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Cover Story

The Ukraine war: Actors, Strategies and Responses

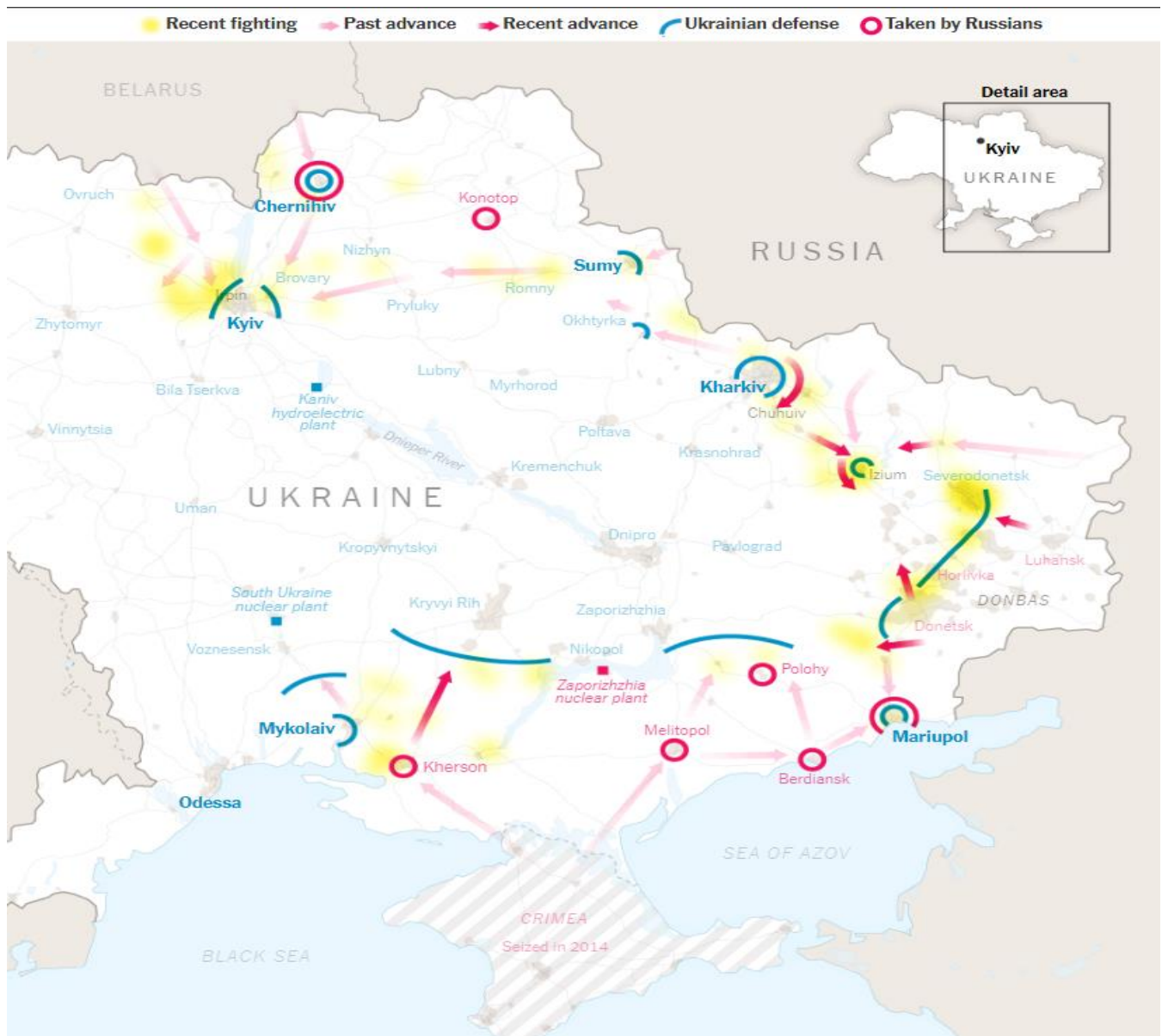


Image source: The New York Times, 21 March 2022

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Global Politics is a primary focus of the NIAS Programme on Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR). The primary focus is on contemporary world affairs. The Programme publishes *The World This Week*, and *NIAS Fortnightly on Science Technology and International Relations*.

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About Europe Monitor

Europe Monitor is an academic initiative by NIAS Global Politics and the KAS India Office.

The Monthly is an integral part of NIAS Europe Studies. It includes focused commentaries on Europe, short notes, and daily updates on contemporary Europe.

Editor

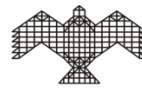
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About NIAS

National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) was conceived and founded in 1988 by the late Mr JRD Tata, who sought to create an institution to conduct advanced multidisciplinary research.

The objective is to nurture a broad base of scholars, managers and leaders who would respond to the complex challenges that face contemporary India and global society, with insight, sensitivity, confidence and dedication.



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With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

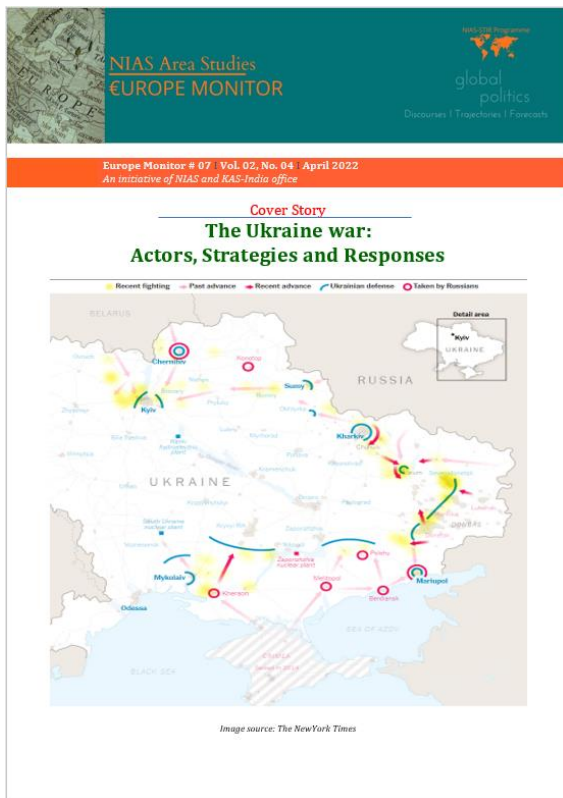
WAR IN UKRAINE



Source: Reuters/Roman Baluk, via Reuters, The New York Times, Reuters/Piroschka van de Wouw, Atlantic Council, State Emergency Service of Ukraine/via Reuters, CSIS Missile Defense Project

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War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from four dimensions. First, War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View: Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war.

By Joeana Cera Matthews, Padmashree Anandhan, and Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan

EM SHORT NOTES



Source: Jessica Taylor/UK Parliament, via Reuters, en.kremlin.ru, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, IOMGOV/BBC, Institute of War, Eurojust

COVER STORY

The Ukraine war: Actors, Strategies and Responses

By Harini Madhusudan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Padmashree Anandhan and Avishka Ashok

EM Short Notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe, and provides the sources from which they are compiled. The daily developments cover from the UK, western Europe, Nordic, Baltic, Balkans to the far east Russia.

By Joeana Cera Matthews, Padmashree Anandhan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan and Emmanuel Selva Royan

COVER STORY

The Ukraine war: Actors, Strategies and Responses

Harini Madhusudan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Padmashree Anandhan, and Avishka Ashok

The Russian military tactics have widened and have expanded further into a war of attrition

I Military Stumbles and Offensive: The Changing Russian Strategy in Ukraine

On 20 March 2022, the Russian Defence Ministry announced it had attacked Ukrainian military assets with the Kinzhal hypersonic missiles from the Crimean Airspace, and cruise missiles from the Black and Caspian Seas. This marks a step up in the Russian offensive in Ukraine. More than three weeks into the war, reports have revealed that the Russian advances have ground to a halt in many areas and have intensified in certain regions with the Ukrainian forces holding out. The initial strategy of Russia aimed to seize major cities like Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa but the forces have not been able to keep up with the initial gains they made in the early days of the attack, forcing them to change their approach. What have been the Russian advances and demands during the one month of the war? What are the strategies adopted by the Russian side and what are the weapons displayed? What are the strategic miscalculations and the possible outcomes for the war?

From Donbas to Odesa

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been the outcome of historical complexities that have resulted in the mutual mistrust in the region. The Russian forces have largely attempted to encircle Kiev and cut off the capital but the troops advancing on the capital have faced strong Ukrainian resistance. There have been strong attempts from the Ukrainian side to keep the artillery away from the city centre, and the Russian troops continue shelling. By 15 March, intelligence reports revealed that the

Russian equipments and troops, based on the current tempo of multi-pronged assaults on Ukraine, are expected to last for another 10 to 14 days and Moscow is seen relying on mercenaries amid their losses. The Russian troops in the recent days, have made very minimal progress in the north of Ukraine, Kiev in particular. However, to replenish their forces would be a priority for Russia. They are seeking troops from Russia's east and attract a few foreign fighters.

The raging war between Russia and Ukraine is seen as unjustified with many of the methods being inhumane, and brutal even for Russia's standards. While the Russian troops are advancing from three sides, the negotiations between the delegations of Russia and Ukraine have displayed cautious optimism with the discussions going on almost daily. Based on the statements released, Russia currently plans to capture a few key cities like Mariupol, Kharkiv, Kherson, Keiv... and not expand the conflict further. It has also been stated that the complete overtaking of Ukraine is not part of the plan. Simultaneously, Vladimir Putin has been pushing for six key demands in his engagement with the opposite parties. These include the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk, the recognition of Crimea, a promise of no membership to NATO and a neutral position, the demilitarisation of Ukraine and the abandonment of weapons that would be a threat to Russia, the ban on ultra-nationalist parties and organisations in Ukraine, and the reintroduction of Russian as the second official language by abolishing the laws that prohibit the same.

Strategy So far

On all quantifiable metrics, the war between Russia and Ukraine is not an equal fight. This includes the size of the armed troops, the military vehicles, intelligence and

surveillance technology, and air and sea capabilities. Despite outranking the opposition, the initial advances of the Russian troops failed to win control over regions with high population. The Russian side struggled to establish air superiority, and were known to have failed at basic logistical tasks of ensuring sufficient fuel, leaving the military experts questioning the preparedness of the Russian side. Many expected a rapid collapse on the Ukrainian side, the initial hours of the Russian strategy included the quick disposal of Zelenskyy's government, and taking Kiev as rapidly as possible. This would have ended the conflict before it really got underway.

Initial gains and Lightning war

The broad assumptions made, revealed from the leaked FSB research, suggested a general unhappiness among the citizens regarding Ukrainian leadership, and presumed that the resistance from the Ukrainian side would be light. These calculations estimated the Russian troop ability to reach Kiev for 48 hours. Hence the lightning war was the first strategy adopted by Russia.

“Politically, Russia demands to prevent an eastward expansion of NATO and put a brick in the anti-Moscow Zelenskyy's closeness with the European countries.”

In the early hours of the “Special Military Operation,” Russia displayed their air supremacy when they took down the military bases across Ukraine. The advances of the Russian forces have been from three directions from the north towards Kiev, from the east with a focus on Kharkiv and Mariupol and from the south, crossing the Dnieper River through the cities of Mykolayiv and Zaporizhzhia.

Strategy of encircling

Currently, the troops have consolidated their grip on Mariupol taking the surrounding towns and widening the corridor that links Crimea to Donetsk, leaving a small strip of the coastline around Odesa under Ukrainian control. The Russian troops are known to have encircled all the important cities like Kharkiv, Kiev, Mariupol, or Odesa. The

attempts to encircle Kiev and Kharkiv in the north and north east, surrounding the city of Sumy have not been very successful for the Russians. The encircling strategy is designed to help the forces in cutting off the Ukrainian resistance. In the South, the city of Mariupol has been successfully encircled for almost all of March. Attempts to cut off the city of Kiev have remained largely unfulfilled, with the Russian troops facing the most resistance and serious logistical challenges.

Strategy of Attrition

This wartime involves the reckless and indiscriminate use of firepower. The strategy turns a blind eye to the damages to the civilian and infrastructure. The strategy has led to an increase in civilian casualties, intensified the humanitarian crisis, blocked access to supplies, and destroyed Ukrainian infrastructure. The situation in Mariupol is a glaring example of this strategy.

In the week preceding the use of hypersonic missiles, the Russian strategy has been aided by the increased use of drones. Dozens of drones are reported to have flown over Ukraine for the purpose of providing intelligence, reconnaissance capabilities, surveillance and aimed at taking down particular targets. While the Russian side did not use some of their advanced weaponry in the early weeks, it would not be the same following the constant bombardments starting mid-March.

Limited war

Following a sizeable number of reports on the use of advanced technology in the war, it is clear that the impression of the Russian actions in Ukraine is not a reflection of their military power. The participation of Russian major conventional forces, the display of its advanced technological capabilities, and its superior intelligence have not been observed. Besides the use of cruise missiles and hypersonic, drones have been extensively used. The difficult terrain of Ukraine has challenged the Russian air capabilities. Broadly however, the Russian side is likely following restraint. It is imperative for Russia to ensure they do not send a false signal to the rest of the regions, and avoid further aggression.

Miscalculations

Based on traditional military doctrine, in a conflict of this kind, experts suggest the heavy use of “combined arms,” where different elements of military power, including tanks, aircraft, and infantry deployed simultaneously. But a systematic usage of combined arms have not been observed in the Russian efforts. Instead, they seem to have sent isolated forces like reconnaissance and paratroopers and insufficient support or logistical planning. The Russians struggled to reach the capital city and also faced challenges to establish air power over Ukraine. However, in the weeks into the war, the Russian side is seen shifting their strategy. The resistance by the Ukrainian side and the depletion of the troop morale have pushed the Russian side to adopt a grinding war of attrition.

One of the primary miscalculations of the Russian troops was Ukraine’s ability to resist their invasion and hold them out of the capital for over three weeks. This was a big blow to the Russian strategy of having a lightning war. Following this, the logistical problems emerged. This included communication challenges, vehicles running out of fuel, and disruptions in the supply lines of basic commodities for the Russian troops. The initial setbacks is said to have affected the morale of the troops that were engaging in Ukraine from three sides. The frustrations in Kremlin from the resistance showed by the Ukrainian forces may encourage them to use more deadly moves involving advanced technology. The hypersonic missile attack could be seen as an early example. This miscalculation would have heavy moral costs on Russia. According to estimates by the US, the Ukrainian side has lost about 1,300 troops but the losses remain high in the civilian displacement and damages to cities. Over 7,000 troops from Russia have either been killed or imprisoned, with some units losing 80-90 per cent of their soldiers, but are seen escalating their efforts. Geographically, in the South, Russia has had some successes with the battle groups being able to deploy and advance easily. The forces in the east and the north faced acute logistical problems. This is due to the supplies coming from depots in Belarus through vulnerable roads.

What next?

Below are four possible outcomes keeping the current trends in line.

First: A possible is the meeting between the two leaders and a ceasefire. Zelenskyy has continued to emphasise on meeting with Putin and this could come into fruition.

Second: Putin could choose the option to increase the range of the war efforts and move into the west of Ukraine, north of Odesa. This would intercept the military assistance, the foreign volunteers, and civilian aid.

Third: The strategy of Russia to hold on to the gains so far, and push harder towards only those regions. This would cause infrastructural damages but would consolidate the troops to specific regions.

Fourth: Possibly a worse option. The continued usage of long-range firepower, and the heavy shelling in cities aiming at disproportionate violence until the opposition gives in. One of the chilling examples of this is the situation in Mariupol, where the city is sealed off from the world and is subject to constant bombardment. However, at the current pace of things, it is highly likely that the war will drag on for a long time.

II Countering Russia's invasion: Mapping Ukraine's multi-pronged defence strategy

Ukraine’s military strategy

Ground advantage, but disadvantaged in the skies and sea

Ukraine has rivers, peat bogs, and uneven terrain that act as a natural defence system. Therefore, the generals in Ukraine used the advantage of knowing the topography and strategized keeping these natural defence systems in mind. Similarly, since the region of Europe is undergoing spring, the melting snow and the marshy lands have become a hindrance to advancing Russian forces. Due

to this, their movement has been restricted to the roads or drylands. However, the Ukrainian army faces inferiority on-air and at sea. This is why the Russian forces implored their strategy of tightening their grip around Mariupol and Odesa from the sea. This is also why the Russians were able to temporarily take away Ukraine's access to the Sea of Azov.

Enlisting civilians and calling foreign volunteers

When the war broke out, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on the citizens of Ukraine to defend the country. As a result, martial law was imposed, and men between 18-60 were banned from leaving the country. However, this was not mandatory or aligned with human rights but more in need of the hour. Therefore, Ukraine and its citizens were entitled to defend their country under the UN charter. Zelenskyy did encourage many civilians to enlist in the army and defend their homes and many heeded to his calls. However, conscription was imposed, but it was only extended to Ukrainian reservists.

"Ukraine stands outnumbered but is resilient to Russian attacks."

Zelenskyy knew, with Ukraine's 200,000 standing army and the 300,000 reservists, he would still need help. So, he reached out to foreign volunteers and appealed to the broader Ukrainian diaspora to join the army resisting Russian forces. Due to this, an estimated 16,000-17,000 'foreign fighters' heeded the call and landed in Ukraine to join the defence forces. This call for foreign volunteers could also be seen as a tactic, as the volunteers brought the international community's attention with them. However, not all foreign fighters were experienced soldiers and had to receive basic training before enlisting.

Countering Russia's Grozny tactics and targeting Generals

Russia has been following similar tactics that it had applied in the battle for Grozny, 1994-1995. They used these tactics to psychologically and psychologically break the Chechens. The strategy implied isolating the region, occupying vital centers, and clearing the

areas resisting Russia's invasion. To counter this, Ukraine had applied an asymmetrical/non-confrontational strategy to fight the uneven war. Furthermore, the Ukrainian military has been using hit and run tactics to buy time and further fortify major cities, which would help them to counter Russia's tactics. In addition, Ukraine's military intelligence has dedicated teams to target the Russian officer class personnel to demoralize their military. So far, five Russian Generals have been killed in the war, and with each general's death, Zelenskyy intensified his call for Russian forces to withdraw from Ukraine.

Where are the Ukrainian refugees headed?

Much of Europe has instituted an open-door policy to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine and the vast majority of them have escaped to the neighboring countries- Poland, Moldova and Romania.

What are the issues?

First, vulnerable minors. Concerns were expressed by UNICEF and UNHCR about children traveling alone, and neighboring nations were advised to identify and register them before sending them to relocation facilities.

Second, sexual exploitation. Women and girls in displacement may be more vulnerable to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Priority is to be given to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), by strengthening inter-agency networks and PSEA mechanisms and systems in receiving countries.

Third, alleged discrimination. Some of those fleeing Ukraine reported claims of discrimination by border guards and other authorities against non-European and Romani people just a few days into the crisis. There have been reports of people being forced to move to the back of queues, deboarded from buses, and denied entry into the country. This would mean sending troops on Russian soil to disable the surface-to-air missiles, which, of course, means war.

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

Managing the civilian population

Decentralization Reform 2014

Ukraine's decentralization reform of 2014 is one of the critical strategies that it applied in

war. The reform was aimed to create an idea of territorial self-governance and was also a tool for managing conflict post annexation of Crimea. However, it has been used by the regional populace to carry out defensive strategies. This is why we see Mayors of major cities playing a critical role in the day-to-day developments, but with the legality of the Ukrainian central government. Nevertheless, this decentralized structure has been favorable to Ukraine as it also brought the local populace more cohesive in putting up a strong resistance to the Russian forces.

Humanitarian corridors

The government has been pushing for humanitarian corridors to evacuate its citizens from becoming collateral of the Russian invasion. These corridors are also crucial to supply food and medicines to regions affected by the war. Food security has been one of the issues the Ukrainians are facing in the besieged regions. However, it has not always been successful in implementing corridors due to the continuous shelling by the Russian government and its violations of the ceasefire.

Setting up of check posts and the use of AI

On 19 March, Ukrainian forces said they detained 127 saboteurs and 14 infiltration groups in Kyiv trying to infiltrate the capital. The Ukrainian forces have set up roadblocks and checkpoints to capture the pro-Russian members and monitor potential Russian spies' movement. In addition, Ukraine's Defence Ministry approved Clearview AI's facial recognition technology to track down Russian assailants and combat misinformation. Another strategy implemented in Ukraine was to change the signboards in major towns to bewilder Russian forces.

Systemic diplomatic appeal to the international society

Declaration of a no-fly zone

Zelenskyy has been calling for a West-backed no-fly zone over Ukraine since February. This was in response to Russia using planes and helicopters to shell its cities. However, it was not accepted by the

West on the grounds that it could escalate the war between Russia and the West.

Outreach to the International Organisations

Ukraine has left no stone unturned in its strategy in reaching out to international organizations like the ICJ, UN, NATO, EU, and even the IAEA for support. It has used cases, justifications, and pleas, to gain support in its defence against Ukraine. For example, Ukraine had filed a legal case against Russia on 26 February 2022, alleging it used Genocide under the "1948 convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide." Ukraine had even asked the IAEA to intervene when Russia attacked the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

Zelenskyy's social media appeals

Zelenskyy has been appealing to the international community and to the people of the globe to get their attention to the issues in Ukraine. His appeals could be compared to the securitization speech act with Zelenskyy as the securitizing actor, Russia as the threat, and depending on whom it is addressed, be it Washington, the EU, or the UN as the referent object. He strategically used historical events in the past to help the audience relate to the situation in Ukraine. He used the examples of Pearl Harbor and 9/11 as he appealed to Washington. At the same time, he said a new Berlin Wall was being built as German energy policy dependency on Russia and their business interests that had created that wall.

Continuing political dialogue with Russia

Ukraine has kept its official diplomatic lines open with Russia regardless of the situation. This could be seen as its political strategy as Diplomats from Kyiv and Moscow met recently in Turkey's city of Antalya. Even though the talks delivered no substantial outcomes, this was the first high-level meeting since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. Apart from this, Ukraine and Russia have been holding informal negotiations to discuss the possibilities of a ceasefire and to create humanitarian corridors in cooperation with Russia. Even on the ground, the situation is very different. There have been persistent small-scale negotiations between the two militaries. As

an example, on 17 March, Ukraine handed over nine captured Russian soldiers in exchange for securing the Mayor of the city of Melitopol. This clearly shows how Ukraine has kept its political dialogue open with Russia.

Thus, Ukraine has left no stone unturned when it comes to defending its people, cities and its countries. After all, her existence is at stake.

Possible fallouts

First: As the Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff Col Gen Sergei Rudskoi mentioning that Russia would now focus on the liberation of Donbas. It leads to the speculation that Russia will downgrade its invasion of Ukraine and focus on just the two regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Second: Putin might still perceive the whole of Ukraine and set up a puppet government to create a buffer zone in favor of Russia and to safeguard its Western flank. This would also grant Moscow the ownership of the birthplace of Modern-day Russia of Kievan Rus'.

Third: Russia might counter Ukraine's asymmetrical tactics by shelling entire cities like it did in Mariupol. Similar tactics could be seen around Kyiv and Kharkiv.

III From the UK to the Baltics: Europe's responses to the Ukraine war

Introduction

What happens if Ukraine became a member of NATO? Became the spark point for the Russian military standoff along the Ukrainian border leading to full-scale war in Ukraine. Europe being a divided region by default when it came to handling Russia, has opted for several strategies to encounter Russia and safeguard Ukraine. Are the strategies deployed by multiple players in Europe making an impact? The following commentary will look into the three categories of European actors, starting from institutional players, and political players to

corporate players, and will analyze the individual strategies opted by them in the Ukraine war.

Strategies opted by the European actors in the Ukraine war

Strategy of non-engagement

The main institutional players the EU and NATO on one side and state players such as the US and UK on the other have used the sanctioning, military support, humanitarian aid, and reducing the dependency on oil as key strategies to counter the Russian invasion.

The EU so far has doubled its military support, import restrictions, investment restrictions in Russia's energy industry, and imposed sanctions on luxury goods, cars, and jewelry. It has also planned to levy the next package of sanctions in the coming week. NATO has been very conditional in not engaging directly in Ukraine and in not granting the no-fly zone, but NATO along with its allies has strengthened Ukraine's military capacity through the supply of weapons, ammunition, medical supplies, and other vital military equipment. Severe sanctioning and massive measures, it has cost Russia economically and politically. Apart from Ukraine, it has also allowed its allies to supply air-defence systems to Slovakia in central Europe. When it comes to the UK, its approach can be seen as very similar to the US, imposing 370 sanctions on Russian Oligarchs, and the withdrawal of top-performing state-owned and private companies from Russia. Bridging alternatives to energies by reaching Saudi Arabia, Gulf, and Qatar. Apart from this, it has agreed to supply sky sabre missile systems and 100 troops to Poland for three months as part of the securitizing of NATO on the eastern front. UK's Defence military intelligence help in reporting Russian troop development is also to be noted. As far as the Baltic is concerned, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were initially blocked by Germany from supporting Ukraine through military aid. Since the invasion, the countries have been allowed to send military weapons and equipment directly to Ukraine, but have directly engaged in the war.

What is a No-Fly Zone and how can it be enforced?

Three Reasons why NATO said NO

Firstly, Belarus and Russia have anti-aircraft artillery with enough range to cover the entirety of Ukrainian airspace. NATO pilots would have to eliminate those unless they want to fly in constant fear of being shot down. This would mean sending troops on Russian soil to disable the surface-to-air missiles, which, of course, means war.

Second, enforcing a no-fly zone would involve hundreds of planes, not just to patrol the area but also to support the aircraft that are keeping the no-fly zone in place, as well as coordination with air forces from allied nations. Even if it wasn't necessary to gain air supremacy by targeting Russian assets, implementing a no-fly zone would necessitate a 24-hour commitment. It consists of much slower advanced detection E-3 AWACS planes that screen the air for flying objects and more vulnerable tanker planes that keep the fighters flying without the need for time-consuming ground refueling.

Thirdly, a no-fly zone would do little to defend Ukrainian civilians. Russia continues to shell civilian-populated regions, mostly with artillery rather than airstrikes. A no-fly zone may not even be enough to resolve the crisis of Ukrainian civilians being targeted by Russian forces. Zelenskyy's desire to gain any international assistance that could help Ukraine is certainly understandable, but to enforce a no-fly zone would entail a slew of risks and could spark a counter-escalation by Moscow.

By Emmanuel Selva Royan

Strategy of diplomatic approach

Olaf Scholz and Macron have been on the front for mediating the talks between Ukraine and Russia, from the Normandy talks to the recent summit hosted by France in Versailles. Both the leader has been in the constant touch with Putin to negotiate and achieve ceasefire. Overall, their strategy has been to solve the war through diplomatic approach. Germany which was one country which took a different stance in the Ukraine crisis vouching for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and resistance to direct supply of military weapons to Ukraine or the Baltic states. Post the invasion, Olaf's decision to

bring a shift in the foreign policy and approval to supply Ukraine can be seen as a major change, but the country stands divided over its energy policy and business interests. In the case of Macron, he has not brought the spotlight on the EU by being the key mediator of the Ukraine crisis, his constant efforts in holding summits and talks with Putin, but at the same time imposing stricter sanctions and aid show his tactful and balanced approach towards the war situation. His actions have given him an advantage over his competitors, increasing the possibility of him winning the upcoming elections.

Strategy of rearmament and deterrence

The basic conditionality followed by the Nordic is their non-alignment policy. Since World War II, Finland, Norway, and Sweden are not been members of NATO, but there was a military exchange. The Ukraine war has turned its position around in supplying Ukraine with weapons, and military equipments such as helmets and armoured vehicles. Therefore, their stand on line of neutrality is no longer possible. Due to the increased security alert in the region, to guard one's own sovereignty, rearmament has been the key strategy to thwart the Russian threat. While Ukraine has been urging for NATO and the EU membership, Nordic, Finland, Sweden, and Norway have kept away from approaching to avoid triggering Russia as part of their deterrence strategy. Instead, have been conducting military exercises between the Nordic countries and have asked for more military support to build defence against Russia.

The same is also being followed by the Slavic states, especially Poland which has been keen on supplying F-35 fighter jets to Ukraine and constantly urging NATO to send its troops to securitize the eastern front of Europe. Although its decision to support Ukraine in the air was stopped by the US, the reason was to ensure the war ended in Ukraine than letting it further to neighbouring countries. This forms part of its deterrence strategy. One other reason for eastern Europe to feel threatened is due to the geographic proximity, Poland sharing the closest border is not only at the receiving end of refugees but also missile attacks. With

Russia nearing the west of Ukraine, the threat is more than ever.

“Sanctions, humanitarian responses, and military support to Ukraine have been the primary strategies of Europe.”

Strategy of mediation

From the Balkans, both Turkey and Bulgaria stepped forward to mediate direct talks between Ukraine and Russia to de-escalate the war. The round of direct talks held between both the countries have helped in bringing the demands of Russia’s leader Putin out front and also given a stage for Ukraine’s representative to voice their condemnations. Although till now the peace talks have not resulted in any breakthrough, the mediation of talks and the rise of mediators show the concern for regional and state security of the European countries.

Strategy of temporary suspension – Corporate players

Many well-established European companies belonging to various industries are restraining the complete closure of business in Russia. The push factors for these countries to stop their operations in Russia are sanctions, government restrictions, supply chain challenges, facing global criticism, mounting pressure from the US companies, and the need to develop a new economic policy to less depend on Russia. Starting with the major oil companies which are closely dependent on Russian oil such as BP, Shell, and TotalEnergies have withdrawn their businesses from Russia. It has led to declining in the forward earnings for the companies. Apart from the oil companies, major mining groups, Rio Tinto, Deutsche Bank, and Bosch which are Europe’s top car manufacturing companies were observed to be functioning in Russia despite warnings. Other industrial companies such as Danone, which deals with food products, Burberry, a luxury fashion brand of the UK, IKEA, and Universal Music Group have tried to skip through the sanctions of the government and escape the complete shutting down by various strategies. First, through the announcement of temporary suspension, which allows them to establish the business

back after the war ends. Second, thorough cutting down of production in Russia or imports from Russia. Third, by keeping the non-Russian clients as an argument to continue its business. Fourth, by promising not to engage in new business, thereby saving the space to continue its existing business.

IV Stuck between Russia and Ukraine: China’s predicament in Eastern Europe

China’s lukewarm response to Russian aggression in Ukraine

Since the onset of the Russian “special military operation” in Ukraine, China has presented a confusing stance on the issue. At the United Nations, China has raised concern regarding the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine and has called the involved parties to directly talk with Russia and Ukraine instead of resorting to a ‘microphone diplomacy.’ China also called for a ceasefire at the earliest. In such instances and in China’s statements, it seems like the country is a friend to Ukraine. However, the actions have not brought an end to the war.

On the other, China was one of the 35 countries who abstained from voting for the resolution that demanded Russia to withdraw completely from Ukraine. Once again, China reiterated its stance that it would not support a microphone diplomacy and would rather be uninvolved in the US-initiated resolution. China also spoke against the imposition of unilateral sanctions on Russia and stressed on their illegal nature in international order. These actions seem to be more helpful than its statement in support of Ukraine.

Despite the unclear and uncertain attitude towards the war in Ukraine, China’s foreign policy objectives in the region can be deciphered easily. China aims to minimize the impact of the war on itself and its

primary national interests. With a view to distance itself from the negative consequences, China has been playing good Samaritan to both the sides in the war.

China's intentions to remain as uninvolved as permissible is evident when it engages with other countries on the issue. On 18 March, President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden held a video conference, soon after the Rome meeting, to discuss the situation in detail. Xi subtly accused the US and NATO of pushing Russia to take up its aggressive actions and explained China's unwillingness in getting involved during the call. He said: "Let he who tied the bell on the tiger's neck take it off." Xi used the very well-known Chinese proverb which has been used often by China in international affairs while dealing with a situation where it believes is has nothing to do with the issue and that the other countries must do what needs to be done. During the Foreign Minister Wang Yi's discussion with the Spanish Foreign Minister, he reiterated China's disinterest in getting involved in the war as it was not a direct party in the conflict.

China's oscillating viewpoint on the war is influenced by two factors: the economic investments in Ukraine and Russia and the political closeness with Russia.

“China's tepid approach stems from its economic investments and political friendships in the region.”

Economic investments in Ukraine

China and Ukraine have shared a close relationship with each other. The relationship was further enhanced after Xi Jinping introduced the Belt and Road initiative. Although, prior to the BRI, China's relations with Ukraine were friendly due to their mutual interests. Between 1994 and 2019, Ukraine's exports to China increased from USD 410 million to USD 3.94 billion. China also exported goods worth USD 7.36 billion in 2019. In the same year, China overtook Russia to become Ukraine's largest trading partner. Although the trade volume has decreased during the pandemic, the trade continues to create opportunities in both China and Ukraine. Being the huge

manufacturing hub that it is, yes, Ukraine is a good market for China.

Other than the market, Ukraine is an important part of the transcontinental infrastructure building project as it connects China and Central Asia with Europe. The objective of a functional modern silk-route can be recognized through China's multi-billion investment in the country. Ukraine is a significant trading juncture for China as 80 per cent of the products pass through the former. Beijing has invested in the rail corridor and is also involved in building Ukraine's ports, skyscrapers, railroads, highways, bridges, airports, dams and power plants.

Another factor why China would want to maintain its friendly relations with Ukraine is the domestic economic stability of China. The country recently concluded the two most important annual political meetings. During the meeting, Premier Li Keqiang announced that China had set a GDP growth rate of 5.5 per cent for 2022; which is lesser than its GDP growth in 2021 by 2.5 per cent.

The Premier revealed that China is knowingly taking the decision because the administration predicts numerous economic challenges, globally and within the country. Thus, although the trade with Russia may be greater, China will continue to hold on to all its international markets to minimize the impacts on its economy.

Close political ties with Russia

Russia and China have been close allies for decades. Although the slight similarities in political ideology and a strong sense of resistance to the west brought the two countries closer, China and Russia have deepened their cooperation along diverse areas. Moreover, the countries have been successful in putting the past behind them under their leadership of Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. During the Beijing Winter Olympics 2022, the two leaders pledged to support each other in numerous issues, international organizations and other initiatives. Putin also expressed Russia's support for the 'One-China' Principle and reprimanded the secessionist movements in Taiwan. They have become each other's

strategic allies in what they perceive to be 'an unfriendly and hostile international order.'

The countries also maintain mutually beneficial trade relations and respect each other's territorial and sovereign integrity. China and Russia cooperate with each other on energy, space, science and technology and various other political engagements. These engagements are bound to continue for the coming decades. In 2014, China promised to invest USD 400 billion in Gazprom over 30 years when other countries sanctioned the project. Although China has its own self-interests in mind, the country invested heavily in Russia's energy and gas pipeline. As an economy that has recorded unprecedented growth in the last three decades, it requires a constant flow of energy to keep up the pace of its economic growth and stability. It therefore depends on Russia, as well as other countries to support its energy needs.

Forecasts for April 2022

Given China's role as a global superpower, the current impassive approach on the war may result in greater losses such as political and economic fallouts with Ukraine or Russia or losing out on its possible role as a mediator in the war. If China is able to bring an end to the violence in Eastern Europe as a mediator, it would significantly enhance the Beijing's value as a powerful country in the international order.

It is unlikely for China to take a stand against Russia because of the shared political

interests and friendship. The economic dependency is yet another determining factor for China's approach to the issue. If forced to choose between two of its important economic investments, China will surely choose Russia over Ukraine.

The current Chinese response is measured. It has economic interests in Russia and is keen to prevent any fallouts to its investments due to sanctions on Russia. On the other hand, China also has an economic interest in Ukraine, through the BRI.

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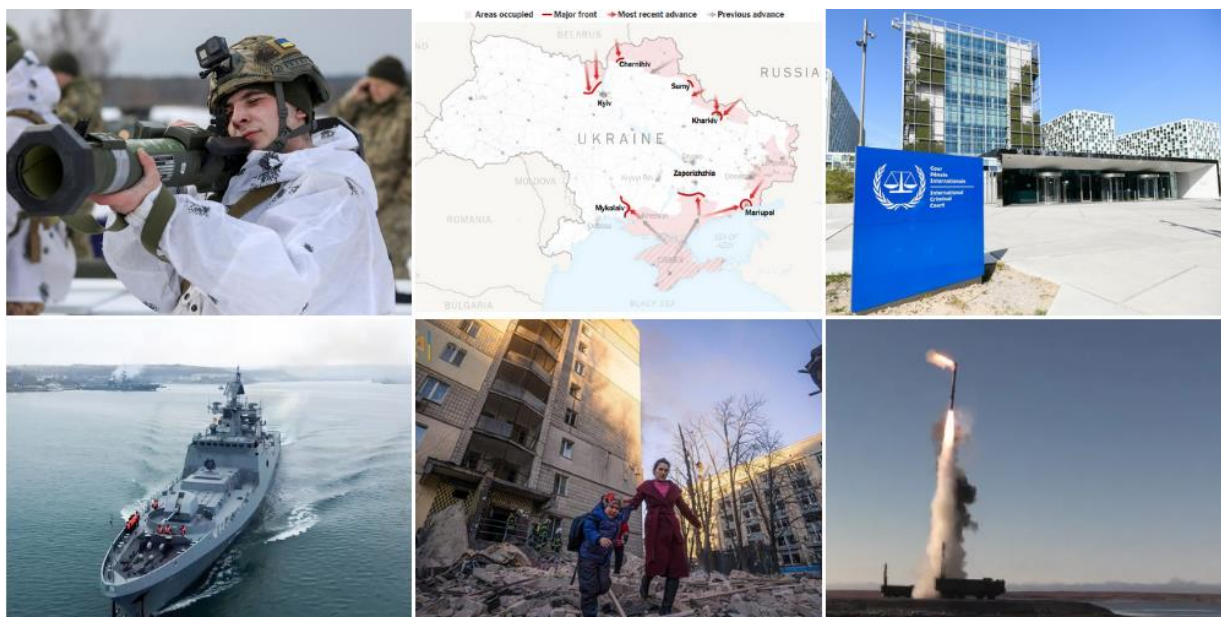
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WAR IN UKRAINE: Daily Updates*

By Joeana Cera Matthews, Padmashree Anandhan, and Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan



Source: Reuters/Roman Baluk, via Reuters, The NewYork Times, Reuters/Piroschka van de Wouw, Atlantic Council, State Emergency Service of Ukraine/via Reuters, CSIS Missile Defense Project

War in Ukraine: Day 35

**War on the ground:
Russian withdrawal misleading; Zelenskyy
speaks to Biden; Russia continues
bombardment**

Zelenskyy is doubtful of Russian withdrawal

On 30 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he did not believe Russia's pledge to cut back its military activities in Northern Ukraine. He said: "Ukrainians are not naive people. Ukrainians have already learned during these 34 days of invasion and over the past eight years of the war in Donbas that only a concrete result can be trusted. The facts – if they change on our land." He further urged the people not to lose vigilance and trust Russians even though the peace talks appeared optimistic. Zelenskyy said: "The enemy is still in our territory. The shelling of our cities continues. Mariupol is blocked. Missiles and airstrikes

do not stop. This is the reality. These are the facts.

