

France Presidential Elections 2022

Return of Macron, and the rise of Le Penn

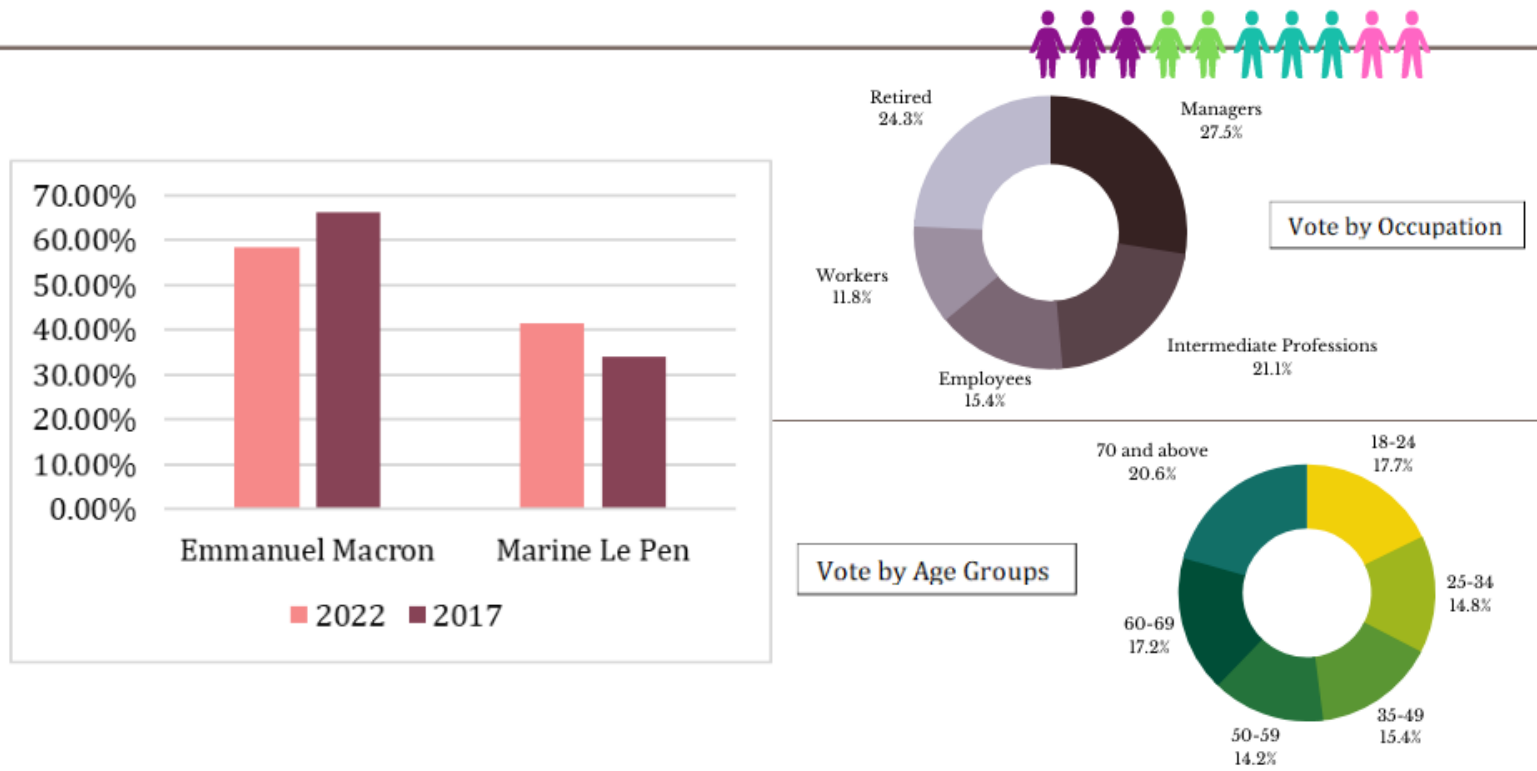


Image source: EM Team/Statista.com/French presidential elections, 02 May 2022

Special Focus

War in Ukraine

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

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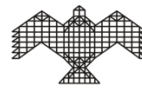
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National Institute of
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About NIAS