On the same day, Ukraine's General armed forces staff urged the people not to believe the Russian statements of withdrawal. The General staff of the armed forces mentioned: "...the so-called 'withdrawal of troops' is probably a rotation of individual units and aims to mislead the military leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and create a misconception about the occupiers' refusal to plan to encircle the city of Kyiv." The US and the allies also urged the West not to drop their guard against Russia.

Zelenskyy speaks to Biden

On 30 March, Zelenskyy spoke with US President Joe Biden and discussed the situation in Ukraine. Zelenskyy put forward specific defence support Ukraine needed and also asked Biden to enhance sanctions against Russia. Zelenskyy further spoke about financial and humanitarian aid as the

*War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from four dimensions. First, War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View. Third, Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read them every day.

US said it would provide USD 500 million in “direct budgetary aid.”

Russia continues bombardment

On 30 March, the continued shelling by Moscow killed one person in the Russian-held areas of Donetsk. Authorities in Luhansk mentioned 35 attacks on local towns in the last 24 hours. The shellings hit a few flats including a kindergarten. This comes as Russia said it would be focusing on the eastern Ukraine region and would downgrade its military activities in regions apart from Donbas.

Ukraine’s Deputy PM on special UN mission

On 30 March, Ukraine’s Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk spoke about the danger of ammunition exploding near the Chernobyl nuclear power station. She said: “We demand that the UN security council immediately take measures to demilitarise the Chernobyl exclusion zone and introduce a special UN mission there to eliminate the risk of repeating a nuclear catastrophe.” She further urged Russia to allow 97 humanitarian corridors to be established in the worst-hit towns in Ukraine.

Attacks on Chernihiv

On 30 March, Chernihiv’s Governor Viacheslav Chaus informed the BBC of the continued attacks on the city despite promises of reducing military activities. Viacheslav Chaus said: “Right now, as we speak, I can hear which I think are mortar shells...We don’t believe [the Russians] because we’ve already seen that there isn’t a single time when their military forces keep their word.”

Devastation in Mariupol

On 30 March, satellite photos released by an observation company called Maxar showed the irreversible damage caused by shelling in the port city of Mariupol. The city’s mayor said about 5000 people, including children, have been killed in the city since Russia’s invasion began. Earlier, Putin had also told France’s President Emmanuel Macron that the shelling would not stop until Ukrainian forces lay down their arms.

On the same day, Mariupol saw a planned evacuation failing as complications arose between the two sides. The UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet is also investigating forcible evacuations by Russian forces in the areas it controlled.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Russia and Iran discuss sanctions

On 30 March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke to Iran about the sanctions imposed by the West. Russia can continue dealing with countries with sanctions imposed, Lavrov spoke to Iran to discuss steps to circumvent sanctions.

Shelling on Russian military camp

On 30 March, a temporary Russian military camp near the border with Ukraine was hit by shelling suspected to be perpetuated by the Ukrainians. Videos of the shelling were posted online, but many news agencies could not confirm it. TASS said that four people were injured in the blasts.

Gas payments in rubles

On 30 March, the Kremlin announced that it would eventually ask its natural gas buyers to pay in rubles. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said: “Payments and deliveries are a time-consuming process.” However, Peskov said that a due process would be followed as the Central Bank and energy giant Gazprom are expected to present the system to receive payments in the ruble to Putin first.

Russian goods to be exported for rubles

On 30 March, Speaker of the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, Vyacheslav Volodin, said Russia planned to expand the list of goods to be exchanged for rubles. The list would include items like grain, crude oil, and lumber goods that would have to be paid for in Rubles. He said: “European countries have all the market opportunities to pay in rubles. There is no tragedy in it. The situation is much more terrible when there is money but no goods.” He also said this would benefit Russia and suggested expanding the list further.

Russia's perspective on the talks in Istanbul

On 30 March, Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky said at talks in Istanbul, they heard the formulated stance of Ukraine. Russia's International Affairs Council (RIAC) Director General Andrey Kortunov said: "Russia is ready to work with Ukraine's leadership and does not seek regime change." However, he said no agreement was reached upon the territorial issues and that Russia would continue its military operations, at least in the Donbas region. Medinsky added that the Ukrainian forces would either be encircled or pushed back. Medinsky further said: "I want to emphasise separately that our country's position on principle regarding Crimea and Donbas remains unchanged."

Lavrov's visit to China

On 30 March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Tunxi, China. The two leaders discussed the war in Ukraine and ensured that the agreements between the two countries were consistently implemented.

Sanctions on Russia leading to a global crisis

On 30 March, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, mentioned how the sanctions against Russia led to a possible global economic crisis. He said: "The actual causes threatening the global food market with serious turbulence are not in Russia's actions but rather is the unrestrained sanction hysteria the West has unleashed against Russia giving no thought either to the population of the countries of the so-called global south or to their own citizens." However, he reiterated that Russia was committed to its international liabilities and extended a security guarantee to Ukrainian troops who wanted to surrender.

Claims of recruiting 16,000 Middle East fighters

On 30 March, in a follow-up report on Russia calling Syrian soldiers to join the war in Ukraine, the BBC mentioned how Moscow now claims that it had recruited 16,000 fighters from the Middle East. A recruiter said: "The recruitment to Ukraine is exactly

like how we recruited to Libya; there are representatives in the regions....You have the right to change your decision after you apply. No one will force you to go." Syria has been facing a crisis induced by instability and war, and thus, fighters are inclined to accept Russia's offer to fight in Ukraine.

Corporates face difficulties continuing in Russia

On 30 March, due to the Western sanctions imposed on Russia, about 250 foreign companies left Russia in response to the war. This has led to a corporate rejection of Russia in fear of not only retaliatory sanctions or business risks but mainly due to ethical reasons. McDonald's' CEO Chris Kempczinski said: "our values mean we cannot ignore the needless human suffering unfolding in Ukraine."

The West View: Responses the UK and the EU Germany and Austria

Germany and Austria have proposed an emergency plan to alternate for the cut-off on Russian gas supply. The move comes as Russia places a strict demand for unfriendly countries to payback in Roubles for the exported energy supply. Germany has strategized by asking its consumers and businesses to reduce their consumption to work ahead for the upcoming shortage and Austria has confirmed to tighten its monitoring of the energy market. Along with both, UK also denied paying in Roubles to Russian commodities stating the impact on industries and manufactures.

The UK

On 30 March, the UK government announced new set of sanctions on aircrafts and ships of Russian Oligarchs or their businesses. The new move will add strength to the existing sanctions amongst businesses. Especially, plane manufacturers such as Boeing and Airbus have stopped supplying components to Russia upon sanctions from the West. It has also issues 25,500 visas to Ukrainian refugees under the new scheme, so far the applications count stand to 59,500.

On 30 March, the UK Ministry of Defence reported Russian troops were hit with huge losses and due to which have been pushed to

return to Russia and Belarus to recoup efforts. According to the ministry: "Such activity is placing further pressure on Russia's already strained logistics and demonstrates the difficulties Russia is having re-organising its units in forward areas within Ukraine."

The Global Fallout: International implications of the Ukraine war

The UN

On 30 March, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that more than four million people had left Ukraine due to the war and close to 6.5 million people had been displaced across Ukraine. According to the research taken by International Organisation of Migration (IOM) found the reasons behind the internal displacement. It found that mostly displaced were women, who were pregnant or disabled or was a victim of war. Amongst the European countries in the ascending order, Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Russia, Slovakia, and Belarus found to be the common destinations of the refugees.

China

On 30 March, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a meeting said that China and Russia are "more determined," to boost their cooperation in terms of bilateral ties. He said: "China is willing to work with Russia to take China-Russian ties to a higher level in a new era under the guidance of the consensus reached by the heads of state." On the question of peace talks, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said that China has "its own way" to pursue its peace talks and confirmed that it will go by international law and norms.

Middle-East

Recent reports state that Russia had signed close to 16,000 soldiers from Middle-East, mostly from Syria to fight against Ukraine. They have been offered USD 7000 in return for the troop deployment by Russia and the requests to join has been continuous due to current economic crisis in Syria.

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War in Ukraine: Day 34

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's address in Danish Parliament and continuing attacks

Zelenskyy's address

On 24 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his virtual address to the Danish Parliament demanded the imposition of stricter and tightening sanctions put on Russia. He recommended blocking trade, oil commodities and closing down the port access to Russian ships. In the address, he also highlighted the worsening situation in Mariupol, where more than 100,000 people had been cornered by Russia using force and shelling.

Ukraine military advance

On 29 March, Ukraine's armed forces warned against taking action relating to the treatment of prisoners of war if found to be violating. In the statement, it said: “All information that comes is checked by the armed forces of Ukraine and, if there is a violation, appropriate legal decisions will be made regarding that military personnel who violated the laws on the treatment of prisoners of war.”

Negotiation

In the ongoing talk with Russia in Turkey, Ukraine has asked for neutral status to acquire a security guarantee. This means Ukraine will not engage in any military alliances or host exercises, it will also include the discussion on deciding the status of Crimea. According to the negotiator, Oleksander Chaly: “If we manage to consolidate these key provisions, and for us, this is the most fundamental, then Ukraine will be in a position to actually fix its current status as a non-bloc and non-nuclear state in the form of permanent neutrality.

Continuing attacks and evacuation

On 29 March, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said the plans to open three corridors for evacuation from Mariupol, which has remained cut from basic necessities, making it lives of civilians difficult.

Adviser to Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, Mykhailo Podolyak brought out the topics of discussion in the talks happening between Ukraine and Russia in Turkey. The key points were “security guarantees and organisation of ceasefire” to solve the humanitarian problem.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 29 March, Russia's Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin after the talks said that Russia will be drawing back its military from the cities around Kyiv and Chernihiv. This decision has seen the first progress from the talks. In the press conference he said: In order to increase mutual trust and create the necessary conditions for further negotiations and achieving the ultimate goal of agreeing and signing (an) agreement, a decision was made to radically, by a large margin, reduce military activity in the Kyiv and Chernihiv directions.”

On the same day, Russia announced the dismissal of 10 diplomats from the Baltic states as a countermove to Latvia's removal of Russian diplomats. It accused the actor of Baltic states by stating it was “provocative” and “groundless.” Russia also claimed to have destroyed one of the fuel depots in Ukraine in the Rivne region using cruise missiles.

On 29 March, Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) Information Ministry reported that the centre of Mariupol city was fully under the control of the DPR forces. It also disclosed that close to 94 towns in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions were liberated. In the statement: “The forces of the LPR's People's Militia have liberated 94 towns in the LPR and DPR. Several areas remain under the Ukrainian force's control.” Apart from this, TASS stated that since the invasion 490,000 people had been moved

out of the eastern Ukraine regions into Russia. The movement rate is observed to be increasing faster than estimated.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 29 March, the Eureporter stated that the officials of the US and Germany met to discuss LNG and hydrogen supplies as ways to increase Berlin's energy supply. The war in Eastern Europe has led European countries to look for alternative energy sources and move away from their dependency on Russia. The meeting would consist of US Commerce Department officials and executives from LNG and hydrogen energy companies. This comes as US President Joe Biden had promised to help Europe get rid of Russian gas supplies.

On the same day, the US and the allies said they were planning new sanctions targeting sectors that would directly impact Russia's economy, which was critical for sustaining its invasion of Ukraine. US Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo said: "In addition to sanctioning companies in sectors that enable the Kremlin's malign activities, we also plan to take actions to disrupt their critical supply chains." He also mentioned that the US plans to target alternative military suppliers that continue to supply Russia with weapons and ammunition used in Ukraine.

Also, on 29 March, Biden announced the proposal of USD 6.9 billion allocated to address the issues in the ongoing war in Ukraine. Xinhua news agency reported: "This funding will enhance the capabilities and readiness of US Forces, (NATO) allies, and regional partners in the face of Russian aggression." Also, in the budget, the US has kept USD 682 million to support Ukraine's military needs, such as "security, energy, cybersecurity issues, disinformation, macroeconomic stabilisation, and civil society resilience."

On the same day, Biden mentioned that it would be better to wait and see Russia implement its plans to de-escalate the conflict. Biden said: "I don't read anything into it until I see what their actions are....

We'll see if they follow through with what they're suggesting. There are negotiations that continued today, one in Turkey and others."

The UK

On 29 March, the UK's cyber security centre said it was continuously providing services to Ukraine to support it against Russian cyber attacks. The move could likely cause Russia to attack the UK's interests in retaliation. Therefore the UK's Cyber Security Centre said: "We have no evidence that the Russian state intends to suborn Russian commercial products and services to cause damage to UK interests, but the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." Earlier this month, Italy announced a warning to replace any Russian-related software or hardware that could pose a severe threat by cyber attacks. The UK said it would be donating bomb disposal kits to Ukraine on the same day. The kit includes first-aid packages and equipment for neutralizing explosive devices.

Finland

On 29 March, the government of Finland said it was preparing for a campaign of disinformation that is speculated to be launched by Russia. This disinformation campaign would supposedly influence the country's debate over joining NATO. Recently, the people of Finland have been more supportive of their country joining NATO since Russia attacked Ukraine. Finland's Security and Intelligence Service Director Antti Pelttari said: "Public authorities must secure the conditions for a full and frank debate without intimidation, and ensure that outsiders are unable to influence security policy decisions made by Finland."

Europe expelling diplomats

On 29 March, BBC reported on European countries expelling Russian diplomats from their respective countries. The list included Belgium, Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland, and North Macedonia, which expelled diplomats, officials, and other representatives from their countries.

Poland

On 29 March, Poland's government said it had approved a bill that would ban the country from importing Russian coal. The EU has been pushing its members to impose an embargo on purchasing Russian energy. Poland's Spokesperson Piotr Muller further discussed how the country is the EU's largest coal producer, but a few of its heating plants depend on Russian coal.

The EU

On 29 March, the EU was working towards setting up centres on its borders to Ukraine to receive and distribute refugees that were escaping the war. These centres would provide the needed healthcare to member states treating the refugees. EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides said: "We are working closely with the Member States and (the World Health Organization's Europe office) to set up triage hubs directly at the border for patients in the most affected Member States to speed up the transfers." Kyriakides mentioned that almost 4 million Ukrainians had fled their homeland and had moved toward Western Europe.

Peace talks in Istanbul

On 29 March, the delegates of Russia and Ukraine met in Istanbul as Turkey called for a ceasefire in the war in Ukraine. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: "As members of the delegations, you have taken on a historic responsibility. The whole world is awaiting the good news that will come from you." Erdogan further mentioned how there was a possibility of solving if both the parties put an end to the tragedy. The meetings are being held in Dolmabahce, at a government building on the shores of the Bosphorus strait.

The Global Fallout:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Impact on the space industry

On 29 March, a report by Al Jazeera mentioned how the war in Ukraine could impact private and state investments due to the war. Due to the war, many launches and other programs have remained grounded. However, the report argues that this would de-link the East and West and increase investments to work without Russia's supply

chains or investments. Nevertheless, this would impact the space industry as Russia provided cheaper, ready-made launching services.

Japan

On 29 March, Japan said it would ban Russian-bound exports of luxury cars, and goods in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The ban would be implemented from 5 April; this would affect Japan, as well as automobiles, which account for half of its exports to Russia. Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said the list would: "...span 19 categories, from cars worth more than 6 million yen (\$48,630) to jewellery, watches, cosmetics, liquor and art priced at more than 40,000 yen 19 categories, from cars worth more than 6 million yen (\$48,630) to jewellery, watches, cosmetics, liquor and art priced at more than 40,000 yen."

Singapore

On 29 March, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met with US President Joe Biden and discussed the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Indo-Pacific. Biden mentioned how Singapore had been actively voicing its concern about the war and had imposed sanctions on Russia. He said: "We are very happy with what Singapore has done, and I think that the key is going to be to continue looking for ways in which we can expand our cooperation on this and other issues."

UAE

On 29 March, Dubai's state carrier, Emirates, stated that it would continue its flights to Russia until its owners stopped it. Emirates President Tim Clark said: "We carry humanitarian goods in our holds. We've got NGOs travelling in and out of Russia. We've got the diplomatic community going in and out of Russia...so all we're doing is being an enabler, facilitator, without taking a political position on this for the time being." Clark mentioned how the sanctions did not impact the Emirates as the sanctions did not apply in the East as they did in the West.

The UN

On 29 March, the head of the UN atomic watchdog, Rafael Grossi, said he was in

Ukraine to monitor the safety and security of nuclear sites. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Grossi would meet senior government officials and travel to one of Ukraine's nuclear power plants. Grossi said: "Just crossed the border into Ukraine to start IAEA's mission...We must act now to help prevent the danger of a nuclear accident." He further mentioned that the IAEA planned to ship critical safety and security supplies to Ukraine to avert a nuclear accident. He also talked about how the war-induced unprecedented danger to nuclear power plants and other facilities with radioactive materials.

Asian and European markets

On 29 March, equities rose in Asia and Europe, bringing hope as Russia and Ukraine negotiators met in Istanbul for talks. Traders moved towards stocks as diplomats moved to discussions. The focus was now on the outcome of the meeting and even on Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as he urged the two sides to "put an end to this tragedy." As reported by BBC: "The CAC40 in Paris and the Dax in Frankfurt were both up more than 3% at 12:44 GMT, and London's FTSE100 index is up by 1.34%."

Red Cross

On 29 March, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) condemned the violence inflicted on civilians due to the ongoing war. The Red Cross called for an end to the "abhorrent and unacceptable" levels of violence. On the other hand, ICRC was being accused of maintaining communications with both sides and facilitating evacuations. ICRC Spokesperson Ewan Watson said: "We are seeing deliberate, targeted attacks using false narratives, and disseminating this information to discredit the ICRC."

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War in Ukraine: Day 33

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy speaks to Scholz; Zelenskyy's interview; Ukraine-Russia talks in Istanbul; Ukrainian MP and Abramovich poisoned?

Zelenskyy speaks to Scholz

On 28 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke with Germany's

Chancellor Olaf Scholz on a call to discuss the progress of the peace talks with Russia. Zelenskyy urged Scholz to continue putting pressure on Russia and intensify their sanctions against Moscow. Scholz after the meeting had mentioned how Moscow was breaking all the rules of the international order, due to which “everyone will suffer for it, especially Russia.”

Zelenskyy’s interview with Russian media outlets

On 28 March, Zelenskyy was interviewed by “Novaya Gazeta’s Dmitry Muratov, TV Rain’s Tikhon Dzyadko, the author Mikhail Zygar, Meduza’s Ivan Kolpakov and Kommersant’s Vladimir Solovyov.” He put forward the conditions for peace by Kyiv and spoke about the war to let the people of Russia know the reality. Nevertheless, since Russia had implemented a censor ban, not all of them could publish Zelenskyy’s remarks. Also, for its interview with Zelenskyy, Novaya Gazeta received a second warning for violating Russia’s controversial foreign agent’s law and had decided to halt its operations.

Ukraine-Russia talks to be held in Istanbul

On 28 March, Zelenskyy said that Ukraine was seeking peace without delay and added that he was ready to meet Putin for an in-person meeting. However, Zelenskyy said, “We must come to an agreement with the president of the Russian Federation, and in order to reach an agreement, he needs to get out of there on his own feet ... and come to meet me.” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also responded to it by saying: “The meeting is necessary once we have clarity regarding solutions on all key issues.”

On the same day, Zelenskyy said he was willing to discuss “neutral status” with Putin in Turkey. In a late-night video message, he said: Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity are beyond doubt. Adequate security guarantees for our state are mandatory.” He said he was ready to adopt a neutral status and make compromises about the status of the eastern Donbas region. This would further secure a peace agreement with Russia. However, he mentioned that he was not interested in discussing demilitarisation.

Humanitarian corridors suspended

On 28 March, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk mentioned that the humanitarian corridors were suspended and cited Russian provocations. Vereshchuk said she had received intelligence reports of escape routes being unsafe for passage. Ukraine has been accusing Russia of sabotaging evacuation corridors in contested areas. However, Moscow blames the same on Kyiv for disagreeing on the safe corridors that Russia had suggested.

Civilians of Mariupol transferred to Russia

On 28 March, Ukraine accused Moscow of forcibly relocating thousands of civilians from the port city of Mariupol into Russia. Vereshchuk said about 40,000 civilians were moved to Russian-held territory without Ukraine being informed. *BBC* reported: “Some Ukrainian officials describe Russia’s actions as “deportations” to “filtration camps” - an echo of Russia’s war in Chechnya, when thousands of Chechens were brutally interrogated in makeshift camps and many disappeared.”

Situation in Chernihiv

On 28 March, the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv was almost entirely encircled by Russian forces. This had led to the city facing a dire situation as it was left without electricity, gas, or running water with tens of thousands of people still trapped. The city is located near Belarus and was the first place to be attacked by the Russian forces who invaded through Belarus. A resident said: “They hit [sites] two times in a row. It is obvious they do it on purpose....Most of the city suburbs are completely destroyed.”

Ukrainian MP and Abramovich poisoned?

On 28 March, *The Guardian* reported that Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich and a group of informal Ukrainian negotiators suffered symptoms that hinted at poisoning. This came after there were informal talks held between the two groups. Ukrainian MP Rustem Umerov said: “It was during his first trip to Kyiv. Roman lost his sight for several hours. In Turkey, they were treated in a clinic, together with Rustem.” Experts on the ground concluded that the symptoms were

likely the result of poisoning with an undefined chemical weapon.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Lavrov on the EU

On 28 March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the EU had demonstrated its inability to serve as a guarantor of conflict settlement in the war. He said: "..., just as it was the case in February 2014, when the EU guaranteed a settlement in Ukraine between the [former] president, [Viktor] Yanukovich, and the opposition. The next morning, when the opposition severed that agreement, the EU preferred to keep quiet and then started referring to some democratic processes." Lavrov talked about the situation in Kosovo, where the UN had asked the EU to mandate as a mediator in the conflict. However, even in 2013, after the EU had to persuade Pristina and Belgrade to sign an agreement, no such communities had been established.

Talks between Zelenskyy and Putin

On 28 March, Lavrov said that a meeting between the two leaders should happen once the two sides show some progress on critical issues. Nevertheless, he added: "any meeting between Putin and Zelenskiy to exchange views on the conflict right now would be counter-productive."

Also, on 28 March, Peskov emphasized the importance of face-to-face talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegations. However, he said the Kremlin did not see any progress towards it. He added: "For now, we prefer to follow a policy of not disclosing any details of the talks. We believe that otherwise we might harm the negotiating process."

Peskov on Russia's gas supply

On 28 March, Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov talked about the implementation of unfriendly countries paying for their gas supplies in the Rubles. He said: "The supply process is very complicated...both the supplies, the payment, as well as adjustment of balances." Even if Europe refuses to pay, they will not engage in charity. However, he did not disclose the Kremlin's plans and

measures if Europe refused to pay Russia for its gas.

Deutsche Welle on foreign agents list

On 28 March, Russia's Justice Ministry announced that it had put Germany's *Deutsche Welle* broadcasting company on the country's list of foreign agents. The judgement cited that the broadcasting company performed the functions of a foreign agent. This could likely be in response to Germany's Commission on Licensing and Supervision banning the broadcasting of *RT DE TV* channels in Berlin. Furthermore, Russia would also withdraw the credentials extended to the staff members of *Deutsche Welle's* Russian bureau.

From the Kremlin

On 28 March, the Kremlin expressed concerns about US President Joe Biden's comments on calling Russian President Vladimir Putin a "butcher." Peskov said: "This is a statement that is certainly alarming....We will continue closely monitoring statements of the US president." Also, on the same day, Russia expelled three Slovakian diplomats in response to Slovakia expelling three Russian embassy staff. Russia has ordered the employees to leave the country within 72 hours.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 28 March, US President Joe Biden speech in Poland during his visit on 25 March has triggered criticisms from Russia. He stated in his speech that "Putin cannot remain in power." The Russians have responded by saying that it was not the right of Biden to decide as Putin was elected by the Russians. As the speech created concerns, Biden denied on asking for a change in regime in Russia.

France

On 28 March, French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in the meeting with policy makers highlighted the need for immediate response from the international community for rampant missile strikes taking place in Ukraine's south-eastern city Mariupol. He said: "Mariupol is a siege war that Russia's

been in for a month now. Maybe it wasn't envisaged as a siege war but today we're in siege warfare, and Mariupol is one of the most striking examples."

Germany

On 28 March, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz disclosed the plans of Germany on buying a long-range defence missile system as a preventive measure to Russian attack. He said: "We need to be aware that we have a neighbour who is prepared to use violence to enforce their interests." Till now Russia has granted tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine, which exceeds NATO's support.

Turkey

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a meeting with Putin, urged for "ceasefire and better humanitarian conditions" to allow evacuation of civilians in Ukraine. He stressed on the peace factor to better the humanitarian situation and assured Turkey's support in the negotiation process.

Finland

On 28 March, Interior Minister, Krista Mikkonen highlighted the importance to narrow the processes in handling the refugees over Russian invasion. She brought out the issues in time-consuming process of residence permit card and registration of refugees. She urged to discuss the situation on refugees and asked to better the efforts in coordinating the refugees. Mikkonen said: "We're also ready to re-settle them from other countries to Finland. One of the EU's ideas is that the re-settlements could be orchestrated by setting up centres where people fleeing Ukraine can receive information about the situation in member states and transport options."

The UK

On 28 March, the government of the UK appointed a war crimes lawyer, Sir Howard Morrison QC for Ukraine to fight legally over the Russian invasion. Sir Howard had previously served as judge at the International Criminal Tribunal and the International Criminal Court (ICC) for more than 12 years. She said in the House of Commons that she asserts on UK's approach to hold Putin's regime responsible in the ICC.

On 28 March, the UK Ministry of Defence reported Russia's advancement in blocking Black Sea coast and keeping Ukraine away from international maritime trade. It also observed that the missiles of Russian navy continue to strike through Ukraine. With Ukraine's forces holding steadfast in the west, the progress of the Russian troops was seen more in the south.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Protests

On 28 March, people across London, Beirut, Moldova, Washington, and Chile were observed to be protesting using various signboards and Ukraine's national flower, the sunflower in support of Ukraine and demanding for the war to end.

ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has raised concern about its inability to send aid to the city of Mariupol. It demanded to Russia and Ukraine to provide a safe passage to reach to people, which has failed. ICRC spokesperson Matt Morris said: "The sides have to be the guarantors and have an agreement to allow safe passage. They have to publicise the route and allow plenty of time for people to get out."

MNCs

On 28 March, Heineken, a Dutch brewing company announced the end of its businesses in Russia. It had previously stopped its sale, production and new investments. It also said that it will not make a profit through the transfer of ownership and it expects the amount to be around EUR 400 million.

On 28 March, Russian officials seized Swiss timepieces through security service agents under the charge of violating customs rules. The Switzerland government has not confirmed yet, but the cost of the watches is estimated to be GBP 700,000.

The UN

On 28 March, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has asked Humanitarian Chief Martin Griffiths to look into the parties engaged in ceasefire talks in Ukraine. He

said: “to allow for progress in serious political negotiations, aimed at reaching a peace agreement.”

G7

The G7 nations including France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, the US and Canada have together denied Russia’s demand to the unfriendly nations to pay for the energy imports in Roubles. One of the spokespeople said: “payment in Rouble is not acceptable and we will urge the companies affected not to follow Putin's demand.”

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War in Ukraine: Day 31 & 32

War on the ground:

President Zelenskyy's everyday address and cruise missile strike in Lviv

Zelenskyy's comments

On 26 Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the Ukrainian troops had launched powerful attacks on Russia as a push for peace talks. He said: “By restraining Russia's actions, our defenders are leading the Russian leadership to a simple and logical idea: talk is necessary. Meaningful. Urgent. Fair. For the sake of the result, not for the sake of the delay.”

On 27 March, Zelenskyy in his daily address demanded the West increase its military supply, stating only one per cent of NATO tanks and aircrafts had been given to Ukraine so far. He said: “What is Nato doing? Is it being run by Russia? What are they waiting for? It's been 31 days. We are only asking for 1% of what Nato has, nothing more.”

Ukraine Military advance

On 26 March, Ukraine Defence Ministry claimed to have killed Russian Lieutenant-General Yakov Reztantsev in a strike near Chornobaivka airbase in Kherson. So far Russia has claimed the death of only one General.

On 27 March, Ukraine’s Military Intelligence reported on Russia’s plan to split Ukraine into North Korea and South Korea, as it failed in taking over Ukraine. It also disclosed launching guerrilla warfare in the cities occupied by Russia. Ukraine’s military intelligence Chief issued a warning on

Russia's efforts to bring the "Korean scenario" and said that Putin's priority remains the east and south of Ukraine on a larger scale.

Continuing attacks and evacuation

On 26 March, BBC reported on the possibility of attacks on the arc of town surrounding Kyiv. Irpin, Bucha, and Hostomel which lies around the capital city, Irpin seems to have been shelled by Russia, with only ruins left. The Russian strategy was observed to be targeting Kyiv to replace Zelenskyy's government. Therefore, the city of Irpic has been at the front of Russian attacks and battle troops.

On 26 March, the Governor of the Lviv region, Maksym Kozytzkyi reported the injury of five people due to the high-precision Onyx cruise missile strike on a fuel storage facility in Lviv. Apart from these Russian forces were seen to be attacking the nuclear research facility in Kharkiv and the workers at Chernobyl's nuclear power plant were reported to be taken over by the Russians.

On 27 March, Ukraine's Agriculture Minister Mykola Solskyi commented on the country's export of grain. He said that as the war advanced, the capacity to export grains was worsening day by day. He added: "The impact (on global markets) is direct, dramatic and large. And it continues. Every day the situation will become more and more difficult."

On 27 March, upon separatist leader in the Luhansk People's Republic called out for a referendum on allowing Russia to join. Ukraine Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded by saying any such fake referendums conducted in part of Ukraine to be considered "null and void." It warned that: "Instead, Russia will face an even stronger international response, further deepening its isolation."

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

Putin's new law

On 26 March, Russian President Vladimir Putin passed a law recognising the individuals who took part in special military

operations in Ukraine as "Combat veterans." The law was assumed by the State Duma and accepted by Federation Council. The recognition meant that the participants in the special operation will be put under social protection and will be eligible for additional payments, tax benefits and medical care

Russian Defence Ministry claims

On 26 March, Russian Defence Ministry declared the end of the first phase of the war as Biden makes his visit to Poland. It said that its aims to destroy Ukraine's navy, air force and target to capture Kyiv was stalled. Russian officials said that Russia would hence focus its military on "complete liberation" of eastern Ukraine, the Donbas region. General Staff's main operations administration Head, Sergei Rudskoy said: "The main tasks of the first stage of the operation have been carried out. The combat capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces have been substantially reduced, which allows us to concentrate our main efforts on achieving the main goal: the liberation of Donbas."

On 26 March, Russia claimed that 93 per cent of the Donbas region of Luhansk has been brought under the control of a separatists group along with 54 per cent of Donetsk. Russian Defence Ministry, Major General Igor Konashenkov claimed on the attack on fuel base in Nikolaev region of Ukraine. he said: "The Onyx high-precision cruise missile destroyed a fuel base in the Nikolaev region, used to supply a grouping of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the southern part of Ukraine with fuel." Apart from this the Russian forces also claimed on disabling of 117 Ukrainian military facilities, an S-300 missile system, nine warehouses that stored ammunition and "92 stronghold Ukrainian forces units."

On 26 March, Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia might nationalise the property of those registered in the US, the EU and other countries listed as unfriendly. The comments come as Russia reported the arrest of the assets of Russian individuals living abroad. He said: "With arrest of assets of foreigners and foreign companies in Russia based on country principle. And maybe, with

nationalization of property of people registered in unfriendly jurisdictions. Like the EU, EU member states and a number of singing-along states of the Anglo-Saxon world that will take part in this.”

On 27 March, Russian presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky through his telegram announced the next round of talks with Ukraine, which has been scheduled to take place in virtual format. He posted: “Another round of talks with Ukraine in the videoconference format was held today. As a result, a decision was made to meet offline on March 29-30.”

On 27 March, Russia’s regulator of state media warned a Russian media Meduza on an interview with President Zelenskyy. In the warning, it stated: “an investigation has been started in order to identify the level of responsibility and what response will be taken.” Russia in the previous week passed a new law banning Russian media from casting on the war in Ukraine and imposed an imprisonment charge of 15 years for spreading fake news.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe The US

On 27 March, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken talked about the US’ strategy and clarified that Washington was not working on a regime change for Russia. His comments clarified President Joe Biden’s statement that Putin “cannot remain in power.” Blinken said: “I think the president, the White House, made the point last night that, quite simply, President Putin cannot be empowered to wage war or engage in aggression against Ukraine or anyone else.”

On 26 March, Biden and US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin met with Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov in central Warsaw. Biden and Austin extended their support to Ukraine and called on the world to prepare for a “long fight ahead.” Biden further stated: “For God’s sake, this man cannot remain in power.”

The UK

On 27 March, according to a report by the UK’s Defence Ministry, the Russian forces were encircling the city of Kyiv. The briefing mentioned: “advancing from the direction of Kharkiv in the north and Mariupol in the south.” The report further discussed the Ukrainian military launching counterattacks to hamper Russian reorganization efforts.

On the same day, UK’s Foreign Secretary Liz Truss mentioned that the UK would lift sanctions if Russia agreed to a complete cease-fire and withdrew its troops from Ukraine. She stated that Russia was serious about negotiations, but less progress was made recently and further added: “That’s why... we need to double down on sanctions,”

On 26 March, The UK’s intelligence released a report from the UK’s Defence Ministry, which warned that Russia would continue its use of heavy firepower in urban areas. The report mentioned that this would come “at the cost of further civilian casualties.” The UK announced that it would fund GBP two million in food aid to Ukraine on the same day. Humanitarian adviser to the Foreign Office Alice Hooper said: “The need on the ground in Ukraine is clear, with so many people in encircled areas trapped in basements without access to food or water.”

Germany

On 27 March, Germany’s Chancellor Olaf Scholz reiterated his support to Ukraine and said that Berlin was doing everything it could for Kyiv. He further mentioned that he was doing everything possible in their power and even supplied weapons to Ukraine. On the same day, Germany sold 5,100 anti-tank weapons to Ukraine. Germany’s DPA news agency reported: “The weapons are shoulder-launched RGW90 HH “Matador,” manufactured by “Dynamit Nobel Defence.”

On the same day, Germany’s President Frank-Walter Steinmeier appealed for a united and humane stance in the face of Russia’s aggression. At the Berlin Philharmonic concert for Ukraine, he said: “We must not permit [Russian President Vladimir] Putin’s hatred to become a hatred dividing peoples and individuals, and it must not be allowed to divide our society either.”

Turkey

On 27 March, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he had spoken to Russia's President Vladimir Putin on call and discussed an immediate cease-fire and a peace agreement. Additionally, he confirmed that Russia and Ukraine would soon meet in Istanbul and continue their negotiations. Later, on the same day, Turkey confirmed that talks between the two countries would happen on 28 March. Ukrainian negotiator David Arakhamia said: "Today, during another round of video negotiations, it was decided to hold the next in-person round of the two delegations in Turkey on March 28-30."

Turkey also stated the need to continue talks with Russia, and Turkey's Presidential Spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin mentioned that the international community must continue their talk to bring a halt to the war. He further said: "If everybody burns bridges with Russia, then who is going to talk to them at the end of the day...Ukrainians need to be supported by every means possible to defend themselves."

France

On 27 March, France's President Emmanuel Macron warned about a possible verbal escalation after US President Joe Biden called Putin a "Butcher." Macron said he would never have used those words and distanced himself from Biden's comments. On the other hand, Macron stressed the need to de-escalate, and he said: "achieving first a cease-fire and then the total withdrawal of [Russian] troops by diplomatic means. If we want to do that, we cannot escalate either in words or actions."

On the same day, France's housing Minister Emmanuelle Wargon mentioned that around 30,000 people fleeing the war had arrived in France. She mentioned that France was prepared to receive around 100,000 people. However, half of them have since traveled to Spain. Additionally, she talked about the French government granting them EU stay permits that would allow the children to enroll in schools and permit them to work in the country.

Finland

On 26 March, Finland's President Sauli Niinisto expressed his concerns about his country being targeted by Russia if it applied for NATO membership. Earlier, Finns were not inclined to join NATO. However, since the war broke out, most of them wanted Finland to be a part of NATO. Niinisto said that joining the military alliance would "gain a preventive effect" on Finland.

Hungary

On 26 March, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban sought to assert his country's neutrality in the war in Ukraine. Orban said: "The answer to the question of which side Hungary is on is that Hungary is on Hungary's side." His comments came as a response to the EU leaders and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's appeals to Orban to take a clear stance rather than a neutral one. Zelenskyy had stated: "I want to stop here and be honest, once and for all. You have to decide for yourself who you are with."

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

The Oscars

On 27 March, at the Academy Awards ceremony held in Los Angeles, many attendees expressed their support for Ukraine by going silent for 30 seconds. Actress Mila Kunis, who was also born in Ukraine at the Oscars, said: "We'd like to have a moment of silence to show our support for the people of Ukraine currently facing invasion, conflict and prejudice within their own borders." Apart from her attendees also wore blue ribbons that read #WithRefugees to show their solidarity with the refugees that had fled Ukraine since Putin invaded.

Japan

On 26 March, Japan and the US condemned Russia for its nuclear weapons threat. Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said: "the horrors of nuclear weapons must never be repeated." His comments came as Moscow had mentioned that it would use nuclear weapons in Ukraine if Russia were to face an existential threat.

Human Rights Watch

On 25 March, the Human Rights Watch released a report on the Ukrainian refugees reaching Slovakia. The report mentioned how in comparison to Hungary, Romania, and Moldova, Slovakia's border and customs police processed and registered Ukrainian refugees faster. The report further stated how Slovak firefighters and soldiers assisted the injured and helped older refugees in wheelchairs to get processed and accommodated. The coordination and the cooperation of the Slovaks on the ground were also highlighted in the report.

Revival of Coal?

On 25 March, an article by Al Jazeera mentioned how due to the war, the demand for coal had exponentially increased. The global energy market has been gravely impacted because of Russia invading Ukraine and had shadowed last year's COP26 targets and promises. Climate and Energy Policy Adviser at climate change think-tank Pieter de Pous said: "Countries that were doing this properly, avoiding gas as a bridge fuel option, are in a better situation than those who really were betting on gas to get out of coal."

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War in Ukraine: Day 30

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's message; Mariupol; Russian strikes; Prisoners of war exchanged

Zelenskyy's message to Russia

On 25 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Russia to negotiate rather than continue with the war. However, he stated that Ukraine would not give up territories to achieve peace. Zelenskyy's response was to Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff Col Gen Sergei Rudskoi, who mentioned that Russia would now only focus on "the liberation of Donbas." Zelenskyy had also claimed that Russia had lost more than 16,000 troops while still unable to take Kyiv or Kharkiv.

Update on Mariupol

On 25 March, Mariupol's Mayor Vadym Boychenko informed about the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the city after Russia besieged it. He said: "The situation is really complicated. It is a humanitarian crisis...Part of the city is occupied by Russian [forces], but our soldiers are still controlling the city, but there is non-stop fighting." He claimed that Russia had restricted 300 tonnes of humanitarian aid to enter the city, with about 100,000 people trapped in Mariupol.

On the same day, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk stated that there was a possibility to open a safe corridor to evacuate civilians in private vehicles. On the ground, Ukrainian and Russian officials negotiated corridors to let civilians flee the besieged city. Vereshchuk said: "The city is suffering constant Russian aerial assaults and artillery strikes, making departure - or

even going above ground - a death-risk for residents.”

Russian strike on a medical centre in Kharkiv

On 25 March, Russia struck a medical centre in Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second-largest city. The strike killed four civilians while others were wounded. The local police said: “This morning, following a bombardment on civilian infrastructure from several rocket launchers, seven civilians were injured, four of them died.” The medical center is in the city’s Osnovyansky district.

135 children killed in the war since the invasion began

On 25 March, Ukraine’s Prosecutor General’s Office stated that 135 children were killed while 184 were wounded since the invasion began. Nevertheless, the BBC has not been able to verify these reports independently. On the same day, two children were reported to have been killed in the city of Rubizhne of the Luhansk region in the crossfire. At the same time, two children were injured on 24 March in Novomykhailivka, Donetsk region, by shelling.

Prisoners of war exchanged at Mangush

On 25 March, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk confirmed that an exchange of prisoners of war took place in the city of Mangush. Ten captured occupiers were exchanged for 10 Ukrainian service members in the exchange. Vereshchuk said: “We managed to release the drivers and rescuers captured by the occupiers two days ago in Mangush.” Mangush is a settlement in the Donetsk region of Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Update on casualties

On 25 March, the Russian Defence Ministry gave an update on its military casualties for the second time since the war broke out. Russia claimed that 1,351 of its soldiers were killed and 3,825 were wounded. On the other hand, Ukrainian military sources had estimated that 15,000 soldiers were killed, although the figure might include the injured. In contrast, US intelligence sources

suggested that approximately 7,500 soldiers have died.

Focus on Eastern Ukraine

On 25 March, the chief of the Russian army stated that the military would focus its efforts only on the Donbas region. The comments suggest a possible downgrading of Russia’s war aims for Ukraine as the forces were met with strong resistance in the northern parts. The chief also mentioned how Russia was always considering two options. First is the liberation of the whole of Ukraine. Second, focus on the eastern part of Ukraine, the Donbas region.

Dmitry Medvedev on Western sanctions

On 25 March, former Russian President and current Deputy Head of Security Council Dmitry Medvedev called the Western sanctions a “foolish” move, thinking it would affect the government. He said: “The sanctions will only consolidate the Russian society and not cause popular discontent with the authorities.” He argued that the sanctions would have favorable effects on Moscow as they would further consolidate Russian society. Medvedev also said: “Let us ask ourselves: can any of these major businessmen have even the tiniest quantum of influence of the position of the country’s leadership?”

Russia denies claims of using phosphorus bombs

On 25 March, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov clarified that Russia had never violated any international conventions. He shunned Zelenskyy for accusing Moscow of using phosphorus bombs. Zelenskyy had accused Russia on 24 March of using phosphorus bombs against civilians at the G7 summit. However, phosphorus bombs are allowed to be used in open spaces as a tactic to be used as cover for troops but are restricted in heavily populated civilian areas.

Lavrov’s response to sanctions

On 25 March, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed that total war had been declared against Russia. His comments came as a response to the West’s all-out sanctions against the Russian economy. Lavrov said: “Today, a genuine hybrid war, a

‘total war’ has been declared against us. This term, which was exploited by Hitler’s Germany, is now pronounced by many European politicians when talking about what they want to do with Russia.” Lavrov lashed out on the sanctions and stated that these were publicly announced to devastate the Russian economy and the country.

Putin calls out cancel culture

On 25 March, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin mentioned similarities of what was going on under the Nazi Germany of Hitler and what the West was doing to Russia. He said: “The notorious cancel culture has turned into the cancellation of culture. The names of Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Rachmaninov are being removed from playbills, Russian writers and their books are being banned.” He said the last time this happened was 90 years ago. He further accused the West of seeking to cancel Russia, its culture, and its people.

Kremlin on exclusion from the G20

On 25 March, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov talked about the West trying to exclude Russia from the G20. He said: “As for the G20 format, it is important. Nevertheless, on the other hand, in the current conditions, when most of the participants in this format are actually in a state of economic war with us, on their initiative, nothing fatal will happen.” However, he said Russia would still take part in the G20, depending on the opinion of other participants. Nevertheless, he reiterated that even if Russia were not allowed to participate, it would not lead to anything fatal for the country.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 25 March, US President Joe Biden’s visit to Poland, G7, EU and NATO summits in Brussels brought out two-fold aims. One, the showcase of Western unity in the face of war and the prominence of liberal values. Two, strengthening of energy security through gas deals and defence. In the joint statement with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Biden remarked: “The United States and the European Union are going to work together to take concrete measures to reduce dependence on natural gas period

and to maximize the availability and use of renewable energy.”

The EU

On 24 March and 25 March, the European Union leaders met to discuss “the new security situation in Europe, sustained high energy prices and Russian aggression against Ukraine.” The European Council also discussed building “robust economic base, coordination efforts in response to COVID-19 pandemic and global health governance.” In his address to the European Parliament plenary session, President Charles Michel highlighted three points: “The first point, we have a weakness in the area of energy, we must immediately take measures to strengthen our resilience and independence in this area and to gradually break out of our dependency, particularly on Russian gas. The second topic is the question of security and peace. As we know, for many years voices have been raised with greater or lesser force in favour of bringing European countries closer together, in order to further develop European defence and security capabilities. The third element, clearly, concerns the robustness of our economic base. If we are able to take measures that affect the regime in Moscow, it is because we are an economic power with 450 million consumers and a strong internal market with unquestionable strengths and assets.”

The UK

On 25 March, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to China’s President Xi Jinping over a call on the Ukraine war. In the call, Johnson stressed the pressure factor that needs to be imposed on Putin to withdraw troops. He also mentioned the implications China would face if found to be supporting Russia.

On 25 March, the UK Ministry of Defence reported through intelligence that Ukraine forces have advanced in taking back the war shelled towns and has taken a defensive position in the east of Kyiv. It also confirmed on the Ukraine forces pushing back the Russian military away from the northwest of Kyiv.

Hungary

On 25 March, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban rejected the appeal of Zelenskyy to supply weapons and impose sanctions on Russia. Orban rejected by stating: "against Hungary's interests." The decision was reasoned by one of the spokesperson Zoltan Kovacs, who said: "Hungary wants to stay out of this war, so it will not allow the transfer of arms and weapons to Ukraine." Another reason behind the denial was not to risk the minority ethnic group in the west of Ukraine becoming targets of the Russians.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

MNCs

On 25 March, Spotify announced its withdrawal of services from Russia due to new restrictions imposed on media companies. In the statement released it said: "further restricting access to information, eliminating free expression, and criminalising certain types of news puts the safety of Spotify's employees and possibly even our listeners at risk." The company had closed its operations in early March and has not been able to sell its premium services in Russia due to international sanctions.

The UN

On 25 March, the UN reported that close to 1,081 civilians had been killed and 1,707 had been injured since the start of the war in Ukraine. It also predicts the count to be higher as it faced challenges in collecting information in the war zones. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine's Head, Matilda Bognor reported on the finding of 200 dead people in the city of Mariupol. According to the Head: "One mass grave we've been able to get satellite information on, and we estimate that one of those mass graves holds about 200 people." She also pointed out the Russian usage of heavy artillery, rockets and missiles in populated areas of Ukraine accounting for war crimes.

Australia

On 25 March, Australia's Foreign Minister, Marise Payne announced the sanctions on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko

and his family members for their role in the Ukraine war. The Minister said: "Australia has now sanctioned a total of 32 pro-Kremlin propagandists, reflecting the strategic importance of disinformation in Russia's attempts to legitimise Putin's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine."

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War in Ukraine: Day 29

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's address in G7 Summit and Ukraine's claim on destroying Russian navy ship

Zelenskyy's address

On 24 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his virtual address in the G7 Summit urged the members of NATO to not look down on Ukraine's Army with that of NATO standards. He also accused Russia of the use of phosphorus bombs, as children were reportedly dying. Zelenskyy reiterated the demand for a supply of powerful anti-aircraft defences. Mentioning Russia's capacity of military arsenal, he complained about not being supplied with a single plane. The most important demand of Zelenskyy was unlimited military aid from NATO to protect the country from the Russian attacks.

Ukraine Military advance

On 24 March, the Ukraine military claimed to have destroyed a Russian Navy ship called the Orsk near the port city of Berdyansk. As per the report of the Ukrainian Navy, "The Orsk large landing ship of the Black Sea Fleet of the occupiers has been destroyed in the port of Berdyansk captured by Russia." There was no confirmation from the Russian Defence Ministry. Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Malyar reported on the same that the military had attacked a "huge target," the ship which was capable of holding 45 armoured vehicles, 20 tanks and 400 troops. Apart from this, the Ukraine military claimed on the withdrawal of Russian troops from the city to the Ukraine border.

Weapons and technology

On 24 March, Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation began using "facial recognition" software to track down the dead Russian soldiers. The technology was provided to Ukraine by Clearview which is based in New York. Which Ukraine using an online portal, has identified 14,000 Russian troops to have died.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 24 March, Russia Foreign Ministry in response to the NATO summit said that the

West's decision to continue support to Ukraine reflected its want to continue the war. It criticised the West by saying that it was "reaping a terrible harvest," by arming Ukraine.

On 24 March, Russia Defence Ministry claimed to have got the city of Izyum in the Kharkiv region under control. It said: "The Russian armed forces continue to carry out the missions of a special military operation. By the morning of 24 March, units of the Russian army had taken full control of the town of Izyum in the Kharkiv region." The city of Izyum is considered one of the important routes to the eastern Donbas region along with a link to north-east and south-east, which has become the recent target of the Russian troops.

On 24 March, Russia announced to expel US diplomats as a counter move to US move to eliminate 12 Russian diplomats. The US State Department confirmed on receiving the list of diplomats of "Persona non grata," from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe The US

On 24 March, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan talked about a unified response to countries that would try helping Russia to evade Western sanctions. Sullivan said: "That's not specifically about China, but it will apply to every significant economy and the decisions that any of those economies take to try, in an intentional and active way, to undermine or weaken the sanctions that we put in place." He further added that since the US had conveyed this to China, the EU should do the same with individual countries within Europe.

On the same day, the White House released official statements from US President Joe Biden's speech at the NATO headquarters in Brussels. He highlighted his objective of visiting the summit and highlighted them as three key points. It was first, supporting Ukraine with military and humanitarian assistance. Second, imposing sanctions to cripple Putin's economy. Third, fortify NATO's eastern flank. He further added that the US would "...invest \$320 million to

bolster democratic resilience and defend human rights in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.”

Also, at the summit, Biden said that the US was ready to accommodate 100,000 Ukrainian refugees. This comes as 3.5 million Ukrainians have fled the country into neighbouring regions. He also said: “I’m announcing that the United States has prepared to commit more than USD one billion in humanitarian assistance to help get relief to millions of Ukrainians affected by the war in Ukraine.”

The UK

On 24 March, at the G7 meeting, UK’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced an increase in lethal aid to Ukraine. The government said it would send 6,000 missiles and provide GBP 25 million in funding for Ukraine’s armed forces. Johnson said: “This is just the beginning. We must support a free and democratic Ukraine in the long term. This is a fellow European democracy, fighting a war of national defence.”

On the same day, the UK also announced another 59 sanctions against Russian banks, industries, and the stepdaughter of Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The latest sanctions imposed were also against Belarusian entities and other companies like Gazprombank, Alfa-Bank, Sovcomflot, a state-run shipping firm; Alrosa, the world’s largest diamond producer; and Wagner Group, a private military contractor.

Lithuania

On 24 March, Lithuania’s President Gitanas Nausėda talked about the EU imposing further sanctions on Russia. Nevertheless, he mentioned how the sanctions’ implications would take time; he said: “the consequences come after a certain time lag.” However, he said there was scope for further sanctions. His comments came as he arrived in Brussels for the NATO summit.

G7, NATO, and EU meetings

On 24 March, NATO, the G7, and the EU plan meetings as US President Joe Biden visits Europe. This would be the first visit by a US President to an EU summit in Brussels. His

visit is not only a symbolic one but to show the US’ support for Ukraine. Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also joined the summits virtually.

NATO

On 24 March, NATO said it would increase its forces deployed on the eastern flank. NATO’s Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg added: “...agree to strengthen Nato’s posture in all domains, with major increases in the eastern part of the alliance. On land, in the air, and at sea...There is a new sense of urgency because we cannot take peace for granted.” Stoltenberg stated these at a news conference on the eve of the emergency summit. He further stated that if Russia used biological or chemical weapons, it would have consequences as NATO was ready to protect its allies against them.

On the same day, Stoltenberg stated that he would be extending his term for another year due to the war in Ukraine. His term was set to expire on 01 October 2022 and was due to take up the post of Norway’s central bank governor. Stoltenberg said: “Honoured by the decision of #NATO Heads of State and Government to extend my term as Secretary-General until 30 September 2023.”

The Global Fallout: International implications of the Ukraine war

Haiti

On 23 March, the World Food Program (WFP) warned of a hunger crisis in Haiti as the war continued in Ukraine, leading to a rise in prices for imported wheat. A recent food assessment by the UN stated: “in Haiti finds 45 per cent of the population, or 4.5 million people, are facing acute hunger, with 1.5 million in need of emergency assistance.” The WFP has further attributed this to the rising issues of political instability, growing inflation, and recurrent disasters.

India

On 24 March, the Indian government clarified that it had friendly relations with the US and Russia. However, India had grown closer to the US amid the tensions with China, while Russia continues to be its biggest arms supplier. Concerning the war in Ukraine, Junior foreign minister Meenakshi

Lekhi addressed the parliament, saying: “India has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue with respect to the conflict in Ukraine.” India’s clarification on its position came as US President Joe Biden had called India’s stance “somewhat shaky.”

Japan

On 24 March, Japan’s Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki raised concerns at a parliament session regarding its energy payments to Russia in Roubles. This comes as Russia announced that it would require its energy payments in Rouble from “unfriendly” countries. Suzuki said: “Currently, we’re looking into the situation with relevant ministries as we don’t quite understand what is (Russia’s) intention and how they would do this.” Japan was added to the unfriendly country list since it had revoked Russia’s most-favoured-nation trade status, banned certain goods, and froze assets in response to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Kenya

On 24 March, an analysis in the Business Daily cited the impact of the war in Ukraine and its far-reaching implications on Africa’s economy, especially on Kenya. Kenya’s fuel prices have gone up by Sh5 a litre, which has resulted in inflation of critical sectors such as transportation and agriculture. However, the analysis suggested that Kenya could use this as an opportunity to secure its food security by investing more in locally produced wheat and sunflower.

UAE

On 24 March, an article by Al Jazeera talked about how the Ukraine war had given the opportunity for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to visit the UAE. Russia had been playing a crucial role in getting the Gulf Arab monarchies to come in terms with the Syrian regime. The efforts by the UAE and Syria, with the Kremlin being a part, have made the US uncomfortable especially due to the ongoing war.

Asian shares struggle

On 24 March, the Asian shares experienced high volatility with oil prices going lower due to the war in Ukraine and the comments

from US Federal Reserve officials. An analyst at IG market Kyle Rodda said: “It is still a relatively volatile market, (which) suggests that these ripping moves in stocks ought to be treated with caution.” However, finance company MSCI recouped some of its earlier losses, while Chinese stocks faced decline. At the same time, as cited by Reuters: “Hong Kong’s Hang Seng Index fell 0.3 per cent while the mainland’s blue-chip index slid 0.6 per cent.” On the other hand, Japan was able to reverse the losses to a gain of 0.25 per cent.

Red Cross

On 23 March, the Red Cross Society released a report on the “Devastation in Ukraine: How the Red Cross is Helping.” President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Francesco Rocca said: “The devastating reality of Ukraine is that the needs are growing every day. Amidst increased violence and a disrupted supply chain, delivering essential goods in many parts of the country is getting harder — not easier.” The report further mentioned the current impact of the war and how Red Cross teams were working with the people impacted by conflict. They also stated plans to work on rehabilitation, reunite families, and create awareness about areas contaminated by unexploded ordnance.

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War in Ukraine: Day 28

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's address in Japanese Parliament;
call for protests; humanitarian corridors
Zelenskyy calls for global protests

On 23 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged people worldwide to organize protests against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He added: "Come with Ukrainian symbols to support Ukraine, to support freedom, to support life...Come to your squares, to your streets, make yourselves visible and heard." His call came as an action to mark one month since Russia invaded Ukraine. He reached out to the global citizens through a virtual video address.

On the same evening, he mentioned the broader implications of Russia's war. He related Russia's invasion as a war not only against Ukraine but a war against freedom. He further stated that this was only the beginning for Russia to invade Ukrainian lands. He added: "Russia is trying to defeat the freedom of all people in Europe. Of all the people in the world. It tries to show that only crude and cruel force matters."

Also, on 23 March, Zelenskyy addressed Japanese Parliament virtually and criticized the UN. He said: "Neither the United Nations nor the UN Security Council have functioned. Reforms are needed." He further praised Japan for being the first Asian country to pressure Russia. Japan followed the steps of the Western allies and imposed tough sanctions on Russian institutions after Moscow invaded Ukraine. Zelenskyy further spoke about the Russian attacks on the Chernobyl site and related it to Japan's 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster to warn about his country's dangers.

Nine humanitarian corridors

On 23 March, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said an agreement had been reached to evacuate civilians trapped in towns and cities. However, Russia and Ukraine have not reached an agreement to establish a corridor in Mariupol. Vereshchuk said the people who could leave the port city of Mariupol would find transport near Berdyansk.

On the same day, Luhansk Governor Serhiy Gaidai stated that a local ceasefire was agreed to evacuate citizens. The ceasefire would come into force on 24 March at 0900 am local time, 0700 GMT.

Russia's campaign in the east, north, west, and centre

On 23 March, an article by France24 stated that on Day 28 of the Ukraine war, Russia's campaign was stalled, and Ukrainian forces were also able to launch counter-attacks in places. Russia did encircle the city of Kharkiv, which was earlier heavily bombed. Capturing the city would give them a strategic advantage in the east.

In the north, Russia reinforced its positions around the capital of Kyiv. However, Ukrainian forces had also launched counter-attacks in the city's outskirts. In the south, Russia has continued to siege the port city of Mariupol. Zelenskyy called for a humanitarian corridors, as he claimed nearly 100,000 people were stuck in Mariupol living in inhumane conditions. Not much movement has occurred in the west and centre since last week's deadly airstrikes.

Chernihiv besieged

On 23 March, Ukraine forces claimed that Russian forces had taken the city and the people of Chernihiv hostage. Local authorities have imposed rationing of drinking water for the civilians. As reported by The Guardian: "About 150,000 people are stuck in the northern city with little hope of aid after Russia cut them off from the capital, Kyiv, 100 miles south, by bombing a road bridge across the Desna River."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Tit for Tat, US diplomats in Moscow, expelled

On 23 March, Russia served the US embassy in Moscow an official declaration that mentioned a list of diplomats as "persona non grata." Moscow's steps came as Washington had expelled 12 Russian diplomats from the country's UN mission in New York. A US State Department spokesperson said: "We can confirm that the US Embassy received a list of diplomats declared 'persona non grata' from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 March."

Russian stock market reopens

On 23 March, the Russian Central Bank announced that the country's stock market

would resume trading by 24 March. The Moscow Exchange had been closed since 25 February following Russia's invasion. This was the longest time the exchange had remained closed since the fall of the Soviet Union. As reported by The Moscow Times: "The trading day will be shortened to just over four hours, with deals starting at 9:50 a.m. Moscow time and closing at 2 p.m. Short selling will also be banned, the regulator announced, in an attempt to limit speculative bids that could send the market into freefall."

Peskov's response to US' pressure on G20

On 23 March, Kremlin's Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov mentioned the US' pressure on the G20 countries. He said: "As for G20, it is a multilateral format, different opinions exist there. It is clear that the Americans will continue pressing various states, but, as we see, a number of states prefer to adhere to their own independent, sovereign point of view." He further accused the US of exerting blatant and undiplomatic pressure on all states of the G20. His response came as earlier the US National Advisor Jake Sullivan talked about the possibility of excluding Russia from the G20.

Residents of DPR and LPR granted asylum in Russia

On 23 March, TASS reported about the citizens of Donetsk and Lugansk (DPR and LPR). They arrived in Russia last month and were granted temporary asylum. TASS stated: "Between 18 February and 16 March, 2022, a total of 1,515 residents of DPR, LPR, and Ukraine filed requests for temporary asylum on the territory of the Russian Federation." However, out of the total number of residents, about 1204 were granted asylum.

Moscow's response to Warsaw

On 23 March, Moscow said it would react to Warsaw's actions if it expelled Russian diplomats from Poland. The Kremlin's Press Secretary said: "We saw and heard such media reports (about the possible expulsion of Russian diplomats from Poland - TASS). If these reports turn out to be true, then this is a continuing freefall, as they say, in all fields of our relations." This comes as a Polish web portal referring to government sources that

said that the authorities had decided to expel 40 Russian diplomats.

On the same day, Russia condemned Poland's suggestion of sending international peacekeepers into Ukraine. Peskov said: "It would be a very reckless and extremely dangerous decision." Russia's response came as Poland said it would formally submit a proposal for an international peacekeeping mission in Ukraine at the NATO summit. Peskov further warned that this could lead to a direct confrontation between Russian and NATO forces.

Clarifying the proceeds of the special operation in Ukraine

On 23 March, Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov clarified that Russia's special military operations were going as planned. He stated: "It [the special operation] is going on strictly in accordance with the plans and with purposes that were established beforehand." However, Peskov added that the operation was a serious one and mentioned that the operation's goals have not been achieved yet, and therefore would continue.

Chubais Quits Kremlin

On 23 March, Kremlin's Climate Envoy Anatoly Chubais left Russia after quitting his position. He was opposed to Russia's operations in Ukraine. Chubais had been pushing for Russia to adopt more green policies. He played a crucial role in the 1990s and was an integral part of Russia's privatisation drive and transition to a market economy. Chubais is said to have moved to Turkey and had no plans of returning to Russia.

Russia uses Attrition

On 23 March, a report by The Moscow Times stated how "Russia's forces in Ukraine appear to be turning to a war of attrition with devastating effect on civilians." This comes as the Russians were not able to swiftly gain a victory in Ukraine as President Vladimir Putin had earlier planned. The Russian army has now resorted to siege warfare to demoralise the Ukrainian population.

**The West View:
Responses from the US and Europe**

The US

On 23 March, US Pentagon issued a statement on proceedings of Ukrainian authorities on the ground against Russia. A spokesperson from the US Defence Department said to the reporters that Ukraine forces were "very smartly, very nimbly, very creatively," countering Russia in various parts of Ukraine. He stated: "The Ukrainians are putting up a very stiff defence... the Russians have not achieved any of the strategic objectives that they set out to - or certainly not without loss.

On 23 March, Reuters reported the plan of the US and other Western countries on excluding Russia from the G20. Previously Russia upon the annexation of Crimea was excluded from G7. A similar move in the G20 forum would impact the economy further and result in adding more economic sanctions on Russia.

On the question of ruling out the use of nuclear weapons in the Ukraine conflict, Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov denied agreeing. Peskov stated that, under "existential threat," Russia may use such arms. The response was condemned by the US Pentagon. It also triggered criticism from US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta. He said: "I don't see how you can see it any other way but as dangerous when Russia is looking for a possible excuse for the use of low-yield nuclear weapons."

Poland

On 23 March, Poland announced to expel 45 Russian diplomats who were alleged to be spying. One amongst were found to have worked in the archive of Warsaw's civil records office, was arrested to be put in custody for three months. In response, Russia's Ambassador to Poland denied any such accusations of the Polish Foreign Ministry.

NATO

On 23 March, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg before the meeting with Western leaders in Brussels warned that it must ensure to not let the war escalate further. He confirmed China's role in providing political support to Russia and affirmed to address. Apart from the warning,

Stoltenberg announced the deployment of four new NATO battlegroups in eastern Europe in Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

The UK

On 23 March, the UK Ministry of Defence reported on the movement of Russian troops. It found that the forces were moving from the north into south further from Kharkiv and Mariupol. On the same day, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that people from northeast of Hertfordshire were coming together to provide support and help the refugee families escaping from Ukraine. Johnson also thanked all the people involved in the refugee schemes. The first scheme is the "Family visa scheme," where Ukrainians who have extended family residing in the UK will be granted the status to remain or settle on proving the permanent residence proof. The other scheme "Homes for Ukraine," allows people in the UK to host Ukrainians for at least six months.

Germany

On 23 March, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz pointed out the failure in the advancement of Russian troops and criticised that despite Russia's destructions of civilian buildings, there was a lack in the offensive. He further asked Russia to stop the war and urged to "find a diplomatic solution." On the sanctions, he said: "We are constantly tightening the sanctions, but [the measures] should not hurt European states harder than the Russian leadership." Scholz also warned on how the sanctions are not just affecting Russia but also pushing Europe and Germany's economy into recession.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

MNCs

On 23 March, Elon Musk's Starlink reported to have sent its dishes to Ukraine for internet support. SpaceX President said that the kits sent to Ukraine were massively funded by private sources and will be plotted in the southern port of Odesa. Apart from this, the Swiss good company, Nestle announced its withdrawal of brands such as KitKat and Nesquik from Russia. The decision comes after the criticism received

from Zelenskyy for continuing its business in Russia.

Japan

On 23 March, Japan's Prime Minister expressed concern about Russia's demand for Rouble payments for the energy sold to "unfriendly nations." Japan accounts for 4.1 per cent of Russian crude oil export and 7.2 per cent in gas export. Russia listed Japan as unfriendly with the US, the EU and other countries to counter the export ban and freezing of assets by Japan. Japan's Prime Minister announced his plans to disclose further sanction on Russia in the upcoming G7 meet.

Egypt

On 23 March, Egypt requested IMF to support through its comprehensive economic programme. As Egypt's economy is under stress due to the exit of foreign investors out of fear of repercussions of a Russian invasion. The government of Egypt allowed the depreciation of its currency by 14 per cent after November 2020. The IMF appreciated the efforts of the authorities on "recent actions to expand targeted social protection." So far, Egypt has reached to IMF thrice in the last few years for billions of loans, with the implication of war on the economy it is expected to only worsen.

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War in Ukraine: Day 27

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's address to the Italian Parliament, targeted attacks

Zelenskyy's address

On 22 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his address to the Italian parliament, reported on the situation of Mariupol. He said that there was "nothing left" in Mariupol apart from the ruins. Zelenskyy called Italy to freeze the assets of the Russian Oligarchs. He said: "Freeze all their property, accounts and yachts. Freeze all the assets of those who have influence, let them use it for peace. Support sanctions against Russia, a full trade embargo, starting with oil." Second, he urged the ministers to

impose a ban on Russian ships from entering Italy and asked to sanction all the banks of Russia. Third, he called in for help to remove Russian troops from the ground and stressed on "reconstruction of Ukraine." Apart from this Zelenskyy mentioned that "For Russian troops, Ukraine is the gates of Europe, where they want to break in, but barbarism must not be allowed to pass." In response, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi said that Italy wishes to see Ukraine as part of the EU and assured to provide military support to stop the massacres.

On 22 March, Zelenskyy, after talking with Pope Francis, asked for the Vatican to engage as a mediator to help end the war. He said: "The mediating role of the Holy See [the jurisdiction of the Pope] in ending human suffering would be appreciated."

Ukraine Military advance

On 22 March, the Ukraine government claimed the killing of 15,000 Russian servicemen. Russian authorities on the contrary confirmed the death of only 500.

Continuing attacks and evacuation

On 22 March, the Mariupol's council reported that Russian troops had attacked the city again with two large bombs, and the casualties are yet to be disclosed. According to the council: "Once again it is clear that the occupiers are not interested in the city of Mariupol. They want to level it to the ground and make it the ashes of a dead land." Ukraine authorities reported that the north-eastern city of Ukraine, Kharkiv was attacked by Russia destroying thousands of residential buildings, killing more than 500 civilians. Apart from Kharkiv, the residential areas in the city of Odesa were also targeted by the Russian troops. On the same, Ukraine's minister pointed out that Odesa being the strategic point in the war for Russia, the reason behind the attack of civilian buildings were due to its inability to proceed on the land. He also said that Ukraine's troops were holding firm against Russia in the city of Odesa.

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

On 22 March, a Russian newspaper was accused of hacking its website. It reported

that after it published the casualty figures, it found the page to have been hacked as the figures mentioned started to turn into thousands. After BBC investigated the hack, it found that 557 Russian soldiers were listed to have died in the conflict. So far, Ukraine claims 14,000, while the US intelligence states 7,000 Russian soldiers to have died.

On 22 March, Deputy Head of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations Alexey Serko reported that Russia had received an influx of 360,000 people from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. He said: "Over 360,000 people have crossed the Russian border since 18 February, 22,000 of them have been staying in temporary accommodation centres, others left for relatives, some went back."

On 22 March, TASS reported that the UNSC announced the reviewal of the usage of dangerous chemicals in Ukraine. Previously, on 19 March, Russian National Defence Control Center head Colonel General Mikhail Mizintsev announced that Ukrainian nationalists were found to be preparing ammonia and chlorine storage in the city of Sumy to poison the civilians when Russian forces entered.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 22 March, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan talked about the war in Ukraine at the White House. He claimed that Russia had set an objective before initiating its war and said that Russia planned on "subjugating Ukraine, enhancing Moscow's power and prestige, and dividing the West." However, he said: "Russia has thus far manifestly failed to accomplish all three objectives. In fact, it has thus far achieved the opposite." Sullivan further predicted that the war would worsen more soon and mentioned: "There will be hard days ahead in Ukraine – hardest for the Ukrainian troops on the front lines and the civilians under Russian bombardment."

On 21 March, US President Joe Biden addressed India's stance in the war on Ukraine at the business leaders' summit. He said India's response to the war in Ukraine

has been "somewhat shaky." However, he praised the other Quad members saying: "The Quad is, with the possible exception of India being somewhat shaky on some of this, but Japan has been extremely strong -- so has Australia -- in terms of dealing with Putin's aggression."

The EU

On 21 March, The EU member disagreed with imposing sanctions on the energy sector of Russia. Germany stated that the bloc was too dependent on Russian oil to decide on an embargo. These calls for fresh sanctions came with the increasing civilian deaths and Russia's siege and bombardment of Mariupol. EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell said: "what's happening in Mariupol is a massive war crime. Destroying everything, bombarding and killing everybody in an indiscriminate manner. This is something awful."

The UK

On 22 March, a UK official stated that Ukrainian military claims of a Russian shortage of food and ammunition were true. The official said: "If they were to send in weapons now, they would struggle to get them into theatre within weeks because they are so bad at this." The official further mentioned that it was unlikely for Lukashenko to join the war. He said: "Lukashenko's main concern is staying in power and this would be a threat, so I think he will try to avoid it."

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

UN

On 22 March, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres talked about a possible 'global hunger crisis' as a repercussion of the war in Ukraine. Guterres said: "Continuing the war in Ukraine is morally unacceptable, politically indefensible, and militarily nonsensical." He also spoke about Russia's invasion of Mariupol and said: "Even if Mariupol falls, Ukraine cannot be conquered city by city, street by street, house by house." He then called the war "unwinnable" and would eventually be brought to a peace table from the battlefield.

Sudan

On 22 March, the Save the Children aid group warned of an exacerbated economic and humanitarian crisis in Sudan as the wheat imports are at risk due to Russia's invasion. The war has disrupted shipments from Russia and Ukraine, and these two countries account for nearly 30 per cent of the global wheat exports. The aid group says this would especially impact Sudan, where a military coup had taken over the country in October 2021. Save the Children's Chief Operating Officer David Wright said: "Sudan is in a particularly vulnerable position because 86-87 per cent of its wheat imports is coming from Russia and Ukraine combined...almost 20 million people, or almost half the country, being food insecure."

East Africa

On 22 March, a report by the charitable organisation Oxfam warned that millions of people in East Africa are at a risk of extreme hunger because of the price hike caused by the War in Ukraine. Furthermore, the report added that there was a possibility of a lack of rain this March which could cause a drought. Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia are currently experiencing the driest weather in the last 40 years. Oxfam's International Executive Director Gabriela Bucher said: "Areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and beyond are experiencing an unfolding full-scale catastrophe. Even if the rains do arrive this month, full recovery will be near impossible unless urgent action is taken today."

Southeast Asia

On 22 March, a report by the *BBC* mentioned how the Southeast Asian region would feel an "economic pinch" due to the war in Ukraine. Store owners have been facing a crisis with supplies as food and drink stocks from across Eastern Europe have halted. A Russian supermarket owner in Singapore mentioned: "Our products from Ukrainian suppliers will likely stop," However, she said, she would eventually diversify her supply chain to avoid delays in shipments due to the war.

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War in Ukraine: Day 25

War on the ground:

[President address in Israel Parliament, Switzerland anti-war protests and targeted attacks in Mariupol](#)

Zelenskyy's address

On 20 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the Israeli Ministers in Israel Parliament. In his speech, he highlighted three points. First, asking the parliament to see it as a full-scale world war and not as a military operation. Second, to support Ukrainians, supply the best weapons, air defence, and third, he questioned the "neutrality of Israel" in the invasion. He also asked why the sanctions have not been levied on Russia by Israel.

On Mariupol, Zelenskyy accused Russia for the continued bombing of the city. So far, the airstrikes and shelling have hit several civilians 'spaces such as residences, hospitals, and theatres, killing more than 2400 people.

On 20 March, Zelenskyy declared the ban on 11 pro-Russian parties under martial law as they were accused of being in relations with Russia. The parties include "Opposition Bloc, Party of Sharia, Ours, Left Opposition, Union of Left Forces, State, Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialist party Ukraine, Socialists, and Vladimir Saldo Bloc."

On 20 March, Zelenskyy also addressed an anti-war protest outside the Swiss Parliament in Bern. He said: "Ukrainians feel what it is when cities are destroyed. They are being destroyed on the orders of people who live in European, in beautiful Swiss towns, who enjoy property in your cities. It would really be good to strip them of this privilege." He urged for the confiscation funds in Swiss banks of those involved in instigating the war. Although not being a member of the EU, Switzerland has sanctioned Russia equally.

Ukraine's military advance

On 20 March, Ukraine's General Staff claimed that first Naval Officer Andrei Paly, Deputy Commander of Russia's Black Sea fleet, was killed in the fighting. The same was confirmed by the secretary of the Nakhimov naval college, Konstantin Tsarenko. Ukraine's military has also stated to have killed 15,000 Russian troops in the last three weeks. Apart from the killing, it also updated on the destruction of Russia's Kostroma 331st Guards Airborne Regiment, Russian military hardware, 476 tanks, 200 jets, drones, and 1487 personnel haulers. The Military also observed that, instead of launching fresh attacks, the Russian military was replacing its lost and damaged equipment. It also claimed to have stopped the "Russian offensive" in Izyum located east.

Continuing attacks and evacuation

On 20 March, Russian troops continued to advance in various locations from the port city of Mariupol, airstrike southeastern

Ukrainian city Mykolaiv to eastern Ukraine town Kreminna. In particular, a school that sheltered 400 people and the biggest iron and steelworks factory in Mariupol was stricken by Russia, causing many casualties. The steel plant was considered to be the key element for Mariupol. Russia aims to capture Mariupol because it serves as an access corridor to the eastern Ukraine Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Apart from the strikes on Mariupol, 4000 to 4500 residents have been moved out to farther places by Russia. According to one of the Ukrainians, Russians have begun to walk in the basements where people are found to be sheltering and being forcefully moved. Although Russia initially denied the claim on moving civilians outside Ukraine, the Defence Ministry later confirmed that the individuals were evacuated by the Russian government. It said the people were moved out upon their wish to "escape to Russia."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 20 March, TASS reported that people who have moved into Russia had crossed 335,000. The security officials have said that people from Donetsk, Lugansk and Ukraine regions have moved into Russia, out of which 111,000 are reported to be Russian, DPR and LPR citizens. Russian forces reported having brought down protests in many Ukrainian cities under control in Enerhodar.

On 20 March, Russia launched a hypersonic missile for the second time to fuel depot in Ukraine. Previously the underground military base of Ukraine was targeted using advanced weaponry. Russian Defence Ministry confirmed the attack on the fuel storage and said that the missile could go 2,000kms, targeting at long range. It also claimed to have killed dozens of mercenaries through missile strikes. According to a spokesperson from the ministry: "High-precision air-launched missiles struck at the training centre for special operations forces of the Ukrainian armed forces, where foreign mercenaries who arrived in Ukraine were based."

On 20 March, Russia's Emergencies Ministry said that 250 humanitarian cargoes were

supplied to Ukraine and Donbass. The spokesperson of the Ministry said: "On March 20, a convoy of 24 heavy-duty trucks from the Russian emergencies ministry's Noginsk and Don rescue centres delivered another batch of some 250 tonnes of humanitarian cargoes, which included food products and articles of daily necessity, to Donbass and Ukraine."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

Belarus

On 20 March, a report by Radio Free Europe mentioned how Belarusian railway workers had cut off railway lines with Ukraine so that Russians could not send supplies from Belarus to its campaign against Kyiv. Ukraine's Director of the Ukrzaliznytsya state railroad, Oleksandr Kamyshin, said: "At the present moment, I can say that there is no railway connection between Ukraine and Belarus. I cannot discuss details, but I am grateful to Belarus's railway workers for what they are doing." He also called Belarus's railway workers honest people and noted that their actions deter Russia from sending military equipment through trains.

Germany

On 20 March, a concert was held in Berlin to show the people's solidarity with Ukraine. Many performers wore shades of blue and yellow, which are the Ukrainian flag's colors. The concert was held near Brandenburg Gate, which symbolized a divided Germany in the Cold war. Ten thousand people were said to have attended the concert, waving Ukrainian flags or holding banners that opposed the Russian invasion.

The US

On 20 March, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin mentioned a "significant reaction" from Washington if Russia resorted to chemical or biological weapons attack on Ukraine. He further talked about how Russia's advance had been stalled in other major cities. However, as reported by Deutsche Welle: "He also would not confirm or dispute whether Russia used hypersonic weapons in the war but added they have not been a game-changer." He further assured that the US and the allies would help create conditions for Ukraine to receive similar

equipment like the Russian-made S-300 surface-to-air missile systems to defend itself from the superior Russian air force.

The UK

On 20 March, with the influx of Ukrainian refugees increasing rapidly, the Isle of Man came up with a scheme to host refugees. Under the scheme, people of the Isle of Man have to commit to offering accommodation for at least six months. Cabinet Office Minister Kate Lord-Brennan said: "We have decided to create our own scheme instead of following the UK approach, to better meet the needs of our community." The government would ensure checks of the properties are appropriate and safe for both the hosts and the guests. However, the decision to provide financial assistance to hosts is still under consideration.

The Vatican

On 20 March, Pope Francis appealed to Russia to end its atrocities in Ukraine. At St Peter's Square, he said: "...there is no justification for this! I plead with all those involved in the international community to truly commit to ending this abhorrent war." Pope Francis also talked about his visit to the Bambino Gesù Pediatric Hospital on 19 March, where he saw children affected by the war receiving treatment. He then urged the Europeans to be more generous and welcome the Ukrainian refugees wholeheartedly.

Switzerland

On 20 March, Switzerland's President Ignazio Cassis extended an offer to organize talks between Ukraine and Russia. Cassis mentioned: "It's a small country with a strong commitment to freedom. It is ready to play the role of a mediator behind the scenes or host negotiations." Cassis had earlier stressed on the idea that Switzerland was a neutral country, and it "...combines neutrality with a humanitarian tradition."

NATO

On 20 March, the first units of the Patriot air defence systems from NATO partner countries arrived in Slovakia. Slovakia's Defence Minister Jaroslav Nad stated that the systems would be set up at the Sliac airport. As a part of NATO, Germany and

Dutch soldiers would operate them to strengthen air defences in Eastern Europe further. However, Slovakia's Russian-made S-300s would not be replaced, and the new defence systems were just an addition.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Australia

On 20 March, Australia announced to step up its support to Ukraine and committed 70,000 tonnes of thermal coal for the country. In addition, Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government said they would offer USD 21 million for military support and another USD 30 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Furthermore, Canberra announced to impose a ban on exporting alumina and aluminium ores to Russia.

Japan and Cambodia

On 20 March, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen urged Russia to immediately end the war in Ukraine. The two leaders condemned Russia's aggression in Ukraine and said it was "A grave breach of the United Nations Charter." A joint statement read: "...recognised that this aggression jeopardises the foundation of international order which does not accept any unilateral change of the internationally recognised borders by force." Hun Sen cited Cambodia's civil war of 1970-1991 and mentioned how a war could only end by peaceful means and not by war.

China

On 20 March, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that Beijing stood on the right side of history concerning the crisis in Ukraine. Wang said: "China will never accept any external coercion or pressure, and opposes any unfounded accusations and suspicions against China." His comments were a response to US President Joe Biden's warning on consequences if China supplied military equipment to Russia. Wang reiterated: "We have always stood for maintaining peace and opposing war."

UNHCR

On 20 March, the UNHRC said about 10 million people had now fled Ukraine or were

internally displaced due to the war. UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said: "Among the responsibilities of those who wage war, everywhere in the world, is the suffering inflicted on civilians who are forced to flee their homes." Furthermore, 90 per cent of the people who have fled were women and children. At the same time, men aged 18-60 could not leave Ukraine due to the imposition of martial law.

The Anonymous

On 20 March, the Anonymous hacktivist collective said they had been attacking Moscow with cyber-attacks since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. A recent hack interrupted Russian TV networks with images and clips of bombs exploding in Ukraine and soldiers talking about the horrors of war. The group also said: "We will intensify the attacks on the Kremlin if nothing is done to restore peace in Ukraine." In addition, the collective has been using DDoS attacks that overwhelm a server and temporarily take it offline.

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War in Ukraine: Day 24

War on the ground:

Russian troops killed, Strike in Mykolaiv 14,000 Russian troops killed

On 19 March, Ukraine's general staff claimed to have killed over 14,000 Russian troops since Moscow's invasion. This comes as Ukrainian forces also claimed to have killed a fifth Russian general who commanded the 8th guards combined army. Lieutenant General Andrei Mordvichev is said to have been killed by Ukrainian forces in the southern part of Ukraine. However, *BBC* suggested that the claims could not be independently verified.

Access to the Sea of Azov temporarily lost

On 19 March, Ukraine's Defence Ministry said it had lost temporary access to the sea of Azov as Russian forces had tightened their grip around the port of Mariupol. Ukraine's Defence Ministry stated: "The occupiers have partially succeeded in the Donetsk operational district, temporarily depriving Ukraine of access to the Sea of Azov."

Mariupol is a strategic point for advancing Russian forces as it is located near Crimea on

the west and the Donetsk region on the east. Nevertheless, the Ministry has not mentioned if it has regained access to the sea.

Russian saboteurs detained

On 19 March, Ukrainian forces said they detained 127 saboteurs and 14 infiltration groups in Kyiv trying to infiltrate the capital. The Ukrainian forces were successful as they set up roadblocks and checkpoints to capture the pro-Russian members. As reported by *BBC*: "They are the basis of fortifications, engineering barriers, checkpoints for vehicles and people, and of the construction of other systems, including those for live-fire."

Impact of the war

On 19 March, Ukraine's Interior Minister Denys Monastyrsky talked about the mines placed by the Russian forces in Ukraine. He said: "We won't be able to remove the mines from all that territory, so I asked our international partners and colleagues from the European Union and the United States to prepare groups of experts to determine the areas of combat and facilities that came under shelling." Denys Monastyrsky further mentioned that it would take years to defuse all of the unexploded Russian ordinances.

Russian strike on Mykolaiv base

On 18 March, Russia launched missiles from the Kherson region to the Mykolaiv base. Russian forces recently occupied Kherson. The death toll was not confirmed, but at least 80 bodies were pulled out of the rubble. As reported by *BBC*: "Mykolaiv Mayor Oleksandr Senkevich has said there was no time to sound air raid sirens before the raid as missiles were launched from the nearby Kherson region, to the south-east."

Zelensky's call for peace talks

On 19 March, on a video, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy appealed for talks with the Kremlin. Zelenskyy said: "This is the time to meet, to talk, time for renewing territorial integrity and fairness for Ukraine...Otherwise, Russia's losses will be such that several generations will not recover." Zelenskyy's remarks came as Russia continued its offensive in Ukraine and intense fighting continued in Mariupol.

**The Moscow View:
Claims by Russia**

Mariupol breached

On 19 March, Russia's Defence Ministry stated that it had entered the city of Mariupol, this was followed by Zelenskyy appealing for a new round of talks with Russia. The Ministry released a statement: "In Mariupol, units of the Donetsk People's Republic, with the support of the Russian armed forces, are squeezing the encirclement and fighting against nationalists in the city centre." This came as a breakthrough for the Russian forces as they had been shelling the city for days.

Use of hypersonic missiles

On 19 March, Russia used its Kinzhal hypersonic missiles for the first time in Ukraine. The missiles were targeted to destroy a weapons storage site. Russia had never admitted using high-precision weapons in combat until now. The Russian Defence Ministry said: "The Kinzhal aviation missile system with hypersonic aeroballistic missiles destroyed a large underground warehouse containing missiles and aviation ammunition in the village of Deliatyn in the Ivano-Frankivsk region." The Kinzhal or dagger is a missile that flies at ten times the speed of sound, deterring it from being targeted by Ukraine's air defence systems.

Progress in talks

On 19 March, Russia claimed that the talks recently held showed progress in the negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. The two countries discussed a proposal for Ukraine to become a neutral state. Earlier, the Kremlin talked about Ukraine becoming a neutral state like Sweden or Austria. Russia's lead negotiator Vladimir Medinsky said: "The topic of neutral status and Ukraine's non-accession to NATO is one of the key points of the talks, this is the point on which the parties brought their positions as close as possible." However, there were issues when Ukraine discussed security guarantees.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the US of restraining Kyiv from agreeing to Russia's demands. He said: "It is constantly felt that the Ukrainian delegation is being held by the hand, most

likely by the Americans, not allowing them to agree to the demands that I think are absolutely minimal." However, Lavrov did not provide any evidence to back these statements.

Responding to Biden's comments

On 18 March, Russian Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov mentioned US President Joe Biden's remarks about Putin. Peskov said: "Bearing in mind Mr. Biden's irritability, fatigue and forgetfulness, which eventually results in aggressive statements, we will possibly prefer to refrain from making any strong comments so as not to trigger more aggression." This came after Biden had claimed Putin was a murderous dictator, pure thug, and he waged an immoral war against the people of Ukraine.

West's information war

On 18 March, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov mentioned the West's strategy to wage an information war against Russia. He said: "Substitution of notions often takes place.... It's a war. It's a war that involves methods of information terrorism. There is no doubt about this." Lavrov further added that the US and UK media controlled the global information field. He further claimed that there was nothing called independent Western media and that censorship continued in these countries on a large scale.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 19 March, a well-known think tank in the US, the Institute for the Study of War has provided an analysis on the Russian invasion. It stated how Russia uses force to lay a strict administration along with the police regime, but also through distribution of food to the public, to portray a good image. In terms of Ukraine, the think found that the Ukrainian forces through counterattacks have safeguarded the southern city of Mykolaiv and have stopped the advancing of troops in Kharkiv. Another think tank, the Center for Global Development warned that the hike in the price of global food and oil will push more than 40 million in the world into "extreme poverty."

Poland

On 19 March, Poland Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki stressed on the EU to impose a full ban blocking both sea and land trade with Russia. He said: "Fully cutting off Russia's trade would further force Russia to consider whether it would be better to stop this cruel war." Although the EU has sanctioned Russia in luxury goods, steel and energy sectors, Poland has been on the front in pressurising the EU to levy stricter sanctions.

The UK

On 19 March, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson pointed out strongly that Russia had launched the war out of fear of Ukraine gaining freedom and fear of having a democratic nation as its neighbour. He said that Putin will not stop with Ukraine invasion and winning Ukraine would mean the end of freedom to Georgia and Moldova. Johnson recommended bold steps against Russia and recommended cutting down the dependency on oil and gas.

On 19 March, the UK Ministry of Defence reported the change in Russia's strategy in war. It said that due to staunch resistance from Ukraine, Russia has been pushed to differ from its "operational approach" and has opted for the "strategy of attrition." The change has led to more civilian deaths, damage of Ukraine infrastructure and deepened the humanitarian crisis.

On 19 March, with the ICC in process of investigating Putin for the accused war crimes, the Former British Prime Minister signed a petition calling for new international tribunal to interrogate Putin based on "Nuremberg trials." He said through the formation of a tribunal, any loophole in international law will be closed for Putin, he also pointed out the crimes carried out by Russia against International law. The crimes were, the breaking of humanitarian ceasefire promises and "nuclear blackmail."

Ireland

On 19 March, Ireland's Foreign Minister said that bringing back Iran into the nuclear deal will help ease the oil prices. With rising oil prices due to sanctions on Russia, Iran

entering the deal would mean an alternative to supply oil to the global market. As the UK and the EU look out to cut down dependency on Russian oil, Iran can be a better exchange.

The Global Fallout: International implications of the Ukraine war

MNCs

On 19 March, Bosch, one of Europe's top car-parts manufacturers announced the decision to stop production in Russia. The withdrawal comes as the company faces similar challenges like other MNCs, the problem of supply chain disruption. The main reason behind the choice is Ukraine's claim on products supplied by Bosch being used in Russian infantry vehicles. Although Germany has reasoned it as long-existing business between Europe and Russia, an investigation has been launched to check whether it is violating the sanctions imposed by the EU.

UN

On 19 March, the UN reported the count of total civilians killed so far in the war. It estimated 847 civilians, which included 64 children to be killed since 24 February. Apart from the deaths, close to 1400 have been injured due to shelling and airstrikes as said by the UN human rights office (OHCHR). According to OHCHR: "Most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area, including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes."

WFP

On 19 March, the World Food Programme (WFP) of the UN failed to reach the people stuck in the city of Mariupol. It is due to Russian troops which have surrounded the city and the truck drivers have refused to drive risking their lives. WFP's emergency coordinator, Jakob Kern commented that Russia's block to the entry of food supplies is: "unacceptable in the 21st century."

From Japan

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi, he remarked that the foundations of the international order has shuffled due to the Russian invasion. So far Japan has levied

many sanctions on Russian individuals and organizations, while India is yet to condemn Russia. Kishida said: "We (Kishida and Modi) confirmed any unilateral change to the status quo by force cannot be forgiven in any region, and it is necessary to seek peaceful resolutions of disputes based on international law."

China

On 19 March, Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng commented on the sanctions levied by the West on Russia as "Outrageous." He also asked the NATO not to advance further in the east of Europe to prevent triggering Russia. China has opposed sanctions put on Russia but has not condemned the invasion, it has opposed the sanctions strongly till now. Le Yucheng said: "History has proven time and again that sanctions cannot solve problems. Sanctions will only harm ordinary people, impact the economic and financial system... and worsen the global economy."

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War in Ukraine: Day 23

War on the ground:
President address in the German parliament, continuing attacks

Zelenskyy's address

On 18 March, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his address to German Lawmakers highlighted three key points. One, divided stance of Germany from Europe on Ukraine in terms of energy policy and business interests. Which contributes for the differed stance. Two, bringing back the cold war events in west Berlin, urged for airlift and no-fly zone to guard the country. Three, Germany's responsibility to counter back the Nazi crimes happening in Ukraine. He urged Germany to bring down the difference wall built between both countries. Zelenskyy said: "We see that the views of the Germans are changing, and this is very important. We see Germany looking for a new path." He demanded: "Dear Mr Scholz, tear down this wall."

Ukraine Military advance

On 18 March, Ukraine's Military Intelligence claimed the arrival of 150 Syrian troops into Russia on 17 March. It estimates 40,000 Syrians to have signed up to join Russian military with a salary of USD 15 per month.

On 18 March, in the report released by Ukraine military, it claimed of destroying seven aircrafts, one helicopter, UAV drones and wing missiles of Russia. It also said: "In certain temporarily occupied territories, Russian occupiers are trying to create a demonstrative positive image of themselves by distributing food items to civilian population."

Continuing attacks and evacuation

On 18 March, Mariupol is becoming the centre for attacks and suffering of people due to continuing rapid attacks by Russia. The local official reported that 90 per cent of the southern port city was destroyed including its historic white theatre and many women, children who were sheltering have rescued out from wreckage. In the total people remaining in Mariupol, only 30,000 have been evacuated, the rest close to 350,000 are still reported to be stuck under the radar of Russia. On the same, Zelenskyy

alleged Russia for halting the humanitarian corridors in Mariupol through attacks, he assured that 35,000 people were rescued from the white theatre. With growing attacks and challenges in evacuation, Zelenskyy promised not to stop the efforts for Ukraine in becoming the member of the EU. Similarly, in talks with Zelenskyy, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, vowed to speed the process of joining Ukraine into the EU.

On 18 March, Lviv city Mayor confirmed the strike on the aircraft maintenance facility. Russian missiles targeted the aircraft repair plant in Lviv, situated in the western Ukraine. The city Lviv is so far the farthest attacked region in the West, but it serves as important point for evacuation and fleeing. Apart from Lviv, eastern city of Kharkiv and Kramatorsk city in south were also attacked with missiles injuring, rescue workers, civilians close to 25.

On 18 March, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said about the talks with the EU's Foreign Policy Chief on imposing the next package of EU sanctions on Russia. So far EU has levied sanctions on energy sector, luxury goods, Swift banking system, assets in Russian Central Bank and oligarchs.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 18 March, Russia held a concert marking its eighth anniversary of annexation of Crimea at the Luzhniki stadium. The event was portrayed to show Russia's love for its motherland and as per reports 200,000 people were present in the stadium. State workers, teachers were asked to take part and held the signs of "Crimean Spring." President Putin addressed the crowd, praising the Russian unity, military and also mentioned that Russian troops present in eastern Ukraine were protecting people from genocide. Putin said: "When needed, they shield each other from bullets with their bodies like brothers. Such unity we have not had for a long time." Apart from this, the symbol "Z" which was seen in the military troops of Russia, emerged as symbol of support amongst those in the stadium and children.

On 18 March, a separatist official in eastern Ukraine announced Russia's move of adopting no-fly zone in Ukraine's Donbas region. Tass reported: "The Krasnodar airport confirmed the extension of the closure of airports in southern Russia until 3.45am Moscow time on 26 March."

On 18 March, President Vladimir Putin in a phone call with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz gave remarks on the ongoing peace talks. He said that Russia was keen in continuing the talks to negotiate with Ukraine, but Ukraine was trying to halt. He also referred to increasing war crimes committed by Ukrainian Army in the eastern cities of Donetsk and Makiivka. He criticised the West for negating the war crimes and also mentioned that Russian army was doing everything to prevent killing of civilians. The call with French President Emmanuel Macron also has similar talks, where Putin promised to protect the lives of the civilians and provide safe route for evacuation.

On 17 March, Putin dialled to Turkish President and listed down five demands to reach peace deal with Ukraine. First, Ukraine to remain neutral and not make efforts to join NATO. Second, disarmament of Ukraine to ensure it is not threat to Russia in future. Third, Protection of Russian language inside Ukraine, a process known as de-Nazification. Fourth, in-person negotiations with President Zelenskyy before signing of the agreement.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe The US

On 18 March, US President Joe Biden said he would speak to China's President Xi Jinping on a video call later in the day. This would be the first phone call since the video summit of November 2021. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said: "an opportunity for President Biden to assess where President Xi stands." In addition, Biden said he would warn Xi of the ramifications of helping Russia from Western sanctions. This would also be the first official discussion of the two leaders since the war broke out.

Germany

On 18 March, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin on a telephonic call. He stressed on the humanitarian situation and called for a ceasefire in Ukraine. He further talked about the deteriorating situation and suggested a diplomatic solution for the war.

France
On 18 March, French government Spokesperson Gabriel Attal mentioned the Western sanctions against Russia and their impact on Moscow. However, he said, the sanctions were now showing a "real impact" and added: "We hope these sanctions will force [Russian president] Vladimir Putin to change his plans."

Poland

On 18 March, as the refugee crisis in Poland increased, the country's business community stepped up to help out the Ukrainians. Mariana Zlahodniuk, a marketing and business advisor from Ukraine settled in Poland, shared her experiences at the border. She said: "Bakers sell me bread below-market prices, firms bring in the food for free, companies offer free transportation and drivers. It is an extraordinary effort." Polish businesses mobilized their support and were prepared to help Ukrainians in the long run.

On the same day, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawieck said that Poland would formally submit a proposal for a peacekeeping force in Ukraine at the next NATO summit. His announcement came as Poland's ruling party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski mentioned about it on his visit to Kyiv. Kaczynski had stated that Poland stood with Ukraine and that it was necessary to have a peace mission.

Norway

On 18 March, Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said the country was prepared to receive around 100,000 refugees from Ukraine. Stoere said it would undoubtedly receive 30,000 refugees. However, they were preparing in advance to receive three times that number. He said: "That is not the most probable outcome but we must have plans and be prepared because it could happen." So far, Norway has received only 2,000

refugees, but the government said an additional 5,250 people were coming to the country.

The UK

On 18 March, the UK government launched an inquiry into the hoax calls received by UK Defence Minister Ben Wallace and Home Secretary Priti Patel. The imposter claimed to be Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and was able to get through to Wallace. The issue has raised serious security concerns, and an immediate inquiry was launched. Home Office Minister Holly Lynch said: "For individuals to be able to fraudulently gain access to two of the most senior government ministers with responsibilities for our national defence is worrying."

On the same day, the UK government announced the revocation of RT's licence. RT is a Russian state-backed news channel. UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said: "Putin's polluting propaganda machine...I welcome Ofcom's decision and it is right that our independent regulator has taken action against RT." Dorries added that the channel cast victims as the aggressors and the actual brutality of the Russians was not depicted on the screens.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Australia

On 18 March, across the cities of Australia, Ukrainians and Russians unitedly protested against the war in Ukraine. The demonstrators said the war waged by Russia was Putin's war. As reported by Al Jazeera: "The protests are for networking, for organising, deciding what to do, allocating people to different directions but also for lifting one another's spirits." Many of the demonstrators were concerned about their relatives and family back in Ukraine.

On the same day, the Australian government announced sanctions on two Russian oligarchs linked to the mining industry. Foreign Minister Marise Payne said: "Australia has now added two billionaires with links to business interests in Australia, Oleg Deripaska, and Viktor Vekselberg."

Payne added that Australia was closely working with international partners to increase pressure on Russia by sanctioning oligarchs. He further said Australia's actions were "in protest of Moscow's illegal, indefensible war against Ukraine."

South Africa

On 18 March, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa accused NATO of the war in Ukraine. He further said he would resist the West's calls to condemn Russia. He said: "The war could have been avoided if NATO had heeded the warnings from amongst its own leaders and officials over the years that its eastward expansion would lead to greater, not less, instability in the region." He referred to Russia's justification of the special operation in Ukraine.

Africa

On 18 March, the US Ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, called out African states for their neutral position on the war in Ukraine. Earlier, at the UN General Assembly voting, 17 states abstained from voting while eight did not vote at all. She further said that there could be no neutral ground during a crisis and added that this was not a Cold War competition. She also mentioned that the US would support South Africa's mediation offer between Ukraine and Russia.

Western Firms

On 18 March, the BBC reported about a few Western firms who were not able to withdraw from Russia due to legal arrangements. Burger King stated that it would not be able to close its 800 stores as the franchise partners refused their closure. Restaurant Brands International president David Shear said: "We contacted the main operator of the business and demanded the suspension of Burger King restaurant operations in Russia...He has refused to do so."

Western Banks

On 18 March, Western banks' withdrawal from Russia caused a lot of complications as they now face risk-ridden retreat with anxious clients and staff. This comes as the West imposed sanctions on Russia, and the banks suspect them to remain long-term. As reported by Reuters, "Citigroup (CN),

JPMorgan (JPM.N) and Goldman Sachs (GS.N) have committed to helping clients with the complex task of unwinding their Russian operations, whilst at the same time supporting the relocation of staff who wish to leave."

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War in Ukraine: Day 22

War on the ground:

Fourth Russian General killed

On 17 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy mentioned the death of another Russian General. This is the fourth Russian General to be killed in Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Gen Mityaev was killed near Mariupol. As Ukraine's military is outnumbered, its military intelligence team has been dedicated to targeting the Russian officer class to boost their own morale. On the same day, Ukraine handed over nine captured Russian soldiers as an exchange to secure the Mayor of the city of Melitopol.

Also, on 17 March, Zelenskyy stated that negotiations between Ukraine and Russia were 'Fairly difficult'. His comments came as there have been multiple meetings with no decisive outcome. He further said: "First of all, negotiations are still in progress. The negotiations are fairly difficult...any war could be finished at the table of negotiations."

Attack on a theatre in Mariupol

On 17 March, Deputy Mayor Sergei Orlov mentioned that the theatre was being used as a refugee centre hosting 1,000 to 1,200 people. Russian forces had bombed the theatre as they besieged the southern city of Mariupol. Mariupol's city council said the troops had "plane dropped a bomb on a building where hundreds of peaceful Mariupol residents were hiding." The Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and the city Council accused Russia of a war crime as the word children were marked on the ground near the building to deter jets targeting the building.

Zelenskyy's call on Germany

On 17 March, Zelenskyy thanked Germany for its support but mentioned a new Berlin

wall being built. Zelenskyy's wall was regarding German energy policy and business interests that had created that wall, BBC reported: "The controversial, now cancelled, Russian-German gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 was "cement for that new wall" dividing Europe, he said. Germany's continued reluctance to allow Ukraine into the European Union was "another brick" in that new wall."

The Moscow View:

Claims by Russia

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman's response on targeting the civilian population

On 17 March, Moscow claimed that the special military operations were not aimed at destabilising Ukraine's statehood. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said: "...this operation is not targeted at the civilian population. It does not pursue the aim of seizing the country's territory, ruining its statehood, or ousting the current president. We keep saying this again and again." Zakharova accused the Western media of forming a distorted picture of the events and called them a propaganda tool.

Also, on 17 March, as Russian and Ukrainian negotiators were scheduled to talk later, Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said: "I don't know if they are already underway but they are expected [to take place] on various tracks." Peskov said the Ukrainian negotiators were not enthusiastic and further mentioned: "Our delegation, led by [Presidential Aide Vladimir] Medinsky, maintains contact with experts and government agencies, it's ready to work around the clock, it has made its willingness clear....."

On the same day, Russia's Finance Ministry stated it closely watched the bond payments. The Ministry said: "A payment order for the payment of coupon income on the Russian Federation's external bond loans ... in the total amount of \$117.2 million ... was sent to a foreign correspondent bank on 14 March 2022 and has been executed." The government said the payment was paid in USD and added that Russia did not face any issues in paying its debts.

Dmitry Medvedev's statements

On 17 March, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev talked about how the collective West did not want Russia to become a strong power again, which could work towards its self-interests and protect its citizens. He said: "They have an urgent need to corner our country, bring it to its knees and reform it based on the Anglo-Saxon world's blueprints, to make it weak and obedient, or better yet, to tear it to pieces." However, Medvedev further stated that Russia was now strong enough to "...put all of its brazen enemies in their place."

On the same day, Medvedev also dismissed the speculations that Russian President Vladimir Putin would visit the zone of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine. He said: "No plans for any such trips...All will take place in due time." A journalist further asked if Putin would visit the frontline the way Joseph Stalin did during World War II in 1943; Medvedev replied: "After all, these are different situations."

Responding to the ICJ ruling asking Russia to suspend Ukraine offensive

Also, on 17 March, the Kremlin rejected the ruling by the International Court of Justice as it ordered Russia to "immediately suspend" its offensive on Ukraine. As reported by The Moscow Times, "Peskov echoed Moscow's stance during hearings earlier this month that the ICJ has no jurisdiction because Kyiv's request fell outside the 1948 Genocide Convention on which it based the case." However, the ICJ stated that it had jurisdiction in the case, and it argued that Moscow had falsely created allegations about genocide in Ukraine's Donbas region.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 17 March, the US launched an international task force that will target the Russian Oligarchs and seize their assets. This task force includes Australia, the UK, Canada, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and the European Commission. According to the US Treasury Department: "In the last three weeks alone, information provided by US law enforcement to foreign partners has

helped detain several vessels controlled by sanctioned individuals and entities." The seized ship value goes to hundreds of millions of dollars.

On 17 March, US President Joe Biden and Ireland's Prime Minister Micheal Martin held a virtual call to discuss the aid provided to Ukraine and plan on furthering the cost on Russia for invading Ukraine.

NATO

On 17 March, in a news conference, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz addressed the reporters on Russia's war in Ukraine. He appreciated the efforts of the Kyiv forces and Germany's action in providing military and humanitarian support to Ukraine. Stoltenberg said: "NATO has a responsibility to prevent this war from escalating further, we cannot take peace and security for granted."

Poland

On 17 March, on the same line as Biden, the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister agreed on characterizing the Russian leader as a "war criminal." He said: "The Kremlin believed the government of Ukraine will evaporate somehow. That was not the case. Ukrainians are very brave defending their land and their values, their democracy, the country they built, they've been building for the last 30 years. So now Mr Putin decided to hit civilian infrastructure."

The UK

On 17 March, the UK's Ministry of Defence revealed that Russia's military is opting for older weapons with lesser precision to cause casualties. Another prediction kept forward by the Ministry was that Russia's usage of older weapons is not by choice but because of its failure to strengthen its military. Apart from this, the UK Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, confirmed the deployment of the Sky Sabre missile system and 100 troops in Poland for three months. The decision comes as NATO further to securitize its eastern front due to recent Russian military advancement into the West of Ukraine. According to the UK government, Sky Sabre is "a state-of-the-art air defence system" which can hit a tennis ball at the speed of

sound. With the UK deploying its air-defence systems, Poland will be able to protect itself from missiles and bombs launched by Russia.

The EU

On 17 March, European Space Agency (ESA) ended the joint Mars programme with the Russian space agency, Roscosmos. The decision comes in support of Ukraine, and with the announcement, the operations on the ExoMars rover mission will remain an impossibility. ESA said: "While recognising the impact on scientific exploration of space, Esa is fully aligned with the sanctions imposed on Russia by its member states."

The humanitarian crisis: The refugee challenge

On 17 March, continued shelling by Russia in Mariupol has forced more than 30,000 people to flee away Ukraine. As estimated, 1.95 million people have left Ukraine and moved into Poland since the war. On the same, Hungary's Prime Minister, Victor Orban, has also expressed fear of expecting 900,000 refugees to flood into the country.

Apart from Poland and Hungary, 460,000 refugees have drifted into Romania. The refugees have been observed to use the Black Sea Coast to escape from Russia and move into other European countries. Due to this, the Black Sea passage has gained importance as it serves as a strategic point for refugees to escape.

On 17 March, Belgium royals King Philippe and Queen Mathilde have confirmed using the two houses owned by the Royal Trust to host three Ukrainian families. As far as Belgium is concerned, close to 10,000 Ukrainians have registered for international protection and permit to work for one year. The Authorities expect 200,000 Ukrainians to reach Belgium.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

UNSC

On 17 March, UNSC announced its plans to hold an emergency meeting to address the rising humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The meeting will include, the US, Britain, France,

Ireland, Norway and Albania. The UN agency, UNESCO, has come forward to supply protective equipment to Ukrainian Journalists to safeguard them from conflict zones. According to the director-general of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay: "Every day, journalists and media workers are risking their lives in Ukraine to provide life-saving information to local populations and inform the world of the reality of this war. We are determined to support and protect them in every way possible."

ICJ

On 17 March, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) passed the order asking Russia to stop its military attacks on Ukraine. It urged for immediate suspension of military activities in Ukraine, and President Zelenskyy claimed the judgement to be a victory.

OECD

On 17 March, OECD warned that the war between Ukraine and Russia would cut down the global economic growth rate by one per cent. It predicts that the effect of war can push Russia into a "deep recession." The impact of the war raises concerns, as both countries are responsible for producing raw materials. Hence with the products becoming unavailable, the prices easily shoot up, affecting the global economic growth.

India

On 17 March, India's Reliance Industries Ltd. Will likely shift its fuel imports from Russia to the Middle East and the US. It is done to avoid being charged under Western sanctions.

Panama

On 16 March, Panama's Maritime Authority reported that three of its flagged ships were hit by Russian missiles in the Black Sea. It did not report any casualties but the material was damaged.

Canada

The price of the commodities has increased due to Russia's invasion, thereby pushing the inflation rate close to six per cent. This has made the central bank increase the interest rate further.

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War in Ukraine: Day 21

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy’s address to the US Congress, Attacks in Kyiv, and a derailed evacuation Ukraine President addresses the US Congress

On 16 March, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the US Congress. In the address, he highlighted three key points. One, he urged on sanctioning of politicians and requested the American companies to withdraw business from Russia. He expressed his gratitude for US President Joe Biden’s aid supply to Ukraine. Two, he

brought back the incidents of Pearl Harbour and 9/11, comparing the situation with that of Ukraine’s present day. He also emphasized on jet fighters and “advanced air defence systems.” Three, he appealed to President Joe Biden to show up as leader of the world and fight for Europe. He said: “Peace in your country no longer depends only on you and your people. President Biden, you are the leader of your nation. I wish you to be the leader of the world. Being the leader of the world means being the leader of peace.”

Apart from the address, Zelenskyy tweeted announcing the linking of the European electricity grid with Ukraine to counter the power outage due to Russian shelling. He also called out the senior Russian officials to quit their post and to stand against the invasion of Ukraine. He said: “If you remain in office, if you do not oppose the war, the international community will deprive you of everything...Everything you have earned over the years. This is already being done.”

Ukraine-Russia Talks

On 16 March, Advisor to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy rejected the offer made by Russia on adopting “Austrian style” neutrality. The negotiator of the process said that the model should be in terms of Ukraine with “verified security guarantees.” On the other side, the Kremlin spokesperson expressed interest to sign a peace deal to hold an army and navy along the borders of Austria and Sweden.

Ukraine’s military advance

On 16 March, Ukraine’s armed forces released a report on launching attacks on Russian groups involved in occupying territories. The report stated that, despite Russia targeting bombs at populated cities, the troops have failed to go further in cities Donetsk, Luhansk and Mykolaiv. Similarly, UK Defence Ministry said: “..it is likely Russia is struggling to conduct offensive operations in the face of sustained Ukraine resistance.” Kyiv’s Interior Minister announced the killing of the fourth Russian General in the fight at Mariupol, a similar announcement was made by President Zelenskyy on death of another Russian

General. Till now Russia has engaged 20 Major Generals in mission in Ukraine.

Attacks continue

On 16 March, the Ukraine armed forces announced the rockets launched by Russia, while a group of civilians were being moved from Zaporizhzhya. They reported firing of BM-21 Grad multiple launch rocket system on civilians at 13:30 GMT.

As of 16 March, Russian troops have advanced their attacks to Kyiv, Mariupol, and Kharkiv. Although Russia claimed to have captured the Kherson region and Odesa, there have been no ground developments.

On 16 March, a 35-hour curfew was declared in Kyiv. While the three Prime Ministers met in Ukraine, Russia continued shelling Ukrainian cities through its artillery and warplanes.

According to recent reports, a 12-storey suburban building in Kyiv was targeted, injuring two and resulting in evacuation of 35 people from the block. Apart from these, a series of explosions were recorded in Odesa and Zaporizhzhia. In Mariupol, close to 400 patients along with doctors have been held in capture in hospital. With the attacks furthering in Mariupol, the living possibility has narrowed, risking the lives of 400,000 people to go without water, electricity, gas, no entry for aid and no exit from the place.

Evacuation

On 16 March, Ukrainian Presidential Adviser reported that close to 30,000 people have been evacuated from various Ukrainian cities using the humanitarian corridor. Most of the civilians belonged to the city of Mariupol and Sumy. The evacuation took place in midst of Russian blockades of buses and private cars.

On 16 March, students from Nigeria have been reported to be cornered by Russian forces in southern Ukraine city, Kherson. As per the report, more than 100 African students have been stranded and have requested the Nigerian government for rescue. The Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Geoffery Onyeama had previously

said that the ministry was in contact with Ukraine and Russia to evacuate students.

On 16 March, Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal reported that Ukraine has incurred more USD 500 billion damages from the start of the Russian invasion and asserted that Russia must provide relief to restore Ukraine post-war.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 16 March, during a broadcasted government meeting, Russia's President Vladimir Putin called out that the efforts taken by the West in the Ukraine war will not help acquire global dominance or separate Russia. On the sanctions imposed by the US on Central Bank, he countered by stating that Russia had sufficient financial resources to run its economy. On the special military operation launched by Russia, President Putin said that the operation was proceeding successfully and criticised Ukraine for engaging in ethnic cleansing in the Donbas region. He said: "A massive assault on Donbas and then on Crimea was only a matter of time and our Armed Forces thwarted those plans."

Russia Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commented on the peace talks between Ukraine and Russia stating: "they say that the negotiations are not easy for obvious reasons. But nevertheless, there is some hope of reaching a compromise,"

On 16 March, Russia's Foreign Intelligence Agency Head said that while Russia's position in the world is being defined, Ukraine's fate will be decided soon. His speech highlighted the sovereignty aspect and stressed that Russia will not compensate when it came to sovereignty. Russia's Ministry of Defence claimed that Russian troops assisted in the evacuation of 36,000 civilians who were found trapped in the west of Ukraine. The Ministry also released a video of the destruction of Ukraine's weapons and ammunition depot in Chernigov region. In the statement released: "The Russian Armed Forces' artillery unit conducted a fire mission, carrying out a pinpoint strike that destroyed a combined depot site containing missile and artillery

weapons, as well as up to 20 pieces of weapons and military equipment.”

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe EU leaders in Kyiv

On 15 March, leaders of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia visited Kyiv by train to extend their ‘unequivocal support’ to Ukraine. As the talks took place, explosives could be heard across the western part of the capital as fighting continued. Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said: “The main goal of our visit and the main message of our mission is to say to our Ukrainian friends that they are not alone.”

Poland’s Deputy Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński mentioned: “I think that it is necessary to have a peace mission - Nato, possibly some wider international structure - but a mission that will be able to defend itself, which will operate on Ukrainian territory.” Prime Minister Petr Fiala further talked about a broad package of support for the citizens of Ukraine. At the same time, the EU officials in Brussels were nervous about the leader’s meeting, as other members were not notified until a few minutes before the trip was announced.

Poland

On 15 March, with the invasion continuing and the number of refugees increasing, Poland was worried about a possible spillover of Russian aggression. The BBC reported: “In terms of security, alarm bells are also ringing. Over the weekend, Russia bombed a Ukrainian military base in Yavoriv, just 16 km (10 miles) from the Polish border.” Poland has now become a critical link for the West and Russia as it is the easternmost flank of the NATO alliance.

The US

On 15 March, the Senate passed a non-binding resolution supporting a war crime investigation on Putin. The resolution was headed by Senator Lindsey Graham and was passed by a voice note after negotiations. Graham said: “The next step for me is to work with our British allies and hopefully others to create an intel cell that will make available to the public Russian military units engaged in war crimes and start naming

their commanders. A name-and-shame campaign is in the making.”

On 16 March, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated: “One way or the other, Ukraine will be there and at some point Putin won’t.” Although his comments came as the US was working towards limiting the war, he added: “working as hard as we can to limit, to stop, to put an end to this war of choice that Russia is committing.”

At the same time, on 16 March, according to the UN data released, the US had only accepted a few hundred refugees. US President Joe Biden said the US was ready to accept refugees but further mentioned that Europe should still be the primary destination for refugees. In response to Biden’s comments, Representative Raul Ruiz said: “The crisis could overwhelm the countries currently hosting many of the Ukrainian refugees, and the United States must lead in the effort to assist these countries in helping the vulnerable escape war.”

The UK

On 15 March, the UK government announced 370 new sanctions against Russia, including on Putin. The UK had already implemented a few sanctions earlier concerning trade restrictions and an additional 35 per cent tariff on vodka. However, this time the government fast-tracked the new sanctions as it had received criticism for being too slow. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said: “We are holding them to account for their complicity in Russia’s crimes in Ukraine...Working closely with our allies, we will keep increasing the pressure on Putin and cut off funding for the Russian war machine.”

On 16 March, the Church of England put pressure on the French energy giant, TotalEnergies, for their continuing services in Moscow. The church said it would reconsider its shareholdings in the company as they had not withdrawn from Russia. The church stated: “in response to the attack on Ukraine by Russia and supporting the sanctions announced by the UK and other governments.” The church’s letter came after French NGOs warned to take legal action

against TotalEnergies over their role in possible human rights abuses.

Germany

On 15 March, Germany's cyber security agency BSI warned about the anti-virus software developed by Russia-based Kaspersky Lab. BSI said the software posed a severe risk of a successful hacking attack. The BSI alleged that the Russians could coerce the company to hack into IT systems and hack the server to launch cyber attacks.

Lithuania

On 16 March, Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda said that the country was willing to stop importing oil and gas from Russia. This was aligned with the EU countries planning to tighten penalties on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. However, Lithuania received 63 per cent of its oil imports from Russia in 2019, and in response, Nausėda said: "It would create some problems, but those problems would not be critical."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Singapore

On 16 March, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs Vivian Balakrishnan talked about the war in Ukraine and hoped China would play a critical role in ending the war. He said: "The big issue now is what decisions and actions China takes...I hope they will assert their influence with Chinese characteristics, which means quietly and discreetly, but effectively." Singapore played a crucial role against Russia's war on Ukraine as its banks sanctioned Moscow's entities and trade financing.

China

On 16 March, China accused Taiwan of taking advantage of the war in Ukraine. China's Taiwan Affairs Office Spokesperson Zhu Fenglian said: "The Democratic Progressive Party authorities are using the Ukraine issue to validate their existence and piggyback on a hot issue." China's government called on Taiwan for its humanitarian aid for Ukraine and the sanctions imposed on Russia.

Western brands

On 16 March, a report by the BBC talked about how a few western brands could not easily withdraw from Russia. Certain brands like Marks and Spencer, Burger King, and hotel groups Marriott and Accor were restricted by complex franchise deals that prevented them from withdrawing. BBC reported: "...brands are locked into legal franchise agreements, making it difficult for them to remove their name from Russia's High Streets and shopping malls."

NATO

On 16 March, at the emergency NATO defence meeting in Brussels, the US and the alliance pledged their support to continue fighting off Russia's invasion of Ukraine. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said: "We need to reset our military posture for this new reality." Stoltenberg's comments came as the alliance was looking to reset its own security to adapt to the "new reality."

International Court of Justice

On 16 March, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) said it would rule on the Russian invasion lawsuit. The ruling would be the first since Russia invaded Ukraine, the judgement would be binding; however, speculation arose if Moscow would abide by it. Russia earlier had claimed it was acting in self-defence and justified its invasion. The session comes as Russia intensified its attacks on residential buildings in Kyiv and the war's displacement of about three million people.

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War in Ukraine: Day 20

War on the ground:

Zelenskyy's address, strikes in Kyiv

On 14 March, Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal urged the Council of Europe to act against Russia and expel them from the human rights body. He said: "The right to life is one of the key fundamental rights, and today at the centre of Europe this right is being violated every minute and every second." Russia had already announced its withdrawal as the council had stripped its voting rights.

Also, on 14 March, Ukraine's parliament mentioned how the Russian forces were blowing up explosives near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. They said the troops were disposing of their ammunition in front of the nuclear plant. PM Shmyhal also claimed that Russia was forcefully enlisting people from Crimea to serve among the Russian armed forces. He said: "Today the Russian

government is mobilising the residents of Crimea to the armed forces of Russia, forcing people who are to be protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention to serve in the armed forces of the enemy state."

On 15 March, a series of Russian missile strikes hit residential buildings in Kyiv. The attacks caused a massive fire, and emergency services were called to rescue the people occupying the building. Two people were killed in the attacks. The shock waves of the attacks had also damaged the metro station's entry gate, which was used as a bomb shelter.

On 15 March, Generals of the Ukrainian army defending Kyiv talked about the topography and the terrain and how it could slow Russia's advancing troops. The generals mentioned how the rivers and peat bogs acted as natural defence systems. However, they mentioned that the capital was still vulnerable to missiles. Gen Andriy Kryschenko said: "Around the city, there are many small rivers that flow into the Dnieper and there are many peat bogs, so that means the area is not suitable for large-scale movement of troops."

The Generals further talked about the advantages of Kyiv being an industrial city. They mentioned that they could produce items of fortification such as sandbags, concrete blocks, and anti-tank obstacles. The destruction of strategic bridges had also slowed down the advancing Russian armies.

Also, on 15 March, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on the Russian soldiers to surrender as Moscow faced massive losses in its invasion. He further said: "I know that you want to survive," and offered soldiers surrendering to be treated as people. Zelenskyy also said he was "grateful to those Russians who do not stop trying to convey the truth." He also paid his tribute to Marina Ovsyannikova, the journalist who had bravely interrupted a Russian state TV news anchor holding an anti-war sign.

Later, on the same day, Zelenskyy spoke about NATO and said: "the strongest alliance in the world," but "some of the members of

this alliance are hypnotised by Russian aggression." He further expressed his anguish on NATO's refusal to implement a no-fly zone. He further addressed the Russians, saying: "We hear your conversations in the intercepts, we hear what you really think about this senseless war, about this disgrace and about your state.

Concerning Mariupol, on 15 March, Deutsche Welle talked about how the situation in Mariupol was after the city was besieged. The article stated: "As of 13:00 pm (1100 GMT), more than 160 private cars have managed to leave Mariupol on the road to Berdyansk." According to Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk, authorities were trying to open nine humanitarian corridors to evacuate citizens and help them get aid. The city had experienced two weeks of shelling and blockages as more than 2,500 people have been killed in the city since the invasion began.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 14 March, Russian Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov spoke about Russia's special military operations in Ukraine. He said: "Russia has a sufficient potential for conducting the special military operation in Ukraine. The operation is proceeding by the original plan and will be completed on time and in full." Peskov's comments came as Western countries claimed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine did not succeed as planned.

On 14 March, Concerning the return of Meta products of Facebook and Instagram, Dmitry Peskov said it was unlikely for now. His response was in reaction to how Meta had provisions for Ukrainians inciting violence against Russia, its citizens, and service members. Peskov stated that Instagram "indirectly admits that we are talking about such decisions when it says that on the territory of Ukraine such methods are allowed, yet somewhere else it is still inadmissible."

On 15 March, with Peskov's statements of an improbable return of Meta, small businesses in Russia are feeling the heat. Many small

businesses and entrepreneurs who were dependent on the app to reach out to Moscow and worldwide now seemed to have found themselves in a fix after Russia banned Instagram. An avid user of Instagram, Golov said: "The other platforms all either charge money, or are not very good...he has tried with little success to migrate his business to Telegram."

Also, on 15 March, Peskov talked about the changes needed in the format of negotiations. He mentioned: "Of course, the negotiations may be desirable again because the situation has drastically changed. New details and emphasis emerged." Peskov's comment aligned with what Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov said on 12 March regarding the changes in the situation and how the previously proposed security guarantees were no longer valid. On 14 March, President Vladimir Putin held a telephonic conversation with Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. The two leaders discussed the operations in Donbas. Putin mentioned how a missile attack by the Ukrainians at Donetsk central part had resulted in numerous civilian casualties. On the same day, Putin also held a telephonic conversation with Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel. The two leaders discussed Russia's special military operations to protect the Donbas region.

On the same day, Russia accused the West of pushing it into an "artificial default" using sanctions. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said: "The freezing of foreign currency accounts of the Bank of Russia and of the Russian government can be regarded as the desire of a number of foreign countries to organise an artificial default that has no real economic grounds." His statements come as Russia was likely to default on its loans from the IMF. He further asked if Russia could make its payments in rubles.

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe Upcoming Meets

On 15 March, three Prime Ministers from European Union have been scheduled to meet President Zelenskyy in Kyiv. The meet's significance is to show the EU's united stand and provide support for

Ukraine. The US announced the meeting of President Joe Biden, NATO, and EU leaders, which is planned to take place on 24 March in Brussels. The meeting will focus on security, defence, and external relations aspects.

The US

On 15 March, a meeting was held between the US and China's top officials. The meeting was aimed to "exercise restraint." According to Yang Jiechi, "All parties should exercise maximum restraint, protect civilians and prevent a large-scale humanitarian crisis." The US was blamed for China for showing a positive sign to Russia on the supply of military weapons. China, in turn, denied the allegations, and the representative said China prioritises its "Security concerns."

NATO

On 15 March, the US had previously raised concerns about Russia carrying out a "false flag" operation by using chemicals. On similar terms, in a press conference, NATO Chief Jens Stoltenberg said that Russia's claims on Ukraine's involvement in chemical weapons were illogical, at the same time concerning as it provides the possibility of Russia to use such weapons. He said: "We are concerned that Moscow could stage a 'false flag' operation, possibly including chemical weapons." On the question raised by a Ukrainian journalist on the absence of NATO's direct military involvement in Ukraine, Stoltenberg answered staunchly that NATO would step against Russia only when one of its 30 members are under attack. Ukraine being a non-member, NATO will not directly engage but has assured help through the supply of military additional installation of naval, air and cyber forces.

The UK

On 15 March, the UK announced a new refugee scheme, where its citizens, upon hosting the Ukrainian refugees, will get GBP 350 per month as allowance. After the announcement, more than 100,000 people have come forward to register. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his trip to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, aiming to boost oil and gas production. The move comes as Europe aims to reduce its oil dependency with Russia. He said: "Vladimir

Putin over the last years has been like a pusher feeding an addiction in Western countries to his hydrocarbons, to his oil and gas, we need to get ourselves off that addiction."

On 15 March, the UK imposed a new set of sanctions on 370 individuals in Russia, including the former President. The sanctions target Putin's spokespersons, Minister of Defence, Editor-in-Chief of RT channel, and others. Apart from the individual sanctions, trade restrictions were mandated on goods worth GBP 900 million and 35 per cent import tax on Vodka.

On 15 March, UK Foreign Minister James Cleverly pointed out that as Russia's attacks are not proceeding as planned, civilians are being turned targets. He also mentioned that the defence of Ukraine is stronger, which is disturbing Russia and Putin to the target public.

The EU

On 15 March, the EU revealed its fourth set of sanctions banning the export of luxury goods to Russia, including cars and jewellery. Apart from the export ban, it also levied import restrictions on Russia's steel products and investment in its energy industry.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

From West Asia

On 15 March, as part of Turkey's mediatory steps, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan announced to send Foreign Minister to Russia and Ukraine to bring back negotiations on ceasefire. Apart from Turkey, Russia has warned the West on imposing sanctions. It said that counter threatened the West saying the sanction might affect its interest in Iran's nuclear deal. Russia's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "...the sanctions must be taken into account, this is a new aspect that cannot be ignored, that must be taken into account."

From India

On 14 March, India was the top importer of agriculture fertiliser and major imports of four to five million came from Russia and

Belarus. With the ongoing war, sanctions from the West and blockade in shipping routes, the imports have shifted from Russia to Canada, Israel and Jordan. From the given places, majorly potash will be imported, for other forms of fertilizers such as nitrogen and phosphate, Saudi Arabia and Morocco have been set as targets by India.

From Canada

On 15 March, Canada announced 15 sanctions on Russian individuals who were close to Putin. The sanctioning came ahead of President Zelenskyy's address in Canada. According to the Foreign Minister: "President Putin made the choice to further his illegal and unjustifiable invasion, and he can also make the choice to end it by immediately ending the senseless violence and withdrawing his forces." Apart from this, Russia has also banned Canada's Trudeau and Biden to enter the country.

From Africa

On 15 March, the statistics office reported that inflation in Nigeria had increased by 0.1 per cent in February due to an upsurge in transport and other costs due to fuel deficiency. In the list of global effects due to the Ukraine war on financial markets, trade and commodity prices, the African continent is at a vulnerable point. The disruption in grain imports from Ukraine's rising crude oil prices are expected to down African economies. According to the Head of the National Bureau of Statistics, "There are so many dimensions that the (Ukraine) crisis would be affecting the economy ... so that even the projections made for growth for 2022 may remain a mirage."

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War in Ukraine: Day 18 & 19

War on the ground:
 Increased explosions, continuing talks, and new maritime block

Zelenskyy's address

On 13 March, Zelenskyy spoke to thousands of protestors in Italy. Many pro-Ukraine protestors in Italy gathered in large in Turin and Florence with Ukrainian flags. In the speech, President urged for more sanctions against Moscow and demanded the grant of a no-fly zone.

On 14 March, in his video address, Zelenskyy reiterated the demands for declaring a no-fly zone to NATO leaders. He said: "If you don't close our sky, it is only a matter of time before Russian rockets fall on your territory, on Nato territory." The demand has been once again kept forward due to increasing airstrikes and attacks on the military base in Yavoriv.

On 14 March, the Ukrainian government announced the upcoming addresses of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The president will deliver addresses to the US politicians using an online platform and the Senate has appreciated the address. In the address, both parties will discuss on bringing new legislation to "cripple and isolate," Russia and to help Ukraine in carrying out the evacuation.

Ukraine-Russia Talks

On 14 March, the peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv began with the Ukrainian minister stating the negotiations, after the discussion the Deputy Head of office for President Zelenskyy said that Russia's position is seen to be becoming more constructive than before. According to the Ukraine negotiator, the talks henceforth will target establishing a ceasefire and removal of Russian troops from Ukraine.

Ukraine Military advance

On 14 March, Ukraine's military claimed to have struck four planes, three helicopters and many unmanned aircraft of Russian troops in the past 24 hours. It reported that it had attacked Russian bases and warehouses to interrupt its supply into Ukraine. Other observations made by the military were, the draining psychological condition of Russian soldiers and Russia's moves to be maintaining control of captured territories than occupying further.

Naval block

As per the recent report, UK Ministry of Defence confirmed a naval blockade being installed by Russian naval forces in Ukraine's Black Sea coastline. This means blocking maritime trade, UK also said that a similar event had taken place in the Sea of Azov.

Disappearing Mayors

After the kidnapping of the Mayor of Melitopol as reported by Ukraine, the Mayor of Dniprorudne has been reportedly disappearing according to Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba. He said: "Getting zero local support, invaders turn to terror. I call on all states and international organizations to stop Russian terror against Ukraine and democracy."

Explosions

On 13 March, a wide range of explosions took place across Ukraine. Amongst the explosions, Lviv, one of the main cities in western Ukraine was attacked rigorously by Russian missiles and airstrikes. The Lviv military officers reported that eight missiles of Russia targeted the International Peacekeeping and security centre. This centre expands to 30 km, which forms the base for training Ukraine's forces, it also holds international forces such as NATO and the EU. Along with this, Ivano-Frankivsk was also experiencing similar attacks. These attacks are observed to be the closes of all to the borders of NATO.

On 14 March, upon the attacks in Lviv, the Mayor of Lviv reported: "I had a meeting with Polish politicians and Polish mayors. I sent a very strong message, 20km (12.5 miles) from the European Union's borders. We need military equipment, we need bullet-proof vests, we need [helmets]... We need together support and help, help [for] refugees, and help [for] Ukrainian troops." He recommended for the no-fly zone to be declared by NATO, as the war nears NATO borders.

On 13 March 1300 Ukrainian troops were declared dead by Ukraine President and Mariupol has been further captured by Russian troops. Ukraine's centuries-old orthodox monastery in eastern Ukraine was shelled by Russia using aerial bombs,

causing severe damage to the building. Many people including the refugees, monks and children were evacuated. As Russia advances further into Mariupol, the count of death have gone up due to attacks, shortage of water and lack of essential supplies, killing close to 2100 people.

Evacuation

On 13 March, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine reported the evacuation of 13,000 Ukrainians through the laid humanitarian corridors. Ukraine's National Rail Company reported the attack on a passenger train that was used in evacuating refugees from eastern Ukraine. In the attack, the conductor was killed and other employees were badly injured.

On 14 March, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine reported that after thousand were evacuated on the previous day. More than 140,000 civilians were confirmed to be rescued from the conflict zone mainly from the front lines through humanitarian corridors.

On 13 March, the Regional Council of Kherson voted against the independence referendum of Russia. It passed a resolution confirming that the city of Kherson remained part of Ukraine. The Deputy Head of the Council said: "never recognise attempts to create a 'people's republic' in the Kherson region and seize part of Ukraine." Previously Ukraine Foreign Minister tweeted that: "Russians [are] now desperately try to organise a sham 'referendum' for a fake 'people's republic' in Kherson."

On 13 March, Zelenskyy and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had talks discussing the possibility of installing peace to end the war with Russia. Zelenskyy asked for assistance in releasing the kidnapped mayor of Melitopol.

On 13 March, Ukraine's Foreign Minister said that Ukraine will settle down only for negotiations and will not surrender to Russia. He also warned that, with the progression of Russia, Kyiv needed more arms, strong air defence systems, and supplies from the West to withhold and carry out the evacuation. He claimed that

despite continuous shelling in Mariupol, Ukraine is still in control of the city.

On 14 March, the Turkish Foreign Minister urged Russia to allow the evacuation of Turkish citizens cornered in Mariupol Mosque. He asked Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to support the process. So far 86 Turks were said to be taking cover, which includes 34 children.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Russia to China

On 14 March, an important development of the week is Russia seeking military and economic help from China. As per recent news reports Russia's ask for economic assistance is to help mitigate its economy from sanctions. Till now China has maintained a neutral position in the Ukraine war, but the economic relations have consistently increased between Russia and China in past year. Upon Russia's move, the West has raised alarm and assured to take necessary steps to keep China away. According to Russian spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, denied Russia asking for military help from China and said: "independent potential to continue its special operation in Ukraine." He also added: "Russia has sufficient potential for conducting the special military operation in Ukraine. The operation is proceeding in accordance with the original plan and will be completed on time and in full."

Death claims and accusations of the UN

On 13 March, Russia's Defence Ministry reported that 3,687 military operating spaces have been attacked, which includes 99 aircraft, 1,194 tanks, combat vehicles and hundreds of artillery guns. In the attack on the Yavoriv training base, Russia claimed to have killed 180 foreign mercenaries and caused large destruction on weapons supplied by external powers to Ukraine.

On 13 March, after the accusation of kidnapping Ukraine's mayor of Melitopol, the Russian military has positioned new mayor Galina Danilchenko in Melitopol. Russia has also decided to temporarily shut down its stock market till 18 March as western sanctions mount over its economy.

On 14 March, the Defence Ministry confirmed 20 being killed in the Donetsk region by the Ukrainian military, it said: “it appears the bosses of Ukraine across the ocean are giving orders to the Ukrainian army.” But, Ukraine has denied such killings. Russian Foreign Ministry condemned the attack of Ukraine using a Tochka-U missile on Donetsk. On the same, Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations Vassily Nebenzia said: “But the under-secretary-general did not find a single word to tell about today’s strike by a Ukrainian Tochka-U missile with a cluster bomb at central Donetsk. The strike killed 20 and wounded 35 civilians. Neither did any of the representatives of Western countries find a single word about it.”

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 13 March, US President Joe Biden spoke to France’s President Emmanuel Macron to discuss the crisis in Ukraine. The White House released a statement about the two leaders’ discussion and how they “reviewed recent diplomatic engagements and underscored their commitment to hold Russia accountable for its actions.” The two leaders also pledged their support to the people and the government of Ukraine.

On the same day, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned a missile attack by Russia on Ukraine’s border with Poland. Blinken said: “We condemn the Russian Federation’s missile attack on the International Center for Peacekeeping and Security in Yavoriv, close to Ukraine’s border with Poland. The brutality must stop.” Also, on 13 March, Biden authorized USD 200 million to procure additional military equipment for Ukraine. The announcement comes as Washington had already authorized USD 350 million worth of military equipment on 26 February.

On 13 March, US journalist and filmmaker Brent Renaud were killed while covering the war in Ukraine. Kyiv’s police Chief Andriy Nebytov said the Russian soldiers targeted Renaud and two other journalists. Fellow reporter Juan Arredondo said the soldiers indiscriminately fired at them while they

were going to photograph refugees leaving Irpin.

Also, on 13 March, the warfare in Ukraine opened a civil war within the US Republican Party as candidates exchanged attacks on each other’s past comments praising Putin. Republican Senate candidate targeted Republican rival representative Ted Budd saying: “While Ukrainians bled and died ... Congressman Budd excused their killer.” Budd responded, saying: “Ted Budd presented the sort of level-headed assessment of a foreign crisis you would expect from a US Senator because he knows these are serious times that require strength and substance, not the empty soundbites.”

On 13 March, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan stated that he would discuss the war in Ukraine with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at talks in Ankara on 14 March. Turkey has voiced its support for Ukraine and called the invasion unacceptable; however, it also opposed sanctions on Moscow. Erdogan said: “Aside from bilateral ties, an exchange of views is expected to be held on other regional and international issues, primarily Ukraine and Turkey-EU relations.”

On 14 March, the US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan stated that China would face the consequences if it helped Russia evade sanctions. Sullivan would be meeting China’s top diplomat Yang Jiechi in Rome. As reported by Reuters: “Sullivan plans in his meeting with Yang to make Washington’s concerns clear while mapping out the consequences and growing isolation China would face globally if it increases its support of Russia.”

At the same time, in response to Sullivan’s concerns on Beijing’s role in the crisis, China’s Spokesperson Liu Pengyu said: “We support and encourage all efforts that are conducive to a peaceful settlement of the crisis.” However, China has not condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has also abstained from voting at the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

On 14 March, days after Poland welcomed about a million refugees from Ukraine, an

article in the BBC talked about how the country now feels the strain of increasing immigrants. Zamosc's mayor Andrzej Wnuk mentioned: "We thought there would be the first wave of refugees and then we would get significant support from the government and the EU, but it turns out we were left alone. We need financial help or the quality of our hospitality will drop drastically." Wnuk mentioned the shortcomings of financial help as they only had enough handouts for two weeks.

Nevertheless, On the same day, as the war continued, an army of Polish volunteers joined to help facilitate the refugees. The volunteers have been providing food and blankets that they received from all over Europe. At the same time, a team of hospital medics from the UK flew to Poland to bring 21 Ukrainian children with cancer back to England. The hospital said: "The families were so incredibly grateful and the stories they told were horrific. We were just so pleased to do something to help."

On 14 March, the UK announced a new visa scheme under which there would be no limit to the number of Ukrainian refugees who can live with UK host families. The scheme will benefit the thousands of displaced refugees in the country. Furthermore, the UK government stated, it would grant GBP 350 a month from the government as a "thank you" for helping the people out. Health Secretary Sajid Javid said: "I'm pleased that we're doing this because as a country we have a very proud record of offering sanctuary to people from wars and from conflicts."

However, the Welsh Refugee Council Chief Executive, Andrea Cleaver, said the UK government was not doing enough compared to the EU countries. She said: "Whereas, in the UK at the moment, we have only taken in 3,000 people, through a visa route, not through a refugee route, and that is really quite disheartening, it is really quite shocking, frankly."

Also, on 14 March, the UK's Ministry of Defence talked about the 2,500,000 refugees that were forced from their homes and the indiscriminate shelling that had caused widespread destruction in Ukraine. The

Ministry also talked about the UN reports that stated 1,663 civilian war casualties.

From Belarus, on 14 March, the Belarusian armed forces pushed asylum seekers towards Poland and Ukraine. The asylum seekers were mainly from the Middle East and were trapped after the war broke out. As reported by the Guardian: "a group of Belarusian soldiers on 5 March to leave the building at gunpoint and given two options: crossing the border into Poland, where guards have beaten them back or entering Ukraine, one of them said." This was the first time the guards had entered the camp and forced them to choose between the two options.

From Italy, on 14 March, Pope Francis condemned the invasion of Ukraine. He said the "unacceptable armed aggression" had to stop. Pope Francis addressed the issues at St Peter's Square, where thousands had gathered for the Sunday blessings. Regardless, Pope Francis did not mention Russia but stated words like "armed aggression" and "no valid strategic reason," hinting towards Russia's Ukraine invasion.

The Global Fallout: International implications of the Ukraine war

IMF

On 13 March, the International Monetary Fund's Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva talked about the possibility of Russia defaulting on its debts in the wake of the unprecedented sanctions and its invasion of Ukraine. However, she assured that both the debt nor war would not trigger a global financial crisis. A total amount of USD 120 billion was the debt owed by Russia. At the same time, Russia even asked the IMF if it could access the USD 1.4 billion emergency fund approved for Ukraine if it won the war and installed a government.

Eurozone

On 14. March, the Finance Ministers of the Eurozone, as reported by Reuters, said: "on Monday the European Commission's view that fiscal policy should move from supportive to neutral in 2023, but that they must be ready with more cash should the war in Ukraine make it necessary." The 19

Euro area members would meet to discuss the implications of war and its risk to the EU economic growth.

NATO

On 13 March, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned of a possibility that Russia planned to use chemical weapons in Ukraine. He said: "Now that these false allegations have been made, we must remain vigilant because it is possible that Russia itself could be conducting missions with chemical weapons under this tissue of lie." At the same time, Stoltenberg rejected Zelenskyy's calls for NATO to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

Instagram

On 13 March, the social media app Instagram was blocked in Russia after the country banned Facebook and Twitter. Russia justified its ban saying, the app allowed calls for violence against Russian troops and Putin. Moscow further encouraged its platforms called Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki to be used in place of the banned apps.

India

On 13 March, India announced temporarily shifting its embassy from Ukraine to Poland amid the deteriorating security situation. The Ministry of External Affairs said it was only a temporary shift and added: "The situation will be reassessed in the light of further developments."

Australia and Netherlands

On 14 March, Australia and the Netherlands launched a legal proceeding against Russia for downing the civil Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in 2014. The complaint was lodged through the International Civil Aviation Organization, and if found guilty, Russia could be penalized by the UN organizations. In addition, the two countries sought compensation and an apology from Russia that saw the death of 298 people, including 38 Australians.

Oil

On 14 March, As Ukrainian and Russian negotiators were set to discuss the crisis virtually, oil prices fell to about USD seven a barrel. The recent lockdowns imposed in

China are an added reason for the drop in prices. Analyst at CMC Markets Tina Teng said: "Oil prices might continue moderating this week as investors have been digesting the impact of sanctions on Russia, along with parties showing signs of negotiation towards (a) ceasefire."

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War in Ukraine: Day 17

War on the ground: Shelling continues, 70 per cent of Luhansk Oblast under Russia, and claims of new Russian troop deployment

On 12 March, the Ukrainian military announced via Facebook that Russia had captured regions east of the besieged city of Mariupol. According to the military, both Mariupol and Severodonetsk in the east are important captures for the Russian troops. Meanwhile, the military also published that Russian efforts to begin an offensive to the northeast of Kyiv had been "partially successful." Additionally, the Armed Forces of Ukraine said: "(Ukrainian troops were) inflicting losses on Russian invaders in manpower and military equipment, which significantly reduces their will to continue the confrontation." Given the humanitarian crisis in the city due to increased shelling, the United Nations Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine Amid Awad said that the UN was working toward safe humanitarian corridors that would aid Mariupol.

On 12 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that more Russian troops were being deployed to Ukraine following its losses. Meanwhile, Zelenskyy also held telephonic conversations with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel

Macron regarding the release of Melitopol's mayor, Ivan Fedorov. According to Zelenskyy, the mayor had been abducted by Russian troops on 11 March. The President demanded Fedorov's release and said: "This is obviously a sign of weakness of the invaders... They have moved to a new stage of terror in which they are trying to physically eliminate representatives of legitimate local Ukrainian authorities." He continued: "The capture of the mayor of Melitopol is, therefore, a crime, not only against a particular person, against a particular community, and not only against Ukraine. It is a crime against democracy itself. The acts of the Russian invaders will be regarded like those of 'Islamic State' terrorists." Ukraine's Parliament backed the claim, adding that the mayor was kidnapped due to his refusal to cooperate with the occupiers.

On 12 March, Luhansk Oblast's Governor Serhiy Haidai stated that 70 per cent of the region was under Russian occupation. Meanwhile, Ukraine-controlled areas witnessed an artillery bombardment leading to dozens of civilian deaths and other casualties. Via the Facebook post, Haidai also mentioned the lack of humanitarian corridors available for citizens to flee the region. Additionally, Sumy's regional administration head Dmytro Zhyvytskyi announced via Telegram that six escape routes were prepared for evacuation. Those from Sumy, Trostianets, Lebedin, Konotop, Krasnopillia and Velyka Pysarivka are likely to be taken to the south of Sumy, to Poltava.

On 12 March, Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said that Russian forces had shelled a mosque in Mariupol. The Ministry tweeted: "The mosque of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and his wife Roxolana (Hurrem Sultan) in Mariupol was shelled by Russian invaders... More than 80 adults and children are hiding there from the shelling, including citizens of Turkey." Separately, an airbase near Kyiv's Vasylykiv was attacked by Russian rockets. Citing the town's mayor, Interfax Ukraine reported the missile to have also hit an ammunition depot.

On 11 March, Zelenskyy had stated that a renewed evacuation effort would be

undertaken for Mariupol residents. The President said: "Russian troops have not let our aid into the city and continue to torture our people ...tomorrow we will try again, try again to send food, water and medicine." Addressing the Russian soldiers' mothers, Zelenskyy appealed: "I want to say this once again to Russian mothers, especially mothers of conscripts. Do not send your children to war in a foreign country... Ukraine never wanted this terrible war. And Ukraine does not want it. But it will defend itself as much as necessary."

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 12 March, TASS reported Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warning the US to be prepared for the country's sanctions list. Ryabkov maintained that it would "soon be made public." Ryabkov stated: "The lists are ready, we are working on this. This is, by and large, part of the daily work." Meanwhile, a Russian Foreign Ministry official Nikolai Kobrinets commented on the EU's sanctions against Russia leading to increased energy prices. As reported by Interfax, Kobrinets said: "I believe the European Union would not benefit from this. We have more durable supplies and stronger nerves."

On 12 March, the Russian embassy in Washington released a statement condemning Meta's decision to permit calls for violence directed towards the Russian military and related authorities. The statement read: "Meta's aggressive and criminal policy leading to incitement of hatred and hostility towards Russians is outrageous... The company's actions are yet another evidence of the information war without rules declared on our country." Meanwhile, the State Duma Head of Information Policy and IT Committee Alexander Khinshtein proposed that Instagram be blocked in the country following the ban on Facebook.

On 12 March, the Head of Russia's space agency Dmitry Rogozin warned that the sanctions imposed on Russia could lead to the crash of the International Space Station (ISS). The Roscosmos head said: "The Russian segment ensures that the station's

orbit is corrected (on average 11 times a year), including to avoid space debris... But the populations of other countries, especially those led by the 'dogs of war', should think about the price of the sanctions against Roscosmos."

On 12 March, Belarus' Armed Forces' Chief of General Staff Viktor Gulevich stated that the country did not intend to participate in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, Gulevich added that five battalion tactical groups (BTGs) were being deployed to the border to replace the forces already stationed there. Gulevich said: "I want to underline that the transfer of troops is in no way connected with (any) preparation, and especially not with the participation of Belarusian soldiers in the special military operation on the territory of Ukraine."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe From France and Germany

On 12 March, the French Presidency released a statement on the phone call between French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The attempts for a phone call failed to push for a ceasefire. In the statement given in TASS: "...the Federal Chancellor and the French president insisted on an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and the start [of efforts] to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict. It was decided to keep silent regarding the remaining details, Scholz learnt about his evaluation of the current situation. The parties agreed to keep in touch." According to France, Putin did not seem to show any interest to end the war in Ukraine, next set of sanctions will be assessed in Brussels taking the latest developments in Mariupol into account. The sanctions majorly aim to side-line Putin from the international community. Apart from this, Macron also urged Putin to remove the blockade in Mariupol as people run out of water and power.

On 12 March, Macron, in the end of the EU summit, accused the UK of its grand statements on easing the visa process for Ukrainian refugees but not following in reality. He remarked that the UK was still

following current rules where Ukrainian refugees have to travel to the UK for applying visa. The UK's response indicated that it is in the process of modifying to a simpler version.

From Bulgaria

On 12 March, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev put forth its interest to host talks between Ukraine and Russia. He said that Bulgaria can serve as a place for negotiation and, as an EU member, urged others to unite to find a solution. The UK Minister of State for Europe and North America James Cleverly recently visited to discuss the Ukraine war situation.

From the US

On 11 March, US President Joe Biden commented that the US would not directly engage by sending troops to Ukraine; he assured that NATO's sovereignty would stand guarded by the US, but warned that a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would mean World War III. Biden announced the ban on Russian alcohol, seafood and diamonds, which are considered more valuable to the Russian economy. Apart from the goods, the US Treasury sanctioned 22 Russian oligarchs. The growing intensity of sanctions is observed in the actions taken by the US.

On 12 March, upon the concerns raised by Ukraine on the possibility of Belarus joining hands with Russia, the US confirmed that there was no evidence showing the movement of Belarusian troops into Ukraine. The US pentagon spokesperson said: "We haven't seen any indications that Belarusian troops or forces have moved inside Ukraine."

From the UK

On 11 March, UK Ambassador Dame Barbara Woodward to the UN accused Russia's claims on Ukraine's use of biological weapons. The Ambassador denied by saying "a grotesque lie" and condemned Russia for engaging in war crimes. Woodward also recommended that Russia be stopped from using its seat in the UN to spread "disinformation and lies." Apart from this, the UK sent six additional planes carrying medical aid and equipment to support Ukraine.

From Italy

On 12 March, Italy seized a EUR 530 million worth superyacht of a Russian billionaire. Similarly, the French also seized a yacht last week. The seizing has increased due to recently imposed sanctions by the EU.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

India

On 12 March, Russia has approached India to further its investments in the oil and gas sector which is currently under sanctions of the West. Russia, through this aims to expand its sales network in Asia. Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said: "Russia's oil and petroleum product exports to India have approached USD one billion, and there are clear opportunities to increase this figure." In response, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri discussed ways of firming "India-Russia partnership in energy sector." According to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the decision to expand in the energy sector will depend on many factors such as transit route, pay channel, and insurance.

Japan

On 12 March, Japanese multi-brands such as Uniqlo and Japan Tobacco have reversed their decision to withdraw business from Russia. Both the companies had announced the closing down last week. It has reasoned it as "clothing is a necessity in life," the decision has been taken to operate in 50 stores in Russia. Similarly, Japan Tobacco company which has a one-third share in the Russian tobacco market has modified its policy by stopping investment and marketing. Instead, it has opted to launch heated tobacco products.

Guatemala

On 11 March, eight Ukrainian refugees arrived in Guatemala due to the Russian invasion; another plane was on its way carrying more refugees from Ukraine.

Social Media

In the past week, social media platforms eased their policies to allow calls and posts against Putin or Russian forces, in response, Russia announced ban on the apps such as

Meta, WhatsApp and Instagram. On 12 March, Meta's Senior Executive, differing from the previous stance, clarified on Meta that: "does not tolerate Russophobia" or any kind of discrimination towards Russians - and "we are only going to apply this policy in Ukraine itself." In continuation of the bans, YouTube has also joined in blocking access to Russian State Media. The spokesperson said: "In line with that, effective immediately, we are also blocking YouTube channels associated with Russian state-funded media, globally."

Entertainment

On 12 March, Pink Floyd and David Gilmour announced the removal of their albums from Russia and Belarus music platforms. They tweeted: "To stand with the world in strongly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the works of Pink Floyd, from 1987 onwards, and all of David Gilmour's solo recordings are being removed from all digital music providers in Russia and Belarus from today."

Banks

On 12 March, along with Wall Street banks, Goldman Sachs, and JP Morgan Chase, Deutsche Bank announced closing down its business in Russia. Previously it did not agree to withdraw its services; upon accusation by the lawmakers and investors, it announced the closing down.

Sports

On 12 March, Hyundai, one of the main sponsors in football, announced its suspension of sponsorship to Chelsea Football Club by sanctions imposed against the club's owner. In the statement given by the company: "...However, in the current circumstances, we have decided to suspend our marketing and communication activities with the Club until further notice."

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War in Ukraine: Day 16

War on the ground:

Increased airstrikes, military expansion to the west and failure in evacuation

On 11 March, the Ukraine Defence Ministry issued a statement making three observations. One is Russia's shortage in manpower, hence its reaching prisoners of war to fight along with Russian forces in Rostov, a city in the south-eastern area. Second, violation of international law through civilian killing and spreading pro-Russian messages to twitch the minds of local citizens. Third, Russia's attempts to install police in the occupied areas to administer and control.

On 11 March, while Kharkiv was being attacked, Russia launched a new set of attacks for the first time in Lutsk, in the north-west, Ivano-Frankivsk in the south-west and Dnipro in the central-eastern of Ukraine. The west part of Ukraine was considered to be safe points for people fleeing and with Russia striking in the west, the war is reaching its full escalation. Mayor of Lutsk confirmed the explosions near a kindergarden and an apartment building. Ukraine's State Emergency Services (SES)

reported killings of many civilians and soldiers due to bombings and aerial assault. With continued gunfire taking place in the north-west and south-west cities, Ukraine issued a warning to for people to evacuate immediately from Krykhyvtsi, Chukalivka, Opyrshivtsi, Gorodok districts. Upon airstrikes in Chernihiv, a northern city of Ukraine, was cut off from water supply. The Ukrainian government hopes to establish 12 humanitarian corridors to evacuate people, but it is highly uncertain if they are under full operation without being destroyed by Russia.

On 11 March, President Zelenskyy responded to the Russian accusation on chemical weapons. He said that Ukraine will not prepare chemicals as weapons or use them as destruction weapon. He warned Russia on using such weapons on Ukraine. Zelenskyy said: "Have you decided to carry out 'de-chemicalisation' of Ukraine? Using ammonia? Using phosphorus? What else have you prepared for us? No chemical or any other weapons of mass destruction were developed on my land."

On 11 March, Kharkiv, the second-largest city in Ukraine was under attack by Russian airstrikes and weaponry fire, killing and injuring numerous civilians. According to reports from Ukraine's State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate, the nuclear facility in Kharkiv has lost the power connection and was under destruction through continued bombing by Russians. Later, Ukraine Air Force released a statement saying that Ukraine smashed 10 Russian warplanes and two huge armoury convoys known as Su-25 and Su-34 jets.

On 11 March, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) disclosed that a Canadian sniper, known for its deadly capacity to kill enemies from two miles distance, was bought by Ukraine to fight against Russia. CBC disclosed that more than 20,000 have volunteered to join Ukraine in fighting the war.

On 11 March, in the meet between the Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers, Sergei Lavrov and Dmytro Kuleba, in Turkey, according to the remarks of French President Emmanuel Macron, there was still

a possibility to achieve a ceasefire. The demands kept forward by Ukraine's representative was a 24-hour ceasefire and a humanitarian corridor in Mariupol, the Russia did not accept both and the talks failed to reach ceasefire agreement. Russia demanded Ukraine to "denazified" meaning to disarm and give up on joining the EU/NATO. On the questions of attack on the hospital facility in Mariupol, the Russian Defence Ministry denied taking responsibility. It countered by saying it believed the site to be Ukrainian Military base and not a hospital.

On 11 March, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine reported that 80,000 people had been evacuated from cities around the capital city Kyiv and from Sumy, around 60,000 were evacuated. The government faced a challenge in vacating people from Izyum, a town located in eastern Ukraine.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 11 March, Russia backed separatists group have claimed to have captured the city of Volnovakha located in the north of the port city Mariupol. According to the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) armed forces: "A group of troops of the Donetsk People's Republic has liberated the city of Volnovakha. The settlements of Olginka, Veliko-Anadol and Zelenyi Gai have also been taken under control, upon advancing 6 kilometers."

On 11 March, the Russian Prosecutor General's Office called out Meta as an "extremist organisation" and proposed its plans to ban its services in Russia. The move comes Meta modifies its policy to allow posts on violent speech against Russian forces. According to the office: "inciting hatred and animosity involving threats of violence."

On 11 March, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, in his address at the Russian security council meeting urged volunteers to fight Russian backed groups in the war. He later approved the volunteers from the Middleeast to support Russia in eastern Ukraine. The involvement of Syrian government troops is predicted to be involved in the fighting for Russia; the inflow

of Syrian soldiers is due to Russia's previous help backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Putin said: "If you see that there are these people who want of their own accord, not for money, to come to help the people living in Donbas, then we need to give them what they want and help them get to the conflict zone." Besides, Putin indicated that the talks between the Ukraine and Russian officials and sanctions on Russia are seen as a positive development.

On 11 March, Russia's Defence Ministry accepted the strikes launched on Lutsck and Ivano-Frankivsk; it claimed the use of "high-precision, long-range attacks," to destroy military airfields in west cities of Ukraine.

On 11 March, Russia's diplomatic office to the UN proposed for an emergency meeting to debate Ukraine's production of biological weapons with the support of the US. Russia's Deputy Ambassador to the UN, Dmitry Polyansky tweeted: "Russian Mission asked for a meeting of #SecurityCouncil for 11 March to discuss the military biological activities of the US on the territory of #Ukraine." According to Chief of Russia's radiation, chemical and biological protection force, Igor Kirillov: "[the materials] clearly refute the US statement that only Ukrainian scientists work in the Pentagon biolabs in Ukraine without the intervention of the US biologists."

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

On 11 March, the EU announced doubling its military support to Ukraine and pledged USD one billion in funds. The EU's Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell said: "Everyone was completely aware that we have to increase our military support to Ukraine to increase the pressure on Russia." On 10 March, the European Central Bank (ECB) announced to stop pumping money into the financial markets as it wants to deter the possibility of an exponential increase in inflation. The regulation would encourage higher interest rates which would counter the 5.8 per cent increase of inflation for February. ECB President Christine Lagarde said: "The Russia-Ukraine war will have a material impact on economic activity and inflation through higher energy and commodity

prices, the disruption of international commerce and weaker confidence."

Also, On 11 March, US Vice President Kamala Harris headed to Romania to discuss the growing refugee crisis in the region. Her visit came after Ukrainian and Russian Foreign Ministers met in Turkey to discuss the war diplomatically. On 10 March, she met with the refugees in Warsaw and discussed issues of the war with Polish President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki. Duda said: "aware that the problem is growing and that this problem is increasing...We have to somehow handle it, and we do not have the experience."

On 11 March, Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda at the EU leaders summit in Versailles said, there was a "flavour of disappointment" as the bloc did not fast track Ukraine's request. He said: "wish Ukraine gets candidate status now. But it was not possible to get it today. But probably it will come back to this issue later on. Some countries have domestic agendas, opinion of society, and they have to care about it. But more could be done."

On 11 March, the UK Ministry of Defence stated that it was doubtful that Putin achieved his pre-invasion plan of Ukraine. Three weeks into the war, the Ukrainian forces had mounted a strong resistance against the Russians. The Ministry of Defence's intelligence report said: "Logistical issues that have hampered the Russian advance persist, as does strong Ukrainian resistance."

On the same day, the US Senate passed a bill to fund USD 13.6 billion in emergency aid to Ukraine. The US also condemned reports of Moscow's plan to seize and nationalize the assets and businesses that have stopped operating. The White House Press secretary Jen Psaki said: "It will compound the clear message to the global business community that Russia is not a safe place to invest and do business." However, a spokesperson for Coca-Cola said: "We have had no indications from Russian authorities that they intend to nationalise our assets."

On 10 March, the UK government acted against the seven Russian oligarchs and implemented sanctions against them in response to Putin's actions in Ukraine. Among the oligarchs, Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich was also sanctioned. The UK government found him to have received preferential treatment from Kremlin, and his business links were destabilising Ukraine. As reported by The Guardian: "Abramovich's assets have been frozen, and he will be prohibited from making any transactions in the UK, as well as being subject to a travel ban."

On 10 March, President Sauli Niinisto said Finland contemplated joining the NATO alliance. Finland shares a 1,340-kilometre border with Russia and decided to review its security policy to join NATO. However, a recent poll found that more than 53 per cent of Finns now want to join NATO; this was a rise from merely 19 per cent that happened five years ago.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

WHO

On 11 March, the WHO advised Ukraine to destroy high-threat pathogens at the country's public health laboratories. The advisory came as the agency wanted to deter "any potential spills." Reuters reported: "Biosecurity experts say Russia's movement of troops into Ukraine and bombardment of its cities have raised the risk of an escape of disease-causing pathogens, should any of those facilities be damaged."

UNHCR

UN's High Commissioner for refugees Filippo Grandi reported that the number of refugees from Ukraine had reached 2.5 million. The UNHCR speculates that two million people were internally displaced within Ukraine. Furthermore, the German interior ministry said that more than 109,000 refugees had been registered in the country. In addition, Warsaw reported the arrival of 300,000 refugees in the country.

Economy

On 11 March, global investors shifted their investments from equities and bonds to

assets of gold and cash. The rapid change came as Russia continued its invasion, and investors tried to seek shelter in the safer havens of gold and cash.

Facebook

On 10 March, Meta's platform of Facebook and Instagram said, a few counties will be allowed to call for violence against Russians and Russian soldiers. The social media giant has temporarily approved posts that even call for the death of Russian President Vladimir Putin or Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Meta spokesperson said: "As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine we have temporarily made allowances for forms of political expression that would normally violate our rules like violent speech such as 'death to the Russian invaders.'"

ASIA

On 11 March, the *BBC* released a report that talked about the role of Asia in imposing and up-keeping the sanctions on Russia. China, India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Laos, and Mongolia did not vote on the UN's resolution in demanding Russia to end its military operations in Ukraine. On the other hand, allies of the West, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and Australia have imposed sanctions and blocked a few Russian banks from SWIFT payment systems. However, the countries who have sided with the west only make up to eight per cent of Russia's global trade, while the countries that abstained made up 18 per cent.

MNCs

On 11 March, Goldman Sachs and Western Union announced their withdrawal from Russia. Goldman Sachs's pull-out would be the first Wall Street Bank to withdraw from the country, while Western Union also said it would suspend its operations in Belarus and Russia. The sanctions imposed on the country have made Western financial institutions tough to go on with their work.

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War in Ukraine: Day 15

War on the ground: Airstrikes, diplomats meet Airstrikes and evacuation

On 09 March, 35,000 civilians were evacuated from Ukrainian cities during the 12-hour ceasefire. The UN also mentioned

that 2.2 million people had fled Ukraine until now. Most of the evacuees are in Poland, the evacuation of Ukrainians has been called the exodus of Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II. Also, two women and a 13-year-old boy were killed over night during the bombing of Velyka Pysarivka village near the city of Sumy.

On 10 March, As reported by The Guardian: "Western officials have warned of their "serious concern" that Vladimir Putin could use chemical weapons on Kyiv." The claims were made as Russia attacked a maternity and children's hospital and the Russian Ministry of Defence confirmed its use of the TOS-1A weapon system in Ukraine.

Also, on 10 March, diplomats of Russia and Ukraine met in Turkey's city of Antalya. Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also participated in the discussion as Russian and Ukrainian delegates met at the sidelines of a diplomatic forum. This is the first high-level meeting since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February.

On the same day, the Mayor of Mariupol said 1,207 civilians were killed in Russia's siege of the port city. The Red Cross assessing the situation, said it seemed apocalyptic as the city was repeatedly under attack and there were no safe routes, water, power, or heat. Fear is also mounting on the Ukrainian people as they suspect a possible encirclement of Kyiv and its imminent invasion. This comes as Russia placed its tanks just a few kilometres away from the city limits.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 09 March, Russia's President Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation with Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz regarding the special military operations to protect the Donbas region. The two leaders also discussed the possibilities of political-diplomatic efforts, and the negotiations held between Moscow and Kyiv were discussed. Putin further talked about the humanitarian corridors, the diminishing situation and civilian evacuation.

On 10 March, The Moscow Times reported on the Western companies' exodus from Russia and its implication on the people's livelihood. The news agency summarised: "The business departures are already blowing holes in the Russian economy and are expected to leave thousands of workers unemployed in what could become the country's worst economic crisis since the end of the Soviet Union." In addition, the move had directly impacted the Russian currency of the Ruble.

On the same day, as the Ruble collapsed, prices in Russia rose at their fastest rate in more than two decades. Russia experienced a weekly inflation rate of 2.2 per cent between 26 February and 04 March. Economists suggest that the commodities' annual prices will surpass 20 per cent by the end of March 2022. Moscow did respond to the price rise by implementing economic contraction methods of increasing the interest rates to 20 per cent. However, that has not stopped the highly volatile market from stabilizing.

Moscow, on 10 March, announced that it would no longer participate in the Council of Europe. The Russian Foreign Ministry said: "since EU and NATO countries that are unfriendly to Russia continue their policy towards destroying the organisation and the common humanitarian and legal space in Europe." The statements came as a response to Russia feeling that the situation was becoming irreversible because of NATO, the EU, and a collective West as they wanted to impose a rules-based order. At the same time, Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko discussed the situation near the Chernobyl nuclear plant over a telephone call on 09 March. Lukashenko then directed Belarusian specialists to provide the necessary logistical and energy support needed by the plant.

On 10 March, as reported by TASS, "As of the morning of 10 March, more than 213,000 people crossed the border of the Russian Federation, and more than 185,000 of them arrived in Russia from the DPR and LPR." This is one of the initial reports by sources that give a number of Ukrainian evacuees

leaving the country and taking refuge in Russia.

On 10 March, in response to the backlash Russia faced for launching an airstrike on a maternity and children's hospital, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defended the claims and said the hospital served as a military base. He further said: "This maternity hospital has long been occupied by the Azov Battalion and other radicals. They drove out the women in labour, nurses and general staff. It was the base of the ultra-radical Azov Battalion."

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 10 March, the EU leaders gathered at France for the summit to discuss on reducing the dependency on Russian energy, and strengthening political support for Ukraine. European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, said: "At this summit we will rethink European defence with strong capabilities. We will rethink energy. We will also certainly discuss Ukraine as part of our European family. We want a free and democratic Ukraine with whom we share a common destiny."

On 10 March, During the visit of the US Vice President Kamala Harris to Poland vowed that the US will stand committed with NATO as per article 5 and announced US donation to World Food Programme of the UN.

On 10 March, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki warned that there are possibilities for Russia to launch attacks using biological weapons or chemicals or will try to carry out a similar fake operation. The US has also given an estimation of 5000 to 6000 Russian troops to have died in past weeks of war. Apart from the estimation, the US lawmakers approved the plan to give USD 13.6 billion as an emergency aid to Ukraine.

On 10 March, the US Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines accused that the approach of Russian forces has "reckless disregard" on civilians as it faces strong resistance from the Ukraine. The Director said: "The Russian military has begun to loosen its rules of engagement to achieve their military objectives." Haines who is the

main intelligence adviser to Biden said that the intelligence was tracking Russia's actions to document evidence, so as to hold responsible of government and individual for actions against civilians.

On 10 March, the UK released a military intelligence brief revealing the Russian deployment of conscript troops and observed the decreased activity of Russian air operations over Ukraine. It also confirmed that 5000 Russian troops to have destroyed so far.

In recent days the influx of refugees has been more than expected and the UK has been facing the challenge in dealing the surge in refugees, hence one of the UK visa offices were found to have apologised to the entrants on its inability to assist in visa process. Upon the discussion with security services, the UK Home Secretary announced the shift in its visa programme to virtual to board in the eligible Ukrainians through plane, train and boat after email confirmation. Although the shift was made instant, it has faced criticism as it will facilitate all Ukrainians, UK Prime Minister explained that UK was taking cautions due to doubt on people to be armed or entering using fake identity.

Role of International Organisations

On 10 March, UN Secretary General António Guterres accused Russia for bombing the hospital facility in Mariupol despite an agreed ceasefire.

On 10 March, IMF authorized USD 1.4 billion as an emergency fund to Ukraine. It was given to support the immediate balance of payment needs. It also promised to help Ukraine design a "economic programme" to bring back growth. The IMF Managing Director said: "Once the war is over and a proper damage assessment can be performed, additional large support is likely to be needed to support reconstruction efforts."

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From Africa, the IMF Chief remarked that the food security and fuel availability situation

was worsening in Africa due to Russian invasion. The war has impacted the prices of the food commodities, reduced revenues from tourism and accessing financial service have become difficult. He added: "At this difficult moment, the Fund stands ready to help African countries reduce the cost of any needed policy adjustments through policy advice, capacity development, and lending." Apart from this, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi met Putin to talk on boosting cooperation and developments in Ukraine.

From South America, six countries have put forth a proposal to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to sanction Russia. Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay have decided to exclude importing fertilizer from Russia as part of the sanction. According to Brazil's Agriculture Minister, said that Brazil being the top most importer of fertilizers must not be target of sanctions. Good imported from Russia such as NPK fertilizer, and beef have been affected due to the war in Ukraine.

On 10 March, Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez met Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to discuss on the alliance and growing complexity in the international. The Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro is seen to be supporting Putin since the invasion and accusing the NATO and the US for invoking crisis in Ukraine.

From China, the effect of speedy inflation in the US and European Central Bank's aiming for higher rates has resulted in de-listing of Chinese stocks in the US thereby pushing sellers to Chinese equity markets. It is believed that the war in Ukraine will further the inflation, increasing prices of oil and other commodities. On the other hand, China has denied supply of airplane parts to Russia, the reason are unknown, but Russia will set out to reach to Turkey and India for the same.

From India, Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (SPL) fifth largest producer of crude steel has said that the demand arising from the fall of supply of Steel due to the Ukraine war can benefit in shooting up the exports to 40 per cent. It projected that, it used to export 25

per cent of steel and is currently reaching the 35-40 per cent margin. Industry analysts predict that Indian and Chinese steel industries will see hike in production to supply the gaps in European market.

From Israel, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will give speech in Israel Parliament on Russian invasion, which is seen as part of his agenda to gain support from international through video briefings.

From Global industries, the impact of the war is observed to be affecting the mass earning of the global companies due to rise in oil price, raw material cost and crush in profits in current year. In the start of 2022 analysts expected an 8.9 per cent boost in the earnings due to the change of scenario it estimates 2.8 per cent decline in forward earnings for European companies, 0.45 per cent in Asian companies and 0.02 per cent in the US firms. Apart from this, Rio Tinto, a metals and mining giant has announced to suspend commercial business with Russia, but the Rio executive stated that it will be very challenging for the company to survive without the imports from Russia. At the same time, Caterpillar and John Deere which are big construction equipment companies has also announced their suspension of business in Russia due to supply chain disruption challenges.

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War in Ukraine: Day 14

War on the ground: Airstrikes and evacuation

On 09 March, Russia launched an airstrike on a maternity and children's hospital situated in the south-eastern city of Mariupol. It was confirmed by the head of the regional military administration, and President Zelenskyy tweeted that: "People, children are under the wreckage. Atrocity! How much longer will the world be an accomplice ignoring terror?" With the strike, Russia has once again breached the ceasefire, which was agreed for 12 hours in six cities, including Mariupol.

On 09 March, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister declared the 12-hour ceasefire in six areas which Russia agreed in permitting civilians to flee the war zones. The six corridors include "Mariupol to Zaporizhzhia, Enerhodar to Zaporizhzhia, Sumy to Poltava,

Izium to Lozova, Volnovakha to Pokrovsk in Donetsk,” and other places routed to capital were Vorzel, Borodyanka, Bucha, Irpin, and Hostomel. With the failure of previous attempts in moving people out of Ukraine, the top development of the day was Sumy becoming the main point; close to 7000 people were evacuated. While the evacuation took place in the planned areas, the Sumy Regional Governor Dmytro Zhyvytskyi accused Russia of launching airstrikes in a residential area, killing 22 civilians.

On 09 March, Ukraine’s General Staff of Armed Forces released a statement on “operative information,” saying that the Ukraine forces were firmly fighting against the continuing attacks launched by the Russian military. It termed it “covert mobilisation,” where Russia was found to be using its training camps to carry out the attacks.

Apart from the above, the Polish Border Guard agency reported that close to 1.33 million people have fled to Poland, and the government already hosts two million refugees since the Russian invasion. The first success in the evacuation at Sumy gives hope for a ceasefire, at least in a few parts of Ukraine; the Ukraine army observed this as slow in Russian progression as Ukraine defends strong in the areas of strikes and carries out the evacuation.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s address to the UK House of Commons chamber

On 08 March, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the British MPs in the House of Commons chamber, becoming the first leader to speak in the chamber. The speech covered the struggle of Ukraine in the 13 days of the war against Russia. President Zelenskyy highlighted four key areas. First, the resistance, strength, and heroism of the Ukrainian military to stand the Russian attacks. Second, the frustration of how relations with NATO have become unfavourable. Third, the rising humanitarian crisis and deaths of children, civilians due to attacks, food and water shortage. Fourth, requesting the UK for more support and to recognize Russia as a terrorist state. He also

thanked the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson for the help given to Ukraine.

On 08 March, UK’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson discussed Zelenskyy’s video address that was broadcasted to the Members of Parliament in the Commons. Johnson said the speech had moved the hearts of everyone in the House. He further called the whole house to support Ukraine and supply Kyiv with the needed military equipment to defend itself. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer also paid his tribute to Zelenskyy’s bravery. He said Zelenskyy could have fled amidst the invasion, and “no-one would have blamed him for fleeing.”

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

On 09 March, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin signed a decree to lay economic restrictions on the exports from other countries and imports into Russia. As per the decree: “Ensure implementation of the following special economic measures until December 31, 2022: export and import ban of products and/or raw materials in accordance with lists to be defined by the government of the Russian Federation.” According to Putin, the decree was implemented to safeguard the security of Russia and ensure the continuous operation of its industries. The announcement is also observed as a counter to the economic sanctions by the West.

On 09 March, the Defence Ministry of Russia claimed the finding of secret documents which disclosed the plans of Kyiv to attack the Russian Separatists group in eastern Ukraine. Apart from this, Russia announced a ceasefire again for the public to leave the city. The order covered Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, and Mariupol.

On 09 March, Russia announced the meeting of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Ukraine’s Minister Kuleba. The meet will be the first of its kind since the invasion and is scheduled to take place in Turkey, which Turkey’s Foreign Minister proposed to hold it under trilateral format.

While Russia proceeds with the war in Ukraine and counter-sanctions the West, the

impact of the sanctions levied is well observed inside Russia, especially amongst its citizens. Russia's economy is taking a hit with currency crashes, a ban on airspace, and the withdrawal of more than 200 MNCs. The gold class services enjoyed by the Russian have ended with no card payment being accepted, limits in withdrawing foreign cash, no more buying of dresses from Western shops, no access to digital services, and no more Starbucks or McDonalds. Although it lays out a grim situation for the Russian, the support for Putin has not wavered down.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

On 09 March, the US rejected Poland's offer to receive MiG-29 fighter jets to transfer them to Ukraine. The Pentagon rejected the proposal as it raised serious concerns with the NATO alliance. The Pentagon said the prospects of flying a combat aircraft from NATO territory into a war zone could have implications for the entire bloc's alliance. As reported by Euronews: "Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby questioned the prospect of jets departing from a US/NATO base in Germany to fly into Ukrainian airspace contested with Russia."

On 08 March, US President Joe Biden announced that Russia's President Vladimir Putin would never be successful in taking over the whole of Ukraine. He said: "Putin seems determined to continue on his murderous path no matter the cost... Putin may be able to take a city, but he'll never be able to hold the country. And if we do not respond to Putin's assault on global peace and stability today, the cost of freedom, and to the American people, will be even greater tomorrow." Biden also commended the strong resistance the Ukrainian people put up in the face of war.

On 08 March, Biden said that the US would ban Russian oil and gas. The US would additionally release 60 million barrels of oil from its reserves to avoid an energy shortage. He also assured security assistance to Ukraine, which would be worth more than USD one billion. Biden said: "Shipments of defensive weapons are arriving in Ukraine every day from the United States, and we in

the United States are the ones coordinating delivery of our allies and partners of similar weapons — from Germany to Finland to the Netherlands." He also reaffirmed the US support in providing humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine.

The UK also announced to phase out Russian oil imports on the same day by 2022. The Ministers in the UK are also trying to make it into an offence for planned owned or chartered by Russians to be made a criminal offence. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the UK was: "One of the first countries to ban Russian aircraft, and today we are going even further by making it a criminal offence for Russian aircraft to operate in UK airspace." This was aimed to target private jets registered in third countries but are used by wealthy Russians. The government further announced new trade sanctions to prevent UK exports of aviation or space-related technology to Russia, even insurance-related services.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

On 08 March, the International Monetary Fund's executive board proposed to extend USD 1.4 billion as emergency funding to Ukraine. This is the third segment of funding proposed for Ukraine after it gave USD 700 million in December 2021 and allocated USD 2.7 billion as emergency reserves for August. As reported by Reuters: "The IMF chief said the war had delivered a shock to the world economy, sending energy and food prices higher, displacing millions of people and eroding business confidence."

Also, on 08 March, FIFA announced to postpone Ukraine's world cup qualification play-off against Scotland. The match was supposed to be held on 24 March but postponed the qualifier after Russia invaded Ukraine. FIFA said: "Following consultation with UEFA and the four participating member associations in Path A of the European qualifying play-offs, it was unanimously agreed in the spirit of solidarity to accept."

On the same day, energy giant Shell said it would be withdrawing all its services and

involvement in Russia. The announcement came as Shell's Chief Executive Officer, Ben Van Beurden, apologised for the company's move to purchase a cargo of Russian crude oil. He said: "We are acutely aware that our decision last week to purchase a cargo of Russian crude oil to be refined into products like petrol and diesel – despite being made with security of supplies at the forefront of our thinking – was not the right one and we are sorry."

On 09 March, Bitcoin's prices rose over USD 41,000 amid the Russia-Ukraine crisis. This comes even after the crypto platform of Coinbase said it blocked 25,000 wallets that are related to Russia. In addition, the platform said it would block Russian individuals or entities that are speculated to be involved in illicit activities. Coinbase's Chief Legal Officer Paul Grewal said: "We shared them with the government to further support sanctions enforcement...Sanctions play a vital role in promoting national security and deterring unlawful aggression and Coinbase fully supports these efforts by government authorities."

Also, on 09 March, Venezuela freed two jailed US citizens as a goodwill gesture. The release of prisoners came as Venezuela had a visit by a high-level delegation from Washington. US President Joe Biden said: "Tonight, two Americans who were wrongfully detained in Venezuela will be able to hug their families once more." The move signals Venezuela's interest in improving relations with the US amid the war in Eastern Europe.

On 09 March, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thanked Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for evacuating Bangladeshis from Ukraine. The citizens of Bangladesh were among students from Pakistan, Nepal, and Tunisia who were evacuated under India's Operation Ganga.

Also, on 09 March, Scotland-based food and drink firms have also decided to halt their exports to Russia. As reported by BBC: "Scotch makers such as Edrington, Diageo and Chivas Brothers have all confirmed they have suspended Russian sales." Furthermore, the Albanian capital of Tirana was the latest European city to rename a

section of its street near the Russian embassy to support Ukraine. They renamed it as Free Ukraine street, and the city's mayor Erion Veliaj said: "The Russian [embassy staff] will have to work, live and get their mail at a Free Ukraine street address."

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War in Ukraine: Day 13

War on the ground: Military actions and reactions

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, on a late-night video on 07 March, accused Russia of attacking fleeing civilians. Zelenskyy's accusations came after Ukraine

rejected Moscow's humanitarian corridors, leading directly to Russia or Belarus. He also addressed the ongoing war and boosted the people's morale by promising to stay in the capital until the war was won.

Russian air attacks destroyed a bread faculty in the northern region. The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has been deepening and the country faces an imminent refugee crisis as food, water, heat, and medicine have grown increasingly scarce due to Russia intensifying its shelling.

On 08 March, Russian forces launched hundreds of missiles and artillery attacks in the residential areas of Chernihiv, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv. Ukrainian forces defended Ukraine's largest port city of Odesa from Russian ships. The Ukrainian forces said they had killed more than 11,000 Russian troops. However, sources from Moscow only confirmed the loss of 500 soldiers. On the same day, nine civilians were killed, this included two children who were bombed by an airstrike in the Ukrainian city of Sumy. In addition, a senior Russian General, Vitaly Gerasimov, the first deputy commander of Russia's 41st army, was killed in Kharkiv.

The Moscow View:

Statements from Russia

On International Women's day, Russia's President Vladimir Putin addressed the mothers, wives, sisters, brides, and girlfriends of Russian soldiers and officers. He said: "I understand how you are worrying about your loved ones and family members." He also assured that conscripts and reservists would not take part in the military operation against Ukraine. Kremlin mentioned: "Missions are carried out only by professional troops."

At the third round of Russian-Ukrainian talks held in Belarus, Russia said it wanted to settle the issue with Ukraine when the latter recognized the Russian ownership of Crimea. The Head of the Russian delegation, Vladimir Medinsky, also put forward the requirement of up-keeping the sovereignty of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. However, as reported by TASS: "The third round of Russian-Ukrainian talks, held in Belarus on 07 March, did not bring the desired results,

representatives of both Moscow and Kiev stated."

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak mentioned that if Germany and the West place a ban on Russian oil, Moscow may respond by cutting gas supplies. He said: "rejection of Russian oil would lead to catastrophic consequences for the global market." The US had been pushing for a potential ban on its allies. However, later on 07 March, Germany and Netherlands rejected the plan. The EU gets about 40 per cent of its gas and 30 per cent of its oil from Russia. These critical energy sources do not have easy substitutes.

On 08 March the Russian armed forces organized a large-scale evacuation of 173,000 people from the Donbas region to Russia. The Ukrainians were accommodated in hotels, sanatoriums, and boarding houses. The Russian Interagency Coordination Headquarters for Humanitarian Relief also said they had made possibilities for children to go to kindergartens while they were also looking to arrange temporary employment for adults.

The West View:

Responses from the UNHCR, UK and the US

On 08 March, the Commissioner of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi announced that the number of refugees displaced from Ukraine had reached two million. Grandi said: "If the war continues we will start seeing people that have no resources and no connections... That will be a more complex situation to manage for European countries going forward." Meanwhile, Japan has announced that they would be ready to accept Ukrainian refugees.

Separately, the UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace acknowledged that the country's visa application processing had not been quick and called for speeding of the process. Wallace further added that the war would end Putin, saying: "Whatever we think about President Putin, he is done. He is a spent force in the world... he is responsible for thousands of Russian soldiers being killed, responsible for innocent people being killed, civilians being killed in Ukraine." During a

press conference with the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas called on the West to seal loopholes present in the imposed sanctions. Kallas called for limiting cryptocurrencies and completely banning Russia and Belarus from the SWIFT payments system.

During the UN Security Council session, the US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said that Putin intended to "brutalize Ukraine." She added: "The humanitarian toll of President Putin's war on Ukraine is mounting. Children are dying, people are fleeing their homes - for what?" Meanwhile, three Belarusian banks and more Russian oligarchs are set to be impacted by the European Commission's new sanctions.

The Global Fallout: International implications of the Ukraine war

The refugee crisis is likely to be a large fallout

The large-scale displacement of the Ukrainians is the fastest-growing refugee crisis since the Second World War. The numbers are only expected to increase, henceforth. According to the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the increased refugee inflow will call for long-term humanitarian solutions. The IRC's Senior Global Communications Officer Nancy Dent added that it was not a situation with a quick fix.

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War in Ukraine: Day Twelve

Continued shelling soars the gas and oil prices

Cities in Ukraine faced shelling in the centre, north and southern regions of the country. Ukraine's Presidential Adviser Oleksiy Arestovich said: "The latest wave of missile strikes came as darkness fell." The recent shellings caused evacuations in the regions of Mariupol and Volnovakha. The war in Ukraine had even impacted the global supply chains which resulted in an increase in the cost of food. Fertilizer companies too have been facing a shortage of raw resources as more than 60 countries bought essential raw materials from Russia.

Also, due to the war, the gas and oil price has soared 10 per cent, while stocks have taken a plunge as the US and Europe consider a ban on Russian crude oil. The rise in prices and the plunge of stocks hint at a possible stagflationary shock for world markets. Ukraine's military has also speculated a possible Russian invasion on the capital of Kyiv as Russian troops were advancing towards it with tank and motorized infantry units.

President Zelenskyy's video address

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in a video address on 06 March, spoke on Russia violating the humanitarian corridor that led to the death of eight civilians. He criticized the Western leaders' failure to

respond to Russia's plans to attack Ukraine's military-industrial complex. He said: "The audacity of the aggressor is a clear signal to the west that the sanctions imposed on Russia are not sufficient."

Zelenskyy further asked the UN's top court to issue an emergency ruling to stop Russia's invasion. Ukraine argued that Moscow claimed justification of war, citing a faulty interpretation of the genocide law. Zelenskyy urged the international community to further impose sanctions on Russia and requested military aircraft. He said: "If the invasion (of Ukraine) continues and Russia has not abandoned its plans against Ukraine, then a new sanctions package is needed... for the sake of peace."

Russia's counter claims: On humanitarian corridors and Ukraine's attack on nuclear reactor

Russia claimed that Ukrainian Security forces and the nationalist Azov battalion planned to blow up an experimental nuclear reactor at the Kharkiv Institute. Russia's Defence Ministry released a statement: "The Ukrainian military and the Azov battalion militants are planning to blow up the reactor and accuse the Russian Armed Forces of allegedly launching a missile strike on an experimental nuclear system."

Russia also announced a ceasefire to open humanitarian corridors for four Ukrainian cities. Kyiv, Kharkiv, Sumy and Mariupol were allowed to open humanitarian corridors to evacuate citizens. Russia's Inter-Agency Humanitarian Response Coordination Center said: "at the personal request by President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, the Armed Forces of Russia announce a ceasefire from 10:00 on 07 March 2022 for humane purposes and are opening humanitarian corridors."

External actors in the crisis: Responses from the UK, Northern Ireland, China and Anonymous

UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson held discussions with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte in London regarding additional

sanctions on Russia. The UK has earmarked GBP 74 million to help Ukraine financially while the Parliament will be voting on an Economic Crime Bill. The Economic Crime Bill would make it easier to sanction individuals. In four days, Northern Ireland announced to raise GBP 1.4 million in response to Ukraine's humanitarian appeal for those affected by the conflict.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China's Red cross would provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Wang's statements came a few hours after Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison urged Beijing to denounce Moscow. Wang also stressed China's strong ties with Russia and reiterated a call for diplomatic talks to continue.

Anonymous, the hacking collective claimed to have hacked into Russian channels and broadcasts. The collective mentioned that they showed footage of the war in Ukraine. Anonymous said: "Remember us when various powers turn their attention towards us because it will happen...We can change the world for the better. That has always been the idea."

From the ground: Plights of the people evacuating Ukraine

The people of Ukraine rejected Moscow's proposed humanitarian corridors as it suggested the transportation of civilians to Belarus and Russia. The vast majority of the people fleeing Ukraine were headed towards Poland and among those fleeing, where children with cancer who were being evacuated by the non-governmental organisations. At the same time, the war in Ukraine resulted in an exodus of Indian students studying in Belarus to leave the country despite assurances from the authorities and their universities.

Top five developments in Ukraine – Day eight of conflict

By Joeana Cera Matthews

Russian forces capture Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant after site hit by a projectile

On 04 March, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant which is Europe's biggest nuclear plant was

set ablaze after the site was hit by a projectile. Located in southeast Ukraine, Russian forces doused the fire after seizing the plant. The plant is reported to have returned to normalcy with operations progressing unaffected. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Chief Rafael Grossi alleges the projectile to be of Russian origin while the Russian Defence Ministry pointed fingers at Ukrainian saboteurs. Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called out to the Europeans in a video address: "Europeans, please wake up. Tell your politicians – Russian troops are shooting at a nuclear power plant in Ukraine."

Russia restricts access to multiple foreign media houses; Parliament passes law declaring jail term for disinformation attempts

On 04 March, Russia curbed access to foreign media houses such as the BBC, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Deutsche Welle among others. The Kremlin's media regulator Roskomnadzor claimed that these news organizations were creating false narratives regarding the Ukraine conflict, essentially creating an anti-Russian view. In a statement released by Roskomnadzor, it said: "Access has been restricted to a host of information resources owned by foreigners... The grounds for restricting access to these information resources on the territory of the Russian Federation was their deliberate and systematic circulation of materials containing false information." Meanwhile, undeterred by the move, the BBC announced that it would return to Cold War technology to provide updates to those Russians and Ukrainians whose "fundamental right" had been denied. The media organization is set to broadcast four hours of news every day in English across Ukraine and parts of Russia using shortwave radio. According to Deutsche Welle, Russian journalists are expected to publish information provided by official Russian sources.

The State Duma (lower house of Parliament) passed a bill approving jail terms of 15 years to those found guilty of spreading false information or "fake" reports regarding the Russian military. Separately, the Kremlin has

refuted allegations that it plans to impose martial law in the country. Expecting a declaration of the move to follow the Federation Council's (upper house of Parliament) extraordinary session on 04 March, thousands of Russians have begun leaving Russia.

Global stocks and RUB fall while oil, gold, metal and grain rates rise; LSE cancels trade with 27 Russia-linked firms

Following the Russian shelling at Zaporizhzhia, European shares witnessed a downslide while the Russian Rouble diminished by 2.35 per cent to 108.70 per USD. The Moscow Stock Exchange has been closed since 28 February. Meanwhile, the oil prices are set to see a strong comeback, one not seen since mid-2020. Commodity markets are also expected to have huge gains as the Chicago Board of Trade witnessed a 40 per cent rise in its wheat futures contract, 16 per cent in corn and 5 per cent in soybeans.

On 03 and 04 March, the London Stock Exchange (LSE) ended trading with a total of 35 firms having strong connections to Russia. Major firms suspended include Gazprom, Sberbank, Severstal, EN+, Rosneft and VK. These companies trade global depositary receipts (GDR) and American depositary receipts (ADR) with the LSE. The LSE stated that the decision was taken after considering the "market conditions, and in order to maintain orderly markets."

Ikea halts retail operations in Russia

Ikea, the furniture giant, announced that it would shut down its stores in Russia as imports and exports would also be brought to a halt. The decision affecting around 15,000 workers, also saw people flocking to its store. The company released an official statement, saying: "The war has had a huge human impact already. It is also resulting in serious disruptions to supply chain and trading conditions... For all of these reasons, the company groups have decided to temporarily pause Ikea operations in Russia."

UNHRC condemns Russian HRVs in Ukraine, appoints investigative commission; Kuleba accuses Russian soldiers of committing rape in Ukrainian cities

On 04 March, the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) met in Geneva to vote on a Ukraine-proposed draft resolution condemning Russia's alleged human rights violations (HRVs) in Ukraine. The UNHRC saw 32 members voting in favour of the resolution while 13 members abstained; Russia and Eritrea voted against the same. The Council also appointed a three-person commission to investigate the same while considering the possibility of war crimes. The commission, working alongside the ICC and a separate UN team on Ukraine, is expected to produce a report on its findings by early 2023.

Meanwhile, during an event in London's Chatham House, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba accused Russian soldiers of having committed rape in his country. Kuleba said: "When bombs fall on your cities, when soldiers rape women in the occupied cities - and we have numerous cases of, unfortunately, when Russian soldiers rape women in Ukrainian cities - it's difficult, of course, to speak about the efficiency of international law."

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Top five developments in Ukraine - Day seven of conflict

By Padmashree Anandhan

Conflict Escalations: War crime investigation launched and Kherson under control of Russia

On 03 March, the International Criminal Court (ICC) Chief Prosecutor launched a war crimes investigation on Russia on suspicion of its military bombing civilians. After 39 countries raised the concern to ICC, filed the investigation on Russia. According to the Chief Prosecutor, ICC has already sent its team to the conflict area to collect evidence that comes under war crimes, crimes against humanity, or anything violating under the Geneva Conventions. In addition, the investigation will track individuals involved in ordering the attack on civilians in the invasion and help target them to impose charges.

Inside Ukraine, Kherson, a southern port city, has now been taken control by the Russian military, securing the state administration building, and the Mayor of Kherson has confirmed the same. The next target of the Russian forces is expected to be Mariupol, which is the next largest port city serves the direct connection for Russia to reach eastern Ukraine through Crimea. The UK intelligence reported that the progression of Russia into Kyiv had slowed down due to "Ukraine's resistance, mechanical breakdown, and congestion.

Ukraine responses: President Zelenskyy demands supply of warplanes and urges direct talks with Putin

In his remarks to the civilians, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reassured that the Ukrainian military was still under control of the port city despite fears of Mariupol being captured by Russia. However, as the cities' shelling continued, Zelenskyy asked for one-to-one talks with

Russian President Putin and urged NATO to send warplanes, as it did not approve the no-fly zone. On the same, the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine criticized NATO for refusing to obligate the no-fly zone and accused it of the civilians' death. She also warned that this misstep would further the war to direct conflict between the West and Russia.

Russia's claims: President Putin threatens with plans of demilitarization and disclosed the count of soldiers killed

On 03 March, Russian President Vladimir Putin in his address, claimed that Russia "is going according to the plan," and marked that "demilitarisation," of Ukraine will be achieved. He also said through "Special military operation," the plan is being executed and criticized Ukrainian forces for using foreign students as "human shields." Furthermore, the President appreciated the "bravery" of the Russian troops in fighting against Ukrainian forces; he also disclosed that 498 Russian soldiers have been killed till now in the war. On the other hand, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, said that Russians were not considering launching a nuclear third world war.

External actors' response: France, UK, US, UN, and WHO condemn Russia and raise concerns for worsening situation in Ukraine

From the UK, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss called for countering the invasion by targetting Russia's economy and cracking it down. She stressed extending the SWIFT ban from certain banks to all Russian banks and to lessen oil and gas dependency from Russia.

From the US, President Joe Biden called for "immediately cease bloodshed." The announcement of tour of the US Secretary of the State Antony Blinken was announced. Who is scheduled to visit six European

countries to discuss the Ukrainian conflict. The US welcomed the vote of the UN to rebuke the invasion.

From the UN, an emergency meeting was held at the General Assembly to pass a resolution against the invasion, where the UN strongly accused and demanded Russia to withdraw its troops. In the voting, While India abstained from voting, Russia, Belarus, Syria, North Korea, and Eritrea polled against the resolution.

From France, Macron is observed to be the only leader who has been continuously in contact with Putin. On 03 March, after the telephonic call with Putin, Macron warned that Russia would not stop invading Ukraine and the whole of Ukraine was under threat. He condemned Russia, stating it as an "aggressor."

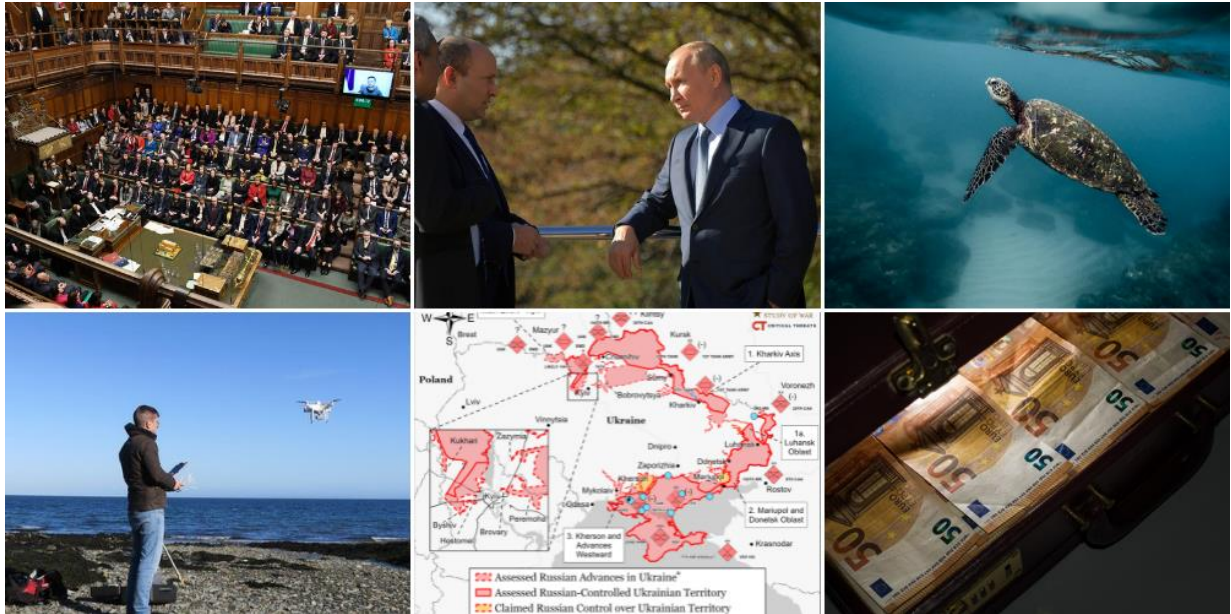
From the WHO, it has expressed deep concerns over the growing humanitarian crisis and highlighted the attacks affecting the health workers and health care facilities in Ukraine.

People's stance: Growing protests in Europe, Russia and fleeing Ukrainians

The first few days of the protest began in most of the European cities against Russia for invading Ukraine, which spread to people in Russia and across the world in support of Ukrainians. Anti-war protests in large numbers were observed in Berlin and St. Petersburg in Russia. The protests in Russia are put under control by the police through direct clashes and mass arrests. In the recent statement from the UN, close to one million people in Ukraine have left Ukraine, and the count is on the rise. As Russia progresses into various port cities launching attacks on civilian buildings, the state of people in Ukraine has turned into a nightmare, striking fears to leave the country.

EM Short Notes[†]

By Joeana Cera Matthews, Padmashree Anandhan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan and Emmanuel Selva Royan



Source: Jessica Taylor/UK Parliament, via Reuters, en.kremlin.ru, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, IOMGOV/BBC, Institute of War, Eurojust

BELARUS

Interior Affairs Ministry classifies Deutsche Welle content as “extremist”

On 09 March, Belarus’ Internal Affairs Ministry released a statement classifying information provided by Deutsche Welle and Telegram as ‘extremist’. The statement read: “The Minsk Central District Court, based on material from the Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, has classified the information products of the Telegram channel and the DW Belarus chat as extremist material.” The Deutsche Welle Director General Peter Limbourg condemned the country’s attempt to silence independent opinion and said: “The blocking of our websites in Belarus in October 2021 was already an unbelievable encroachment on press freedom. The recent announcement of the criminalization of the DW logo proves how nervous the regime there is.” Even the logo of the media house has been classified

as extremist. (“[Belarus classifies Deutsche Welle as ‘extremist’](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 10 March 2022)

BULGARIA

Former Prime Minister detained on allegations of misusing EU funds

On 17 March, the head of the major opposition party GERB Boyko Borissov was detained as part of a police operation tied to the EU Public Prosecutor’s Office investigations. The European Public Prosecutor’s Office, headed by Laura Kovesi, targets serious fraud of EU funds. The office has received numerous complaints from Bulgaria and has initiated 120 investigations. Borissov’s lawyer Menko Menkov stated: “Borissov has not been charged for the time being. The police have searched his home. He has been taken to the headquarters of the national police where he will most likely be detained for 24 hours.” (“[Bulgaria’s former PM Borissov detained after EU probes](#),” *Reuters*, 18 March 2022)

[†]EM Short Notes are notes published along with Daily Focus on Europe, every evening by the NIAS Europe Monitor team. The short notes provide a brief overview of the latest developments in Europe, and provides the sources from which they are compiled. Visit <https://globalpolitics.in/europe/> to read them everyday.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Tender for a new unit at the Dukovany nuclear power plant

On 13 March, the Czech Industry Ministry Spokesperson Vojtech Srunka said: "Industry Minister Jozef Sikela will issue an order next week for the tender for a new unit at Dukovany nuclear power plant." The new unit is intended to replace structures slated for retirement in the coming decades. Concerning that nuclear energy accounts for 40 per cent power supply, Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala said in February that he expects a supplier for the new Dukovany unit to be picked by 2024, construction permits obtained by 2029, and the unit to be operational by 2036. (["Czech ministry to order launch of nuclear power plant tender - spokesman"](#), *Reuters*, 13 March 2022)

DENMARK

Prime Minister Frederiksen apologizes to Greenlandic Inuits separated from families for social experiment 70 years ago

On 10 March, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen directly apologized to Greenlandic Inuits' group. Frederiksen addressed the six surviving members of the group and said: "What you were subjected to was terrible. It was inhumane. It was unfair. And it was heartless... We can take responsibility and do the only thing that is fair, in my eyes: to say sorry to you for what happened." 22 Inuit children, ranging from five to eight years, were separated from their families and shipped to Copenhagen in 1950 as a part of an experiment to create a Danish-speaking elite. Although the parents were promised their return, they were never brought back to their original families. An inquiry into the impact of the experiment on the children's lives concluded that most of them were negatively affected by the same. According to the Inuits' lawyer Mads Pramming, the written apology followed by the financial compensation of NOK 250,000 was in itself "a big success," Pramming added: "... and now they will have a face-to-face." (["Denmark PM says sorry to Greenland Inuits taken for 'heartless' social experiment"](#), *The Guardian*, 10 March 2022)

Prime Minister Frederiksen announces referendum on 01 June 2022

On 06 March, Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen announced a referendum to be held on 01 June. The referendum would decide whether or not the country should continue with its "opt-out from EU defence policy." The move follows the Russian invasion of Ukraine. During a news conference, Frederiksen said: "Historic times call for historic decisions... (the government) very clearly calls on Danes to lift the opt-out on defence." Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has also promised to expand defence spending by NOK seven billion over a period of two years. Frederiksen added: "For me, as prime minister, this is a values-based decision... Putin's pointless and brutal attack on Ukraine has heralded a new era in Europe, a new reality." The referendum is expected to be a part of a newly-approved parliamentary agreement called the Folketing. (["Denmark to hold referendum on scrapping EU defence opt-out"](#), *The Guardian*, 06 March 2022)

FRANCE

Concerns over anti-Islam rhetoric in election campaigns

On 27 March, the Rector of the Great Mosque of Paris, Chems-Eddine Hafiz, expressed concerns over Anti-Islam rhetoric in election campaigns. Rival candidates of incumbent President Emmanuel Macron have turned their attention to Islam and immigration. Eric Zemmour, Valérie Pécresse, and Marine Le Pen, the far-right contenders, have been inciting racial hatred, calling to renounce Islamic practices, and frequently referring to the "Great Replacement Theory." They claim that the local French population could be replaced by immigrants, making France a majority Muslim country. Hafiz stated: "For several years now, at every election in France, certain candidates have spoken of the 'problem' of Islam, linking Islam to immigration or terrorism." He is afraid of the possible increase in anti-Islam sentiments post-election. (Angelique Chrisafis, ["Anti-Islam rhetoric in French election risks' spiral of hatred', says Paris mosque rector"](#), *The Guardian*, 24 March 2022)

Elections: Concerns over low voter turnout

On 25 March, France24 reported an anticipated low turnout rate for the upcoming presidential election. Observers argue on how severe low turnout may be in this election due to the war in Ukraine. Due to which politicians may suffer the most, in a recent poll, only 71 per cent of those questioned intend to vote. In reality, this would imply a per cent of abstention equivalent to the first round of the 2002 presidential election, when 28.4 per cent abstained, setting a new record for the first round of France's two-round presidential election. In 2017, 22.2 per cent of registered voters did not vote, which was considered a high abstention per cent. Political Analyst Gerard Grunberg believes that the presumptive victory of Macron, does not motivate people to turn up to vote. (["Turnout concerns loom large for French presidential election frontrunners,"](#) *France24*, 25 March 2022)

War in Ukraine increases Macron's probability of re-election

On 18 March, a report by BBC mentioned how the war in Ukraine had boosted incumbent French President Emmanuel Macron's candidacy in the upcoming elections. Macron's diplomatic visits and the role in mediating between Ukraine and Russia improved his poll rating and has made his re-election seem inevitable. Veteran commentator Pierre Haski examined that Macron has two factors working for him. One is the opposition's disarray. The other factor is the global political climate, which is working almost effortlessly in his favour. It's shaping up to be the most tedious presidential election in living memory. Apart from that, since France took up the EU's Presidency this year, it has highlighted Macron on the international stage. (Hugh Schofield, ["French elections: Putin's war gives Macron boost in presidential race,"](#) *BBC*, 18 March 2022)

Corsica's Yvan Colonna granted suspension of prison time

On 17 March, the French Judiciary suspended Yvan Colonna's life sentence "for medical reasons." Yvan Colonna, who was imprisoned for the assassination of Corsica's top regional official Claude Erignac

in 1998, is now in a coma after being beaten on 02 March in jail by a fellow detainee serving time for terror offences. He was arrested in 2003 after a five-year search that found him living as a shepherd in the Corsican mountains. He, however, is still seen as a hero in the struggle for independence. Franck Elong Abe, who was jailed for terror-related offences, has been charged with another terror offence for the attack on Colonna. (["France suspends jail term of Corsican nationalist Yvan Colonna after clashes,"](#) *France24*, 17 March 2022)

President Emmanuel Macron's economic policies over the last five years

On 11 March, an article published by France24 reported insights on France's President Emmanuel Macron and his economic policies as he declared his candidacy for re-elections. Macron was a former investment banker and had served under the former President François Hollande as the Economy Minister. His economic policies had boosted businesses as he had reduced the tax rate of firms from 33.3 per cent to 25 per cent. His other policies were the reason why France's GDP growth reached seven per cent in 2021, even with the pandemic dip of minus eight per cent in 2020. However, workers' job security and job quality reduced as wealthy people in France grew wealthier. (Romain Brunet, ["Trickle-down in drips and drops: The French economy after five years under Macron,"](#) *France24*, 11 March 2022)

Corsica: Protests over assault of nationalist figure lead to clashes with police

On 10 March, France24 reported Corsica to have witnessed violent clashes between protesters and police. The clash was triggered after locals were angered by the assault of nationalist figure Yvan Colonna in prison. Colonna, who was captured in 2003 for the 1998 assassination of the Mediterranean island's top regional official Claude Erignac, is serving a life sentence. After being assaulted by a fellow prisoner on 02 March, Colonna is now in a coma. Some of the citizens in Corsica who consider Colonna as a "hero in a fight for independence" were disappointed by the incident and protested in Ajaccio, Calvi and Bastia. The protests quickly took a violent turn with

demonstrators clashing with the police force. Colonna had requested to be moved to Corsica from his south of France detainment, however, this was denied as his offence made him a "special status detainee." On 08 March, Prime Minister Jean Castex did away with the status to reduce the situation from escalating. Meanwhile, French prosecutors charged Colonna's assailant with attempted murder. (["Corsica protests turn to riots over assault of jailed nationalist Yvan Colonna,"](#) *France24*, 10 March 2022)

Presidential Elections 2022: Zemmour guilty of copyright infringement in the campaign video

On 04 March, French far-right presidential candidate Éric Zemmour was found guilty of copyright infringement in the video launching his presidential campaign. Zemmour used unauthorized film clips from Luc Besson's 1999 biopic of Joan of Arc and newsreels from in the 10-minute campaign video. Zemmour has been penalized EUR 70,000 to be paid to directors François Ozon and Besson, who were the plaintiffs of the case. The video, posted on 30 November 2021, also included clippings from *France24*; the media house had opposed the move by calling for immediate removal of the same. (["Far-right Zemmour guilty of copyright infringement in presidential campaign video,"](#) *France24*, 04 March 2022)

French President confirms candidacy for election

On 03 March, French President Emmanuel Macron confirmed his candidacy for the upcoming presidential election. On winning the election, Macron will become the first French leader to continue his second term. The voting is expected to take place on 10 April. As per the recent polls, Macron is predicted to be on the front with a stable popularity rate competing with opposition leaders, far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour, and conservative candidate Valerie Pécresse. In his recent letter Macron said: "I am seeking your trust again. I am a candidate to invent with you, faced with the century's challenges, a French and European singular response." (["France: Emmanuel Macron confirms he will run for second term,"](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 03 March 2022)

GERMANY

Finance Minister initiates temporary measures to address high fuel cost

On 24 March, the German government agreed on proposals to initiate temporary measures to ease the high fuel prices. The provisions include a EUR 300 one-time energy tax relief payment, a three-month decrease in the fuel tax, and a three-month decrease in the cost of monthly public transportation tickets. The tax on gasoline will be decreased by 30 cents per litre, while the tax on diesel will be reduced by 14 cents per litre. The funds will also be sent to regional public transportation organizations so that the states can coordinate the monthly ticket subsidies. Finance Minister Christian Lindner, on the implementation of measures, said: "This should show the people of this country that we can be trusted to act in this crisis." (["Germany unveils measures to tackle high energy prices,"](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 24 March 2022)

Foreign Minister Baerbock outlines the key elements of national security strategy

On 18 March, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock announced to start the deliberations on Germany's new national security plan. Baerbock's plans for a national security strategy that are based upon the need to secure freedoms and the foundation for people's livelihoods. She emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to national security that includes international partners, stating that security policy is more than just the military and diplomacy. Reflecting on the past, the Foreign Minister stated that Germany bears a "special responsibility" due to its history and guilt for atrocities committed during World War II. She lastly advocated for a new security strategy that was forward-thinking, focusing on cybersecurity, which has become an integral part of modern warfare. (Alex Berry, ["German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock presents Germany's national security strategy,"](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 18 March 2022)

Fresh debts to be incurred in the new budget

On 15 March, Deutsche Welle reported on Germany's upcoming budget plans for 2022, which is set to incur USD 108.8 billion in debt. The current draft's key points have

been rendered obsolete due to the conflict in Ukraine. However, the budget does not account for the impact of the conflict in the region, surging energy prices, and the costs of assisting refugees fleeing from Ukraine. The Finance Ministry has prepared a "core budget," which the federal cabinet is expected to approve on Wednesday before sending it to the parliament. It allocates EUR 457.6 billion in overall spending. In addition, the government decided to create a separate fund for military up-gradation. The Chancellor earlier announced this, and the fund would be raised through loans. Nevertheless, it will not be included in the budget to increase the debt ratio further. (Sabine Kinkartz, "[Germany's massive budget increase: Who foots the bill?](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 15 March 2022)

Federal environment agency reports an increase in greenhouse gases

On 15 March, a report by the German environment agency UBA mentioned an increase of greenhouse gas emissions by five per cent in 2021. However, even though the report registered an increase from the 2020 levels. When compared to the 1990s, the levels were 39 per cent lower. As reported by Reuters: "Germany overshot its targets in 2020 to cut emissions by 40% compared with 1990 levels, reducing them by almost 41% as emissions fell because of a sharp reduction in economic activity during the pandemic." The report also found that industry and agriculture met their targets on controlling CO2 emissions while transport and buildings exceeded theirs. (Markus Wacket, "[EXCLUSIVE Germany's greenhouse gas emissions rose in 2021 - environment agency](#)," *Reuters*, 15 March 2022)

Court rules far-right AfD party a suspected threat to democracy

On 08 March, a German court declared the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) to be a suspected threat to democracy. This allows for the domestic intelligence agency to monitor the activities of the opposition party. In March 2021, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) had legally challenged the AfD calling on the court to put the party under observation; however, the challenge was dismissed. Meanwhile, the court in Cologne found

"sufficient indications of anti-constitutional goals within the AfD." This classification permits intelligence agents to monitor party communications and deploy spies. The AfD, founded in 2013, began as an anti-euro entity that is now both an anti-immigrant and anti-Islam party. ("[German court rules far-right AfD party a suspected threat to democracy](#)," *The Guardian*, 08 March 2022)

Women workers in Amazon warehouses in Germany launch strike

On 07 March, Germany's largest trade union Verdi gathered its employees in six Amazon warehouses in Germany to protest against bad working conditions. The strike comes as "Equal Pay Day and International Women's Day," which occurs on the same day. The trade union demanded recognition of labour agreements in the retail and mail-order areas. One of the woman leaders who took part in the strike said: "The individual, their performance and personal circumstances of employees are ignored. Those [employees] are often women, for example, single mothers." In response, Amazon countered by indicating the recent rise in the salary of its logistics workers and saying that it gives a platform for professional development regardless of gender. ("[Germany: Amazon workers stage 2-day strike](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 07 March 2022)

Germany to accept inflow of refugees without asylum procedures

On 06 March, German Interior Minister, Nancy Faeser said in the recent German newspaper that, regardless of the nationality of the refugees escaping from the Ukraine war will be accepted by Germany. The UN expects more than 1.5 million people to flee from Ukraine and settle in nearby countries. According to Faeser: "The vast majority of those who have fled are Ukrainian nationals. People from other countries who already had a permanent right of residence in Ukraine bring this status with them." She also added that the complicated asylum procedures will be excepted for the ease of the refugees entering the country. ("[Germany to accept refugees from Ukraine regardless of nationality](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 March 2022)

IRELAND

Meta fined EUR 17 million for data breach

On 16 March, Ireland's data regulator stated that it would be imposing a EUR 17 million fine on Meta platforms. The country's Data Protection Commissioner said: "Meta Platforms failed to have in place appropriate technical and organisational measures which would enable it to readily demonstrate the security measures that it implemented in practice to protect EU users' data." The decision came after an inquiry in 2018 on the 12 data breach notifications, which were then submitted to the regulator. The Data Protection Commissioner has many other ongoing investigations into Meta; Dublin regulates the internet giants as their European Headquarters are based in Ireland. ("[Irish watchdog fines Meta 17 million euros for data breach](#)," *Reuters*, 16 March 2022)

ITALY

Prime Minister Mario addresses parliament on Russia

On 23 March, Prime Minister Mario Draghi asked China to stop supporting Russia and to participate in peace efforts over Ukraine. He also expressed that Russian President Vladimir Putin is not interested in agreeing on a ceasefire which could lead to further negotiations. Draghi stated: "The diplomatic effort can only succeed when Moscow really wants it too." Draghi was also concerned about the shortage of computer chips and the need to prioritize the production of semiconductors in Europe. ("[Italy's Draghi urges China to support peace efforts in Ukraine](#)," *Reuters*, 23 March 2022)

MALTA

Labour party claims to win national elections

On 27 March, Prime Minister Robert Abela claimed victory in general elections, securing a third consecutive term for the Labour party. If confirmed, Abela would be serving his first electoral mandate after succeeding Joseph Muscat, who stepped down in January 2020 during a government crisis triggered by the death of journalist Daphne Galizia. Abela assures humility by stating: "Humility will characterize this government, I will insist on humility from those chosen to work within it, and I will lead by example." He was credited for sustaining

unemployment at a historic low, keeping energy costs constant despite rising global prices, and increasing pensions regularly. (Christopher Scicluna, "[Malta's prime minister promises humility as Labour claims election victory](#)," *Reuters*, 27 March 2022)

MOLDOVA

Moldova to submit the application to join the EU

On 03 March, Moldova has officially applied to join the EU. The recent statement released by President Maia Sandu said that the government signed the application to join the Republic of Moldova into European Union. The application is expected to be submitted in Brussels in the coming week. The President said: "The Republic of Moldova must have a clear European path. We are ready to do everything possible to achieve this fundamental national goal," The initiative to join the EU has risen amongst the non-EU member countries due to the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. So far, Georgia, Moldova, Sweden and Finland are considering joining the EU. ("[Moldova asks to join the European Union - a week after Russia invades Ukraine](#)," *Euronews*, 03 March 2022)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland reports an increase in oil prices

On 07 March, Northern Ireland reported the increase in oil prices which have shot up by 35 per cent since the Russian invasion. Two-thirds of people in Northern Ireland depend on oil for heating purposes, which is the highest rate in Western Europe. After seven days of the invasion, the oil prices have increased from GBP 555.72 to GBP 758.11 within a span of one week. According to National Energy Action (NEA) it expects fuel poverty amongst households to be expected to double. This has resulted in oil companies selling the oil at losses as the price rise and demand falls. (Jessica Black, "[Energy prices: NI oil prices up 35% since Russia invades Ukraine](#)," *BBC*, 06 March 2022)

NORWAY**Cabinet Reshuffle: Minister for Petroleum and Energy replaced**

On 07 March, the Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store's office announced the replacement of the Minister for Petroleum and Energy Marte Mjoes Persen with Terje Lien Aasland. Meanwhile, Persen was appointed in the Ministry for Labour and Social Inclusion. The change of ministers during the concerning energy crisis is crucial given Norway is Europe's top producer of oil and gas. Aasland has been a member of parliament for 16 years and is currently the head of the Energy and Environment committee. Persen replaces Hadia Tajik, who had resigned recently. ("[Norway names Labour's Aasland as oil minister in cabinet shuffle](#)," *Reuters*, 07 March 2022)

ROMANIA**Two aircraft crashes lead to an investigation**

On 03 March, eastern Romania witnessed two crashes as both a fighter jet and a search-and-rescue mission dispatched for the same crashed. The cause for the country's deadliest crash since 2014 is still under investigation. Seven soldiers of the search-and-rescue team along with the pilot of the fighter jet are reported to have died. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis termed the accidents "a tragic night for Romanian aviation" while his condolences were expressed towards the victims' "bereaved families." Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry has announced that aircraft models of the MiG-21 LanceR fighter jet and the IAR 330-Puma helicopter would not take-off until after the investigation. Further, Defence Minister Vasile Dincu expressed that there were no indications of an attack. ("[Romania: Military personnel killed in aircraft crashes](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 03 March 2022)

RUSSIA**Prison time extended for Navalny after the new verdict**

On 22 March, President Vladimir Putin's most vocal critic Alexi Navalny was sentenced to nine years in prison, guilty of large scale fraud and contempt of court. Navalny was imprisoned in 2021 after surviving a nerve gas attack that he accused was perpetuated by the Kremlin. Prior to his imprisonment, Navalny was the main

opposition leader in Russia, and his team frequently published investigations into the wealth of Russia's elites. However, Navalny is also accused of stealing several million dollars worth of donations given to his political organizations for personal use. He will now serve nine more years in a maximum-security prison. Which will be remote and with stricter conditions than the prison in Pokrov east of Moscow, where he has spent two and a half years. ("[Russian court finds jailed Kremlin critic Navalny guilty of fraud](#)," *Reuters*, 22 March 2022)

Central Bank suspends purchase of Gold

On 15 March, the Russian central bank suspended gold purchases from banks to fulfil the rising household demand for precious metals. This is the latest attempt by the government to control the adverse effects of Western sanctions. In a statement, the bank said: "Currently, households' demand for buying physical gold in bars has increased, driven, in particular, by the abolition of value-added tax on these operations." VTB Bank analysts said the central bank's move appeared reasonable, considering that the loss of access to USD 300 billion in reserves which meant gold's share of accessible reserves had climbed to 40 per cent from 21 per cent. ("[Russian c.bank halts purchases of gold from banks to meet household demand](#)," *Reuters*, 15 March 2022)

Ukraine: Kremlin admits use of conscripts in invasion

On 09 March, the Kremlin's Defence Ministry admitted to having deployed Russian conscripts into Ukraine. This followed repeated denials by President Vladimir Putin of having conscripts in the war. In a statement released by the Ministry, it said: "Unfortunately, we have discovered several facts of the presence of conscripts in units taking part in the special military operation in Ukraine. Practically all such soldiers have been pulled out to Russia." Following the 24 February Russian invasion into Ukraine, mothers of those soldiers doing compulsory military service lost contact with their sons. This raised the possibility of Russia using conscripts. Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry has announced the launch of an investigation to penalize those who used conscripts,

allegedly disobeying orders. ([“Russia admits to use of conscripts in Ukraine invasion — as it happened,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 09 March 2022)

Symbol “Z” invoke curiosity as found marked in the Russian military

On 07 March, Russian gymnast Ivan Kuliak will face disciplinary procedure conducted by International Gymnastics Federation for wearing the symbol “Z.” In recent days, the symbol has been found to be present on the cars, advertisements, bus shelters, recently in the Serbian demonstrations and social media. When looked into, the audience of the Russian news channel mentioned that the “Z” was a marking to distinguish the Russian military. According to the US Air Force Lt Col Tyson Wetzell: “de-confliction measure to help prevent fratricide.” (Paul Kerley and Robert Greenall, [“Ukraine war: Why has 'Z' become a Russian pro-war symbol?”](#), *BBC*, 07 March 2022)

SPAIN

Lorry drivers to continue 12-day strike

On 25 March, self-employed truckers resumed strike despite a government aid package. In addition, numerous tractors drove slowly towards Madrid to protest what they called a “brutal increase” in fuel prices and the insufficient farm revenue. As part of the package, the socialist-led government agreed to EUR 0.20 per litre gas reduction for lorries after 12 hours of negotiations. The government also announced that it would grant EUR 450 million in direct financial assistance to road transport companies and special credit terms. The platform for the Defence of the Road Transport Sector, on the other hand, has urged its members to continue their strike and march forward. The group is not associated with any of Spain’s larger national trucking groups or road haulage companies, and it has not engaged in any negotiations with the government. The strike has wreaked havoc on supply systems across Spain, resulting in irregular shortages of fresh produce such as vegetables, milk, and seafood. ([“Truckers’ strike to continue in Spain despite government support package,”](#) *Euronews*, 25 March 2022)

SWEDEN

Large scale mining might disturb Reindeer Herding

On 22 March, the Swedish government granted a concession to mine on a large scale to the Jokkmokk mining company. In response, activists argued that mining in the region will affect the reindeer herding practices and the indigenous Sami people of that region. Jokkmokk Iron Mines, a subsidiary of Beowulf Mining, first applied for the Kallak mine nine years ago. Even with the government’s concession, the company must still obtain approval from a Swedish environmental court and meet other criteria. One of the conditions stated that initial construction must be initiated at specific times of the year to have the least impact on reindeer herding. ([“Sweden gives green light to controversial iron mine,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 22 March 2022)

NATO Accession: Prime Minister Andersson denies calls by the opposition to join alliance

On 08 March, Sweden’s Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson turned down calls by the opposition to consider acceding into NATO. Andersson stated that applying for accession now would further jeopardize European security. The Prime Minister added: “I have been clear during this whole time in saying that what is best for Sweden’s security and for the security of this region of Europe is that the government has a long-term, consistent and predictable policy and that is my continued belief.” Sweden’s foreign policy is founded on non-participation in military alliances; however, it has created close ties with NATO following growing Russian aggression in the Baltic region. ([“Swedish PM rejects opposition calls to consider joining NATO,”](#) *Reuters*, 08 March 2022)

Sweden to summon Russian representative for violating its airspace

On 03 March, the Sweden government announced that it will call down Russian officials after it found four fighter jets in its airspace. As reported by Swedish Air Force, two jets SU-27 and SU-24 were under the question of entering Swedish airspace. On the incident, Swedish Foreign Ministry will take the necessary procedures to summon a representative from Russia to hold

responsible for the violation. Upon the rise of the conflict situation in Ukraine, both Sweden and Finland have begun to re-think their membership with NATO. ("[Sweden summons Russian officials after fighter jets fly near Gotland Island](#)," *Euronews*, 03 March 2022)

THE UK

London to break the impasse over the trading protocol with Northern Ireland

On 28 March, the UK's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis stated that he would make every effort to reach an agreement with the EU to reform Northern Ireland's post-Brexit trading protocols. The UK and the EU have been trying to break the deadlock on the Northern Ireland Protocol, the trading regulations that London agreed to, but now claims are impractical. Lewis said: "Our focus has to be and it rightly is - for myself, the foreign secretary and the prime minister - on resolving these issues by agreement with the EU." He further expressed that the UK Government refuses to use safeguarding measures mentioned in the agreement to solve the issue. ("[UK to 'strain every last sinew' to get N.Ireland protocol deal, minister says](#)," *Reuters*, 28 March 2022)

Stringent border measures implemented with Ireland

On 24 March, the UK government implemented a rule requiring non-Irish EU residents to apply for authorization to travel between Ireland and Northern Ireland. This reform is part of the Nationality and Borders Bill, voted by a majority of 298 Members of Parliament on 22 March. Non-Irish EU citizens will be required to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) before entering the UK from the EU and Ireland. However, the ETA will limit Common Travel Area (CTA), a long-standing agreement between the United Kingdom and Ireland that predates EU membership. Citizens of the UK and Ireland can freely travel between the two nations and reside in any jurisdiction under the CTA. Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney felt that this decision is contrary to the principles that the two governments had agreed upon for years. The agreement stated to protect free movement on the island for everyone.

(Nichola Daunton, "[EU citizens could face tougher border measures in Ireland after UK vote](#)," *Euronews*, 24 March 2022)

Cabinet in disagreement over ease of Planning Laws

On 23 March, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's proposal to ease Planning Laws on onshore windmills was disagreed by some in the Cabinet. The government has increased attention to renewable energy and is planning to release a new Energy Security Strategy. The Planning restrictions that former Prime Minister David Cameron imposed in 2015 gave local councils effective veto over projects and are proposed to be eased. Business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, supports easing planning laws to make it smoother to approve plans for more onshore windmills. (Ione Wells, "[Cabinet split over changing planning law to allow more wind farms](#)," *BBC*, 23 March 2022)

Assange gets married in prison amid extradition trials

On 23 March, Wikileaks founder Assange wed his former colleague Stella Morris at Belmarsh Prison. The US government is seeking Assange's extradition to stand trial on 18 espionage counts for WikiLeaks' release of US military records and diplomatic cables more than a decade ago. Journalists or photographers were not allowed inside the prison to witness the wedding due to security reasons. Morris' wedding dress was adorned with a silvery inscription of his words, and her long veil was embroidered with messages such as "valiant", "relentless", and "free enduring love" to support Assange's cause. ("[WikiLeaks' Assange to get married in prison](#)," *Reuters*, 23 March 2022)

Inflation hits highest after three decades

On 23 March, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released February's Consumer Price Index value, which showed inflation of 6.2 per cent, the highest since 1992. As global commodity and energy prices soar, caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The UK now has the second-highest annual inflation rate among the Group of Seven countries, trailing behind the US. Although UK's KPMG Chief Economist Yael Selfin said that the figures will influence the Bank of England to continue raising interest

rates, she further added that if the prices are stabilized by 2023, the inflation may decrease to two per cent. (Andy Bruce, "[UK inflation hits 30-year high of 6.2% as Sunak readies response](#)," *Reuters*, 23 March 2022)

National Museum Wales defends its decision to display Black Lives Matter placards

On 13 March, the former UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage criticized the National Museum Wales for displaying placards from the Black Lives Matter protests. He stated that the movement was Marxist and violent, and its motive was to defund the police. However, the Museum's Director General, David Andersson, upheld his decision and said: "Now if ever is the time to defend democracy and cultural rights; we must collect far more of the histories of black communities in Wales, not less." Further, National Museum Wales public history and archaeology head, Sioned Huges, defended Anderson. Huges expressed that the collection of contemporary material displaying the placards, photographs, and accounts from activists was crucial to tell the story of the Black Lives Matter movement. ("[St Fagans: Museum hits back after Farage rebuke over BLM display](#)," *BBC*, 13 March 2022)

BCC forecasts decline in UK economy

On 04 March, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) forecasted a decline in the UK economy since the start of the war in Ukraine. It reported that the possibility of the economy falling back to the pre-pandemic level was high, but the challenge of public confidence will persist. According to the Head of the economic at BCC: "Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to weigh on activity by exacerbating the current inflationary squeeze on consumers and businesses and increasing bottlenecks in global supply chains," Apart from the blocks in global supply chains, the surge in the oil and gas markets due to Russian invasion is another key contributor to inflation. (Phillip Inman, "[UK's economic growth to halve this year says British Chambers of Commerce](#)," *The Guardian*, 04 March 2022)

UKRAINE

Chernobyl workers relieved after a month of working round the clock

On 20 March, half of the single shift staff working persistently at the Chernobyl nuclear waste facility were replaced by other workers. On 24 February, Russia captured Chernobyl nuclear facilities. The team that was working then had been on duty constantly, since Russia captured the facility and were unable to rotate out. The International Atomic Energy Agency had warned that they were exhausted and working under extreme pressure, which posed a threat to safety. In the presence of foreign military forces and without appropriate rest, they were performing important work tasks under highly stressful and tiring conditions. (Francis Murphy, "[Chernobyl staff rotated out for first time since site's capture, IAEA says](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 21 March 2022)

Ukraine: Fashion designers pressurized to support Ukraine

On 02 March, *The Guardian* released an article stating the pressure fashion designers were facing due to the Ukraine crisis. The Ukraine conflict coincided with the fashion week, forcing those luxury brands to stop incoming Russian revenue. Russian consumers contribute to approximately 3 per cent of the global luxury sales. Balenciaga made a solidarity statement on the crisis, becoming the first Paris fashion week brand to do so. It also contributed to the World Food Programme. A department store in Kyiv is demanding that the fashion industry cut all trade ties with Russia. In an interview with *Vogue Business*, the store's marketing director said: "The fashion industry needs to stand up... Stop trading – stop supplying Russia. Stop your relationships with Russia." (Jess Cartner-Morley, "[Worldwide fashion industry urged to show support for Ukraine](#)," *The Guardian*, March 2022)

REGIONAL

Vatican trial defendant Carlino testifies on a botched deal

On 30 March, Monsignor Mauro Carlino testified on the botched London real estate deal involving Pope Francis. The defendant testified that Pope Francis approved a EUR

15 million settlement to withdraw from the botched deal. In 2014 the Vatican's Secretariat of State, Cardinal Pietro Parra invested EUR 350 million on a luxury building in London with Italian broker Raffaele Mincione. The Vatican suspected it was being scammed by Mincione in 2018 and resorted to another broker, Gianluigi Torzi, to get out of the initial contract. Carlini said that he and other Vatican negotiators agreed to pay Torzi EUR 15 million in May 2019 to exit the deal. Prosecutors said the Vatican lost EUR 217 million; some of it was donations by the faithful. The trial is adjourned until 5 April. (Philip Pulella, "[Pope approved payment for Vatican to exit botched deal, court told](#)," *Reuters*, 31 March 2022)

EU to present plans for circular economy

On 30 March, the European Commission said, it would present its proposals for the EU's transition to a circular economy. This comes as an effort to move toward long-term sustainability. The circular economy project offers tools to individuals that encourage reusing and repairing rather than buying new instruments. The aim is to provide individuals with high-quality tools so they don't have to buy cheap, low-quality items that they may never use again. Policy Officer of European Environmental Bureau Jean-Pierre Schweitzer stated: "if you can access spare parts locally rather than having to import them from the other side of the globe, this means that at a local scale where you have more control of your supply chain, you can be more resilient." (Aida Sanchez Alonso, "[Brussels to present circular economy plans in bid to reduce waste](#)," *Euronews*, 29 March 2022)

Serbs in Kosovo protest to vote in Serbia's election

On 25 March, ethnic Serbs in Kosovo urged the government to allow them to vote in the general election of Serbia. Most of Kosovo's ethnic Serbs live north of Mitrovica, near Serbia's border. Ethnic Serbs in Kosovo voted in previous Serbian elections under the watchful eye of foreign observers. That did not happen in Serbia's national referendum on constitutional reforms, which prohibited ethnic Serbs from voting on Kosovan soil. The United States and other EU

countries recognized Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008. ("[Kosovo Serb protest calls for voting rights in Serbia's election](#)," *Euronews*, 25 March 2022)

EU unveils new landmark rules in Digital Market Act

On 24 March, the EU Parliament and Council agreed on new reforms to limit big techs. The new Digital Markets Act (DMA) aims to limit the influence of the major tech companies to allow smaller businesses to compete with them. The DMA requires that digital companies make their messaging systems interoperable and provide business users access to their data. The rules forbid corporations from promoting their own services and blocking consumers from uninstalling pre-installed software or apps. The new obligations will apply to companies termed "gatekeepers" - a category defined by the legislation as firms with a market capitalization of at least EUR 75 billion with 45 million monthly users. Tech giants like Google, Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, and Apple are included in this category. (Foo Yun Chee, "[US tech giants face tough new rules as EU countries, lawmakers clinch deal](#)," *Reuters*, 25 March 2022)

The US and the UK decide to drop mutual tariffs

On 22 March, the US agreed to withdraw the Section 232 tariff on the UK. The UK too responded by dropping retaliatory tariffs on imports. The Section 232 tariffs were imposed on the UK steel and aluminium imports by Former US President Trump, citing National Security. Part of the agreement requires any China-owned UK steel companies to audit their financial records to assess any influence of the Chinese government and share the results with the United States. US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and UK International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan reached an agreement after two days of trade talks in Baltimore. ("[US to drop UK steel and aluminum tariffs](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 22 March 2022)

War in Ukraine imposes a strain on fertilizer supply chain

On 21 March, *Euronews* reported on the increase in production cost for farmers as

the price of fertilizers boomed. The increase was due to the aftereffect of the Ukraine war. Russia, a major producer of fertilizer, exporting nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus, has become a challenge for farmers to acquire. The war restricted access to such fertilizers and with no immediate alternative, the economic conditions of the farmers have worsened. In order to meet the gap, Brussels and the European Commission have proposed to use the agricultural ministry to help the farmer groups. (Gregoire Lory, "[Skyrocketing fertiliser prices sends farmers production costs soaring](#)," *Euronews*, 21 March 2022)

EU Summit: EU countries divided over oil embargo

On 21 March, EU Foreign Ministers signed a political agreement to support Ukraine with an additional EUR 500 million support of arms and military equipment. In terms of furthering the sanctions and imposing an oil embargo on Russia. Poland and the Baltic States urged for tightening of sanctions on Russia in the land and sea trade. On the oil embargo, several EU countries along with Germany showed hesitance in agreeing. Germany's Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock said: "The question on an oil embargo is not a question of whether we want or don't want it." (Christopher Pilcher, "[Brussels agrees on more military aid for Ukraine, but no new sanctions](#)," *Euronews*, 21 March 2022)

EU discusses fifth round of sanctions

On 21 March, the EU initiated the discussions on the fifth round of sanctions over Russia, which included talks on the oil embargo. Baltic countries such as Lithuania are pressing for an embargo as the next logical step. Germany, which is heavily reliant on Russian gas, is cautioning against acting too quickly due to Europe's inflated energy prices. Defence ministers of the EU will also discuss a "strategic compass," a new EU military strategy meant to address the changing geopolitical landscape in the region. (Siebold and Melander, "[EU must impose sanctions on Russian oil, ministers tell divided bloc](#)," *Reuters*, 21 March 2022)

Spain: Moroccan plan of autonomy for Western Sahara accepted

On 18 March, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez recognized the autonomy initiative presented by Morocco in 2007. Morocco has claimed Western Sahara as its own since annexing it in 1975 after Spain abandoned its former colony. Under the new plan, Spain would accept autonomy in the Western Sahara. A major diplomatic incident in 2021 led to the recent policy shift. Madrid permitted Polisario Front leader Brahim Ghali to fly to Spain for medical treatment. Morocco reacted by allowing up to 10,000 individuals to cross into the Spanish North African enclave of Ceuta, resulting in a humanitarian crisis. ("[Morocco says Spain backs its designs on Western Sahara](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 18 March 2022)

The EU sets draft rules for sustainable cryptocurrencies

On 14 March, the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the European Parliament passed the legislation for regulating digital assets called the Markets in Crypto Assets (MiCA) framework. The European Parliament declined a last-minute amendment to the bill, which was aimed to limit the use of cryptos powered by the energy-intensive process known as proof-of-work (PoW). The Members of the European Parliament (MEP) agreed on the draft rules for the supervision, consumer protection, and environmental sustainability of crypto-assets. The draft rules received 31 votes in favour, four against, and 23 abstentions. The European Commission Council and Parliament will begin formal negotiations on the framework. The MEP Stefan Berger of the European People's Party stated: "With the adoption of the MiCA report, the European Parliament has paved the way for an innovation-friendly crypto-regulation that can set standards worldwide." (Pascale Davies, "[Europe rejects proposal limiting PoW cryptos such as Bitcoin but sets draft rules for sustainability](#)," *Euronews*, 14 March 2022)

Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis visits Istanbul

On 13 March, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis agreed to improve ties, despite

the long-running disagreements between the two countries. The Turkish presidency stated: "the benefits of increased cooperation between the two countries" in light of "the evolution of the European security architecture." After the meeting, Mitsotakis said: "I believe we set the foundations to improve our relations." For years, Ankara and Athens have had issues over maritime, energy, the division of Cyprus, the status of the Aegean islands, and migration. The two leaders agreed for further talks and emphasized building a positive agenda in the economic sector. ("[Turkey and Greece talk Ukraine, pledge to improve ties](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 13 March 2022)

Bosnia-Herzegovina: Germany's Baerbock meets with Foreign Minister Turkovic

On 10 March, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock addressed a news conference with her Bosnian counterpart Bisera Turkovic in Sarajevo. Her visit marks efforts to bring the country into the EU's purview following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Baerbock said: "We want to live together in the European house." Baerbock, who is on a three-day trip to the region, will also visit Kosovo, Serbia and Moldova. top diplomat says the Ukraine conflict shows the importance of ties between the EU and the Western Balkans. Bosnia is seeking to join the EU, but accession negotiations have not begun. Meanwhile, Bosnia has sought membership in the bloc. Turkovic pushed for the accession process to be quickened as she said: "We believe that this would be a strong contribution to peace in Bosnia ... and in Europe." ("[Germany calls for closer EU-Bosnia ties amid war in Ukraine](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 10 March 2022)

Estonia: UK's Sir Keir meets with Defence Minister Laanet

On 10 March, UK's Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer met with Estonia's Defence Minister Kalle Laanet. During the trip, Sir Keir met with NATO troops stationed in the country while expressing that the Labour party stood "steadfast in solidarity with Ukraine." His visit marks 15 days since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and is aimed at addressing the Army's claims that a few soldiers have moved on to fight in Ukraine

which is against orders given to them. Sir Keir along with the shadow Defence Secretary John Healey met Colonel Dai Bevan; the Colonel leads NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia. Sir Keir is expected to return to Tallinn and address MPs at the country's Parliament. Commenting on the threat of a nuclear war, Sir Keir mentioned the importance of ignoring "hypotheticals." ("[Ukraine war: Starmer meets Nato troops on Estonia visit](#)," BBC, 10 March 2022)

European Parliament votes in favour of banning 'golden passports' to Russians

On 09 March, the European Parliament members voted in favour of banning the 'golden passport' schemes to Russians. The non-binding vote intends to bring an end to the purchase of citizenship that allowed for "oligarchs and corrupt politicians to buy their way into Europe" by 2025. The Parliament saw 595 members voting in favour of the ban, 12 voting against while 74 members abstained from voting altogether. The European Parliament hopes to increase the background checks for the procedure as well. The European Commission will now decide on how to implement the proposal leading to the EU's national government concluding on the same. According to the Netherlands' MEP Sophie In't Veldt: "The time of asking national governments nicely is over... [We need] the total complete abolition of this procedure, not simply to reduce it but to completely eliminate it." (Jack Parrock, "[EU parliament demands end to 'golden passports' for Russians](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 09 March 2022)

Ukraine: German Catholic Bishops' Conference comments on Russian invasion

On 09 March, German Catholic bishops attended the annual spring plenary of the German Bishops' Conference. Concerned about the situation in Ukraine, Bishop Bertram Meier of Augsburg expressed: "We value human rights and civic freedoms, we stand for the common security of states and the exchange between them on the basis of binding and fair rules. All of this is under attack with the invasion of Ukraine." He called on Europe to be defended, allowing people to "live in free democracies." Meier also justified Pope Francis for his

unwillingness to denounce Russian actions, stating that he was clear on wanting the fighting to stop without picking sides. ([“Russia admits to use of conscripts in Ukraine invasion — as it happened,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 09 March 2022)

Ukraine: Lithuania changes Russian embassy’s address to “Ukrainian Heroes’ Street”

On 09 March, Vilnius Mayor Remigijus Simasius announced that the Russian embassy had a new address called the “Ukrainian Heroes’ Street.” This move follows Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Simasius said: “From today, the business card of every employee of the Russian embassy will be decorated with a note honouring Ukraine’s fighting, and everyone will have to think about the atrocities of the Russian regime against the peaceful Ukrainian nation when writing this street name.” Lithuania has used such name changing tactics in the past as well to condemn Russian aggression. The week prior to 09 March, Latvia also had taken to a similar move by renaming the Russian embassy’s address to “Independent Ukraine Street.” ([“Lithuania names road leading to Russian embassy ‘Ukrainian Heroes’ Street’,”](#) *The Guardian*, 10 March 2022)

Former Director-General of WTO comments on EU as a rising bloc against Russia

On 03 March, the former Director-General of WTO has commented that with recent imposing of sanctions by Brussels on Russia reflects the strengthening of the EU as a bloc against Russia. He remarked that Russia which is a big player when it came to economic markets, energy and food is being accurately being targeted by the west with economic sanctions. He said: “Little by little, yes, the European Union is progressing towards, let’s say, the shores of power that a certain number of Europeans dream of, not all of them, including in terms of trade policy. Little by little, by building up its arsenal, I believe that this is the case.” (Gregoire Lory, [“EU slowly becoming more powerful, says former WTO chief,”](#) *Euronews*, 03 March 2022)

Georgia: Formal application for EU membership submitted

On 03 March, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced that Georgia had submitted a formal application to join the EU. Following the signing of the application, Garibashvili said: “We are applying today for EU membership... Georgia is a European state and continues to make a valuable contribution to its protection and development.” The Georgian move towards EU accession follows Ukraine’s bid to the same. Georgia, like Ukraine, was also a former USSR state and fears a repetition of August 2008 when Russia invaded two breakaway regions called South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Moldova is also expected to apply for the membership soon. (Timothy Jones, [“Georgia formally applies for EU membership,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 03 March 2022)

Ukraine: Seven Russian banks removed from SWIFT

On 02 March, according to the EU’s official journal, the bloc formally imposed sanctions on seven Russian banks by removing them from the SWIFT global payments system. The targeted institutions include Russia’s second-largest bank VTB, along with Bank Otkritie, Novikombank, Promsvyazbank, Rossiya Bank, Sovcombank and Vnesheconombank. The banks are expected to end their operations with the network in 10 days. The sanction intends to deter Russia in its decision to invade Ukraine. However, Sberbank and GazpromBank, major Russian banks, were not affected since they facilitate payments for EU’s energy imports. ([“Ukraine: EU excludes 7 Russian banks from SWIFT,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 02 March 2022)

COVID-19

Austria: Vaccine mandate to be suspended until further notice

On 09 March, Austria’s government announced that it would be suspending its COVID-19 vaccine mandate. Seeking an expert commission’s advice, the mandate will be suspended and the situation will be reviewed after three months. Previously, the government required all adults to be inoculated against the virus; the lack of inoculation was to be penalized with EUR 3,600 from mid-March. Austria had become the country to declare a vaccine mandate

amidst a devastating outbreak of the pandemic in November 2021. (Douglas Busvine, "[Austria suspends coronavirus vaccine mandate](#)," *POLITICO*, 09 March 2022)

GENDER

Women in Sport reports more than one million girls drop out of sports after primary school

On 07 March, a recent study by Women in Sport found that more than one million girls in the UK drop out of sports when they become teenagers. The main reasons behind the dropout were due to "fear of judgement and lack of confidence." As per the survey 43 per cent of girls expressed that they were no longer interested in sports after their primary level of education which sums to 1.3 million all over the UK. The stats showed that eight out of 10 girls accepted that the per cent of people who didn't take part exceeded those who were active. The Women in Sport said: "Teenage girls are not voluntarily leaving the sport, they are being pushed out as a consequence of deep-rooted gender stereotypes. We must all do more to reverse this trend and not continue to accept this as inevitable." (Matthew Weaver, "[More than 1 million girls in the UK lose interest in sport as teenagers](#)," *The Guardian*, 07 March 2022)

ENERGY

Germany: Ministries of Economy and Environment approve closure of nuclear plants, LNG terminal to be opened by 2024

On 08 March, Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck announced that the country's first LNG terminal would be functional by 2024. Additionally, commenting on the closure of nuclear plants in the country, the Ministries of Economy and Environment released a joint statement that read: "As a result of weighing up the benefits and risks, an extension of the operating lives of the three remaining nuclear power plants is not recommended, also in view of the current gas crisis." Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Germany now considers creating alternative energy sources to make up for the fast-closing nuclear plants; other energy sources under consideration include solar and wind power while relying on coal-based power plants for emergencies. Russia

accounts for two-thirds of Germany's natural gas imports. ("[Germany vetoes nuclear power extension, aims for LNG terminal in 2024](#)," *Reuters*, 08 March 2022)

The UK: Embargoes on Russian oil and gas imports lead to price hike

On 09 March, the BBC reported diesel prices in the UK to have crossed GBP 90 for the first time affecting public life. According to the RAC motoring group, the average diesel price saw a 165.24 pence surge – the second biggest daily jump since 2000. Following the embargo on Russian gas and oil, European governments have been looking for alternative sources to meet their energy requirements while aiming to increase output. Meanwhile, a barrel of crude oil saw an increase of 1.3 per cent in cost. According to RAC fuel spokesperson Simon Williams: "The cost of a filling a 55-litre family car with petrol is now GBP 87 - GBP 7 more than it was at the start of the year. Diesel drivers are even worse off with a tank now costing more than GBP 90 for the first time ever - GBP 8 more than in early January." (Russell Hotten & Daniel Thomas, "[Ukraine war: Warning Russian oil move will hit UK living costs](#)," *BBC*, 09 March 2022)

Ukraine: IEA Chief calls on Europeans to save energy, reduce dependency on Russian gas

On 03 March, the International Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Fatih Birol called on the Europeans to save energy by turning down their thermostats by a degree. Birol said: "Russia is using its natural gas resources as an economic and political weapon. This is clear to everyone in the world." The agency has created a 10-point plan that advocates for European governments to impose a windfall tax on fossil fuel companies profiting from the energy price hikes. This could be used to reduce the energy bills for consumers suffering from the crisis while allowing for a reduced dependency on Russian gas imports. No more new gas contracts are encouraged with Russia's Gazprom. Meanwhile, the IEA advises a delayed closure of nuclear power stations, fast-moving wind and solar energy-related constructions and increased energy efficiency in homes and businesses. The

European Commission is expected to release its own energy strategy based on the IEA's proposals. (Fiona Harvey, "[Turn down heating by 1C to reduce need for Russian imports, Europeans told](#)," *The Guardian*, 03 March 2022)

Ukraine: Sanctions on Nord Stream 2 forces operator to end employee contracts

On 01 March, the Nord Stream 2 AG operator, Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom, ended contracts with its employees citing the heavy sanctions imposed by the US. An emailed statement saw the operator saying: "Following the recent geopolitical developments leading to the imposition of U.S. sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, the company had to terminate contracts with employees. We very much regret this development." Meanwhile, there are also reports of the Swiss-based company considering filing for insolvency. While Nord Stream 2 AG ignored a request to respond, Gazprom refused to comment. ("[Nord Stream 2 terminates contracts with employees following sanctions](#)," Reuters, 01 March 2022; Aziz El Yaakoubi and Shariq Khan, "[Exclusive: Nord Stream 2 owner considers insolvency after sanctions](#)," Reuters, 01 March 2022)

ENVIRONMENT

Bittern Birds revive from near extinction

On 25 March, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reported on the increasing number of birds in the UK after nearly disappearing. Bitterns are wetland birds that hide in reed beds and are members of the heron family. Conservationists can count them during mating by listening for the male's thunderous "foghorn" call, which may be heard three miles away. In the 1870s, the birds were driven to extinction across the UK. Their extinction was caused by a combination of poaching and the draining of their marsh habitats for cultivation. Nevertheless, they returned in the early twentieth century. In 1997, it was estimated that just 11 males remained, placing them on the verge of extinction for the second time. However, in the last ten years, the systematic restoration and re-creation of wetlands have allowed their numbers to double. (Victoria Gill, "[RSPB: Bitterns make](#)

[booming recovery in UK wetlands](#)," BBC, 25 March 2022)

Fridays for Future stage Global protests

On 25 March, the activism network staged the global climate movement. Hundreds of protests were anticipated in cities throughout the seven continents, beginning from New Zealand and moving west to the US. Responding to the call, protesters marched under the banner "people not profit." Protesters in Berlin condemned the government's decision to ignore its climate goals to develop new liquefied gas shipping facilities for imports rather than developing renewables and reducing energy consumption at home. Germany paying millions of euros to Moscow every day for buying harmful fuels affecting the environment enraged the protestors. A Ukrainian protester said: "The war in Ukraine could stop anytime. The EU and especially Germany just need to stop financing this." ("[Fridays for Future protests call for peace and climate justice](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 25 March 2022)

Survey of Isle of Man territorial seas for carbon stores

On 23 March, a team of scientists began surveying the Isle of Man's territorial waters for plants that store carbon as part of a broader effort to reduce emissions. The study would lead to the understanding of how much carbon is stored in the seas around the island. Further, how to manage any "destructive practices" that release the carbon stores, and to restore marine vegetation in specific places. The National Oceanographic Centre and Swansea University, Wales are working with the island's government on a year-long project to document "blue carbon." A marine management plan will be developed over the next two years once the information has been collected. ("[Scientists begin Isle of Man marine carbon stores drone search](#)," BBC, 23 March 2022)

Race to cut reliance on Russian Oil might increase global temperature

On 21 March, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned about addiction to fossil fuels in his keynote speech to the Economist Sustainability Summit. He warned that

countries could become so obsessed with the immediate supply gap for fossil fuels that they ignore policies to reduce it. Scientists believe that keeping the rise in global temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius this century is critical to limiting the scope of the damage caused by global warming. To maintain that threshold, carbon output must be halved by the end of this decade. Instead, as Guterres points out, emissions are expected to increase by 14 per cent. (Matt Macgrath, "[Climate change: 'Madness' to turn to fossil fuels because of Ukraine war](#)," *BBC*, 22 March 2022)

Climate change's impact on farmers and farming

On 18 March, Deutsche Welle reported the adverse effects of climate change and its impact on crops in Europe. Europe has been experiencing hotter summers, severe storms, and prolonged dry spells. Climate change would also induce frequent events of flash floods, water shortages, and hailstorms; this has caused a shift in growing conditions for several crops in Europe. However, the European Environment Agency (EEA) report stated that climate change could benefit northern Europe. This comes as northern Europe would face shorter frost periods and open up the opportunities to cultivate newer crops and varieties. (Martin Kuebler, "[In Europe, climate change brings new crops, new ideas](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 18 March 2022)

Europe accelerates clean energy missions

On 15 March, Europe's high dependency on Russia's gas has accelerated its transition to cleaner energy sources. The EU expects to save about one-third of its gas this year by reducing fossil fuel demand. It would reduce its dependency on Russian fossil fuels by installing solar panels, wind turbines, making buildings more energy-efficient, and installing heat pumps. European Director of the Regulatory Assistance Project Jan Rosenow recommended an overhaul of permit processes for renewable energy to help decarbonize the power sector. They further suggested a change in subsidies from gas boilers to heat pumps, and an information campaign to encourage energy conservation at home. (Ajit Niranjana, "[Russia-Ukraine war risks greater carbon](#)

[pollution despite boost to clean energy](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 15 March 2022)

IPCC report warns severity in living conditions of humans due to rising temperatures

On 28 February, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on factors contributing to climate change. The report stated that the current changes to the environment were pushing the limits of the survival of humans and nature to exist. It is expected that more than 40 per cent of the world population will be put under vulnerable climate conditions and the IPCC team hopes if the increase in temperature is maintained at 1.5 Celsius, there might be lessening in the impact. According to Prof Debra Roberts, who is a co-chair of the IPCC: "Our report clearly indicates that places, where people live and work, may cease to exist, that ecosystems and species that we've all grown up with and that are central to our cultures and inform our languages may disappear." The report will be the sixth assessment of the organisation, urging countries to go towards "Net Zero" emissions.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Germany: Tesla's Gigafactory plant gets approval

On 04 March, Tesla's Gigafactory plant on the outskirts of Berlin received its final approval. It now competes in the battery-powered car market with other European carmakers. Since its launch in 2019, the plant saw slow progress due to the opposition it faced from green groups citing the environmental impacts of the project. The Premier of Brandenburg Dietmar Woidke says: "This approval process was a mammoth task... (it is) a little ray of sunshine in challenging times." Tesla's initiative has brought German carmakers like Volkswagen, BMW and Mercedes Benz to invest in battery research. (Merlin Sague and Joshua Posaner, "[Tesla's Berlin Gigafactory gets green light](#)," *POLITICO*, 04 March 2022)

Europe's implementation of 5G network bridging the regional digital divide

On 04 March, Nokia, a Finnish multinational telecom giant, mentioned how the

implementation of the 5G network could make the internet faster and benefit multiple sectors in Europe. The fifth-generation mobile network would advance technology in healthcare, mining, and robotics used in factories. Nokia's Vice President for Europe Jan van Tetering said: "I believe that 5G and enterprise will have a profound impact on the way enterprises can do business and become more efficient, to become perhaps even more agile." Tetering also mentioned how Japan and Korea were leading in the field of 5G implementation for consumers, but Europe had more potential to be a key player in the global market. Tetering further said: "We still have a lot of manufacturing happening inside Europe and that's where I think Europe could be in a sweet spot in that part of the 5G." (Pascale Davies, "[5G will boost Europe's tech and bridge the digital divide, says Nokia](#)," *Euronews*, 04 March 2022)

SPORTS

Barcelona beat Real Madrid by 5-2

On 30 March, a record 91,533 spectators witnessed Barcelona beat Real Madrid in the Women's Champions League at Camp Nou football stadium. It was the largest audience that a women's game has ever gathered for in a stadium in Spain. This game outnumbered the previous record of nearly 30,000 seats when Barcelona played Atletico Madrid in 2019. Barcelona beat its rival Real Madrid 5-2 and reached the semi-finals with an aggregate 8-3 win. (Sid Lowe, "[Record crowd sees Barcelona Women beat Real Madrid in Champions League](#)," *The Guardian*, 31 March 2022)

Beijing Winter Paralympics: IPC bans Russian and Belarusian athletes over Ukraine crisis

On 03 March, the International Paralympic Committee announced that it was banning Russian and Belarusian athletes from participating in the Beijing Winter Paralympics. The decision announced on the eve of the competition was appealed to by Russia. The Russian Sports Minister Oleg Matytsin commented on the appeal effort: "We are currently in work to establish our legal position to file lawsuits on the protection of our athletes' rights, against the discrimination of athletes based on their

ethnicity and the use of sports as a tool of a political pressure." The Minister added that the decision was a "blatant violation of athletes' rights and a manipulation of the Olympic Charter and human lives' values in pursuit of political goals." Nonetheless, the IPC's decision was commended by the UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries among others. (Paul MacInnes, "[Russia head for court to overturn ban on athletes at Winter Paralympics](#)," *The Guardian*, 03 March 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

The UK and Russia's Foreign Ministers visit India

On 31 March, the UK's Foreign Minister Liz Truss mentioned that she would visit India on 31 March as a part of her broader diplomatic effort on the war in Ukraine. Her trip will coincide with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov who is also visiting India for two days. The UK foreign ministry said she would emphasize the role of democracies working together to deter aggressors. Furthermore, Truss will also unveil a new joint cyber security initiative and increase maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Her plan to visit comes after India refused to condemn Russia and join the West in issuing sanctions. ("[UK's Truss to visit India on same day as Russia's Lavrov](#)," *Reuters*, 31 March 2022)

European countries freeze assets post-economic crisis in Lebanon

On 28 March, the EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) announced that France, Germany and Luxembourg had frozen assets in Lebanon after its investigation. Eurojust stated that the probe involved five anonymous individuals alleged of embezzling public funds amounting to over USD 330 million between 2002 and 2021. Germany seized over EUR 35 million in assets and Luxembourg an estimated EUR 11 million in bank accounts. In Monaco, France confiscated assets worth at least EUR 18.2 million and bank accounts totalling EUR 46 million. On 21 March, Lebanon's central bank Governor was charged with illegal enrichment and money laundering. The developments come as Lebanon is in a crippling economic crisis primarily caused by corruption and mismanagement of public funds. ("[EU countries freeze assets worth](#)

[\\$130m in Lebanon probe](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 28 March 2022)

Group of Seven rejects Putin's demand to pay in Rubles

On 28 March, the Group of Seven countries agreed not to comply with Putin's demand to pay for gas and oil in rubles. On 23 March, Putin announced that unfriendly countries need to pay for natural gas only in Rubles and instructed the central bank to lay out the procedures for buyers to acquire rubles. The demand triggered concerns over Russia halting gas supplies to Europe and it also caused a further rise in fuel costs. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated: "the contracts we know lay down the euro as a payment currency and the companies will pay according to the contracts they have signed." ("[G7 rejects Russia's demand to pay for gas in rubles](#)," *Euronews*, 28 March 2022)

Barclays bank to be scrutinized by the US regulators

On 28 March, the UK bank Barclays risked an estimated USD 592 million loss and regulatory scrutiny for exceeding the US limit on sales of structured products. Barclays' stock dropped four per cent after the bank admitted to overselling billions of pounds worth of securities over a year, exceeding the USD 20.8 billion limit agreed with US regulators. Two exchange-traded notes (ETNs) related to crude oil and market volatility are among the products concerned. On 14 March, Barclays ceased sales and issuance of both the products. The two ETN products had risen in popularity as investors bet on volatility as the Ukraine crisis roiled global markets. As a result, Barclays stated it will postpone its share buyback until the second quarter of 2022. (Iain Withers and Saqib Iqbal Ahmed, "[Barclays faces \\$590 million hit, scrutiny over sales slip-up](#)," *Reuters*, 29 March 2022)

Canada to displace Russian oil supply

On 27 March, Canada committed to supplying energy sources to displace Russian oil and gas for European countries. Canada's Natural Resources Minister Jonathan Wilkinson assured us that they could provide an increased supply of oil, gas, and uranium to stabilize the global energy crisis. They expect to produce an additional

200,000 barrels of oil and 100,000 barrels of natural gas. Wilkinson emphasized the use of nuclear energy and announced the readiness to export uranium. Canada's assurances came after the meeting of the world's energy ministers at the International Energy Agency (IEA) in Paris held on 24 March. A senior oil analyst at the consultancy Rystad Energy stated that the impact of Canada's extra supplies "will be relatively limited given the regional nature of Canadian crude, which will likely stay in the North American market." (Jonathan Josephs, "[Canada pledges to help countries stop using Russian oil](#)," *BBC*, 27 March 2022)

The US to increase energy supply to the EU post the gas deal

On 25 March, US President Joe Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen upon signing of the gas bill agreed on importing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from the US. This is an attempt to reduce reliance on Russian energy in response to its invasion of Ukraine. Biden stated, "I know that eliminating Russian gas will have costs for Europe, but it's not only the right thing to do from a moral standpoint, but it's also going to put us on a much stronger strategic footing." The ultimate goal is for the US and foreign allies to provide the EU with around 50 billion cubic meters per year. By reducing reliance on Russia, more renewable energy will be generated and improved energy efficiency. ("[EU signs US gas deal to curb reliance on Russia](#)," *BBC*, 25 March 2022)

Group of Seven to talk on deterrence of Russia's actions

On 24 March, the Group of Seven (G7) summoned an emergency meeting at Brussels to discuss further actions against Russia. BBC examined the relevance of the G7 countries amid the Ukraine War. The ministers and officials often met throughout the year to make agreements and issue unified comments on world issues. The G7 countries have already imposed the most comprehensive sanctions on Russia. They have cut the country off from international trade and the global financial system and froze the assets of the country's wealthiest citizens. While, the US has banned all Russian oil and gas imports, the UK plans to phase out Moscow's oil by the end of 2022.

Ukraine's leaders want the rest of the G7 to follow suit. ("[G7: What is the G7 and what is it doing about Ukraine?](#)," *BBC*, 24 March 2022)

Concerns over North America's Arctic, amid war in Ukraine

On 25 March, the BBC examined North America's Arctic vulnerability to Russia. Despite its remoteness and limited population, North America's huge area is greater than Europe. Due to its vast area, it is attracting the attention of governments and security experts. They warn that North America's Arctic may be susceptible when tensions are high following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the event of a confrontation, Russian missiles would have to cross the Arctic to hit targets in southern Canada or the US. However, an Arctic expert at the University of British Columbia, Michael Byers, believes Russia is unlikely to consider any invasion or escalation along the frigid border with Canada. While it already faces tensions with Scandinavian countries. (Bernd Debusmann Jr, "[Is North America's Arctic vulnerable to Russia?](#)," *BBC*, 25 March 2022)

US President Biden urges private firms to level up their cyber-defences

On 23 March, US President Joe Biden called on private companies and organizations to increase their cyber-security precautions, concerning cyber-attacks from Russia. The US and the West are concerned about the three Russian-based cyberattacks-BlackEnergy, NotPetya and the cyberattack that targeted the Colonial pipeline. Ukraine has been relatively unaffected by the Russian cyber-offensives, but experts are now concerned that Russia may launch a cyber-offensive against Ukraine's allies. If a NATO country is the victim of a cyber-attack that results in death or significant irreversible damage, Article 5 of the alliance's collective defence clause, could be invoked. (Joe Tidy, "[The three Russian cyber-attacks the West most fears](#)," *BBC*, 23 March 2022)

Germany: Transatlantic trade agreements resumed with the EU and the US

On 20 March, Germany's Finance Minister Christian Lindner asked to resume talks over free trade between the EU and the US.

Former US President Donald Trump, under his tenure, had halted negotiations over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. He further emphasized the significance of free trade with partners who share similar values amid the crisis. In an indirect response to the call, the US embassy in Germany mentioned that the existing US-EU trade and technology council encourages trade and broad-based growth. They further stated: "The current crisis shows the United States and Germany, and the European Union, are indispensable partners." ("[Germany calls for new talks on transatlantic trade deal](#)," *Reuters*, 20 March 2022)

German Economic Minister Robert Habeck visits Qatar

On 20 March, Economic Minister Robert and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani agreed on a long-term energy partnership at Doha. In addition, the agreement also focuses on promoting energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy projects. Berlin plans to import Qatar's Liquefied Natural Gas through ships but lacks the terminal infrastructure to receive them. However, they have announced plans to build two LNG terminals by 2026; Until then, Germany will depend on Russian gas through Nord Stream 2 pipelines. ("[Qatar to help Germany cut reliance on Russian gas, says minister](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 20 March 2022)

The US to supply military equipment to the UK amid Ukraine War

On 17 March, the US State Department approved a USD 700 million missile defence system sale to the UK. The agreement comes amid a rise in requests from European countries to buy additional US-made weapons as the Russian invasion of Ukraine changed the region's security dynamics. The UK government wished to purchase ballistic missile defence radars and two command and control battle management and communications systems from Lockheed Martin Corp. The US State Department stated the sale would advance US foreign policy goals by "by improving the security of a NATO ally that is a force for political stability and economic progress in Europe." ("[UK gets](#)

[approval to buy missile defences from US,](#)” *Reuters*, 17 March 2022)

Europe increased Defence equipment purchases from the US

On 17 March, European governments proposed purchase orders of defence equipment from the US government and contractors. The inquiries respond to a more uncertain security environment in the region, with Germany, Sweden, and Denmark among those pledging significant increases in defence spending. The Pentagon has re-established a team to respond to the rising demand for sales and transfer of arms supplied by US defence companies to speed up government approval. The officials are also exploring ways to meet Ukraine’s needs, replenish US inventories and restore depleted stocks of allies and partners, and work with contractors on ways to “mitigate supply chain constraints and accelerate production timelines.” (Mike Stone, [“Exclusive: Russian invasion spurs European demand for US drones, missiles,”](#) *Reuters*, 17 March 2022)

The EU asks for a pause in the Iran nuclear deal due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

On 11 March, EU’s Foreign Policy Chief, Josep Borrell said the 2015 Iran nuclear deal was put on hold due to “external factors.” Since Borrell had been coordinating the JCPOA agreement, he further said: “A final text is essentially ready and on the table. As coordinator, I will, with my team, continue to be in touch with all participants and the US to overcome the current situation and to close the agreement.” The talks of reviving the agreement were earlier held in Vienna. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh responded by assuring “No external factor will affect our joint will to go forward for a collective agreement.” ([“EU says ‘pause’ needed in Iran nuclear deal talks,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 12 March 2022)

Turkey: Biden holds phone conversation with Erdogan

On 10 March, US President Joe Biden held a phone call with Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. According to a statement released by Erdogan’s office, the President called on Biden to remove the “unjust” sanctions imposed on the country’s defence

industry. The US had imposed sanctions on five of Turkey’s officials after Turkey bought Russian missile defence systems. Meanwhile, a White House statement failed to address any specifics regarding the talk on sanctions while it stated that the two leaders “discussed opportunities to strengthen bilateral ties.” Talks also focused on “Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine.” Additionally, Biden appreciated Turkey’s support to bring about a “diplomatic resolution to the conflict.” (Lauren Aratani, [“US conducting ‘legal review’ of possible Russian war crimes in Ukraine – as it happened,”](#) *The Guardian*, 10 March 2022)

The US extends support to Moldova to handle the refugee crisis

On 06 March, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that the US stands united with Moldova as the country experiences inflow of huge number of refugees as a result of the war in Ukraine. So far, 230,000 refugees have gone across the Moldovan border to escape from the Russian attacks. According to Moldovan President Maia Sandu: “In this region now there is no possibility for us to feel safe.” The US administration has urged for humanitarian aid of EUR 2.5 billion to support Moldova in handling the refugee influx. ([“US top diplomat reassures Moldova amid Ukraine crisis,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 06 March 2022)

Report on the UK’s support for aid workers in Afghanistan

On 04 March, a year after the UK’s withdrawal from Afghanistan, questionable support was offered to aid workers in the region. As cited by the BBC: “A report by the Commons International Development Committee found ministers were too slow to provide help to humanitarian workers and Afghans.” Many Afghan aid workers working in Afghanistan felt abandoned as the schemes in place by the UK government were not able to adequately support their evacuation and settlement. Committee’s Chairwoman Sarah Champion said: “We are deeply grateful to aid workers - be they British, Afghan or of other nationalities - for all they have done for the people of Afghanistan...But we are ashamed that the government did not give them the support

that they needed during the UK's withdrawal, or now, during the complex task of delivering an aid programme under Taliban rule." (Becky Morton, "[Afghanistan: MPs' ashamed' over support for aid workers](#)," *BBC*, 04 March 2022)

Mali: Sweden to pull 220 of its soldiers by June 2023

On 03 March, Sweden announced the withdrawal of their UN-authorized peacekeeping troops a year earlier, by June 2023. The Swedish Armed Forces said: "In recent times, conditions have changed in the country, but until our last soldier is home, we continue to conduct operations just as usual." They did not specify a reason for the withdrawal but had mentioned that the presence of Russian military contractors in the West African state was a reason for contention. A Spokesperson for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) said: "We will continue our important work with the Swedish contingent until they leave...Regardless of Sweden's participation, we hope they will continue to provide political support to the efforts of the United Nations in Mali." ("[Sweden announces early pullout of troops from UN Mali mission](#)," *Reuters*, 03 March 2022)

US President vows to resolve the Ukraine conflict

On 02 March, US President Joe Biden in the state of union address said that Russian President Vladimir Putin had undermined

the response of the west in the invasion of Ukraine. He promised: "an unwavering resolve that freedom will always triumph over tyranny." Following the airspace bans by Europe and Canada, the US announced the ban of Russian aircrafts to fly in the US airspace. Both democrats and republicans supported the President's vow and appreciated it. Biden also added: "Putin's war was premeditated and unprovoked. He rejected repeated efforts at diplomacy." ("[Ukraine crisis: Biden threatens to punish Putin over invasion](#)," *BBC*, 02 March 2022)

Ukraine: Putin calls on Russian army to ready nuclear forces for "combat service"

On 27 February, Russian President Vladimir Putin made a statement via a televised address calling on the Russian army to prepare their "deterrence." Putin said: "I order the defence minister and the chief of the general staff of the Russian armed forces to put the deterrence forces of the Russian army into a special mode of combat service." Following this, the Kremlin spokesperson said: "Statements were made by various representatives at various levels on possible altercations or even collisions and clashes between NATO and Russia... We believe that such statements are absolutely unacceptable." Putin's statement has raised concerns of further escalation in the Ukraine crisis while the Kremlin has justified the measure citing possible confrontations with NATO troops. (Carla Bleiker, "[How serious are Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats?](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 28 February 2022)

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