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: Daily Updates



Source: BBC, Reuters/Zohra Bensemra, Ukrainian Presidential Press Service/Handout via Reuters, UK Ministry of Defence, Reuters/Alexey Pavlishak/File Photo, Reuters

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 Padmashree Anandhan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Rishma Banerjee, and Emmanuel Selva Royan

EM SHORT NOTES



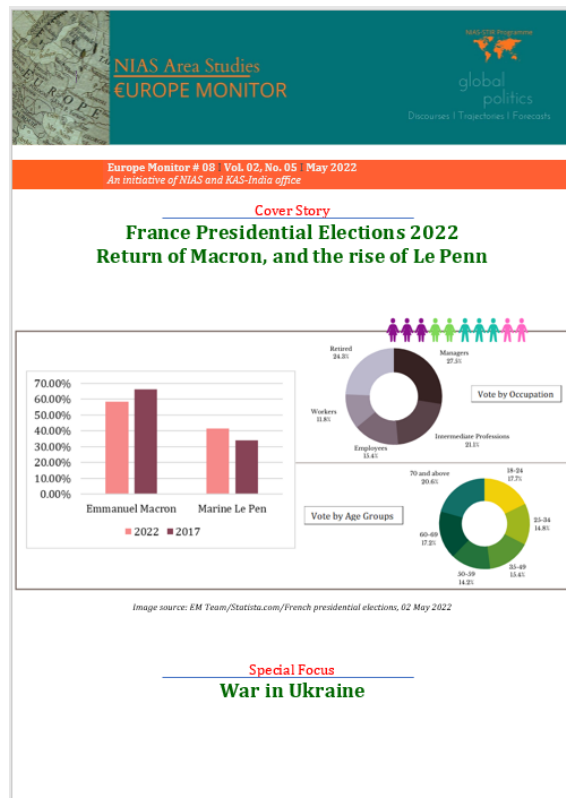
Source: Dursun Aydemir/AA/picture alliance, IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, Xinhua, REUTERS/Henry Nicholls, REUTERS/Bernadett Szabo/File Photo, Joerg Boethling/Alamy

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 Padmashree Anandhan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Rishma Banerjee, Emmanuel Selva Royan, and Sai Pranav

Europe Monitor

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COVER STORY

France Presidential Elections 2022
Return of Macron, and the rise of Le Pen

By Sourina Bej, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Rishma Banerjee, and Padmashree Anandhan

COVER STORY

France Presidential Elections 2022: Return of Macron, and the rise of Le Pen

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I Four challenges ahead for President Macron

On 24 April the French President Emmanuel Macron of the La République En Marche party won the re-election with 58 per cent vote. Compared to 2017, the vote share of the centrist party dwindled; President Macron managed a vote share of 10 per cent more than his far-right contender Marine Le Pen. The latter from Rassemblement National (RN) party hailed her 41.5 per cent vote share in the Presidential election as a "historic score." The far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon has called for a unified left front: "you can beat Macron and choose a different path," said Melenchon.

As the French voters hand Macron a second term, questions now loom large on the parliamentary elections in June 2022. Will it be another comfortable win for Macron or should the country look forward to cohabitation between a centrist President and far-right or left Prime Minister?

Parliamentary Elections in June 2022: Four challenges

The 2022 Presidential election was set against the immediate backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the issue of rising unemployment, rigorous support for the far-left and far-right leaders among younger generations and widespread voter apathy. Setting the tone for the parliamentary election, Macron acknowledged in his victory speech that many had voted for him mainly to thwart his far-right challenger.

In all likelihood, the parliamentary elections could witness a similar competition as the presidential election with four immediate challenges before President Macron.

1. Public discontent, Tattered economy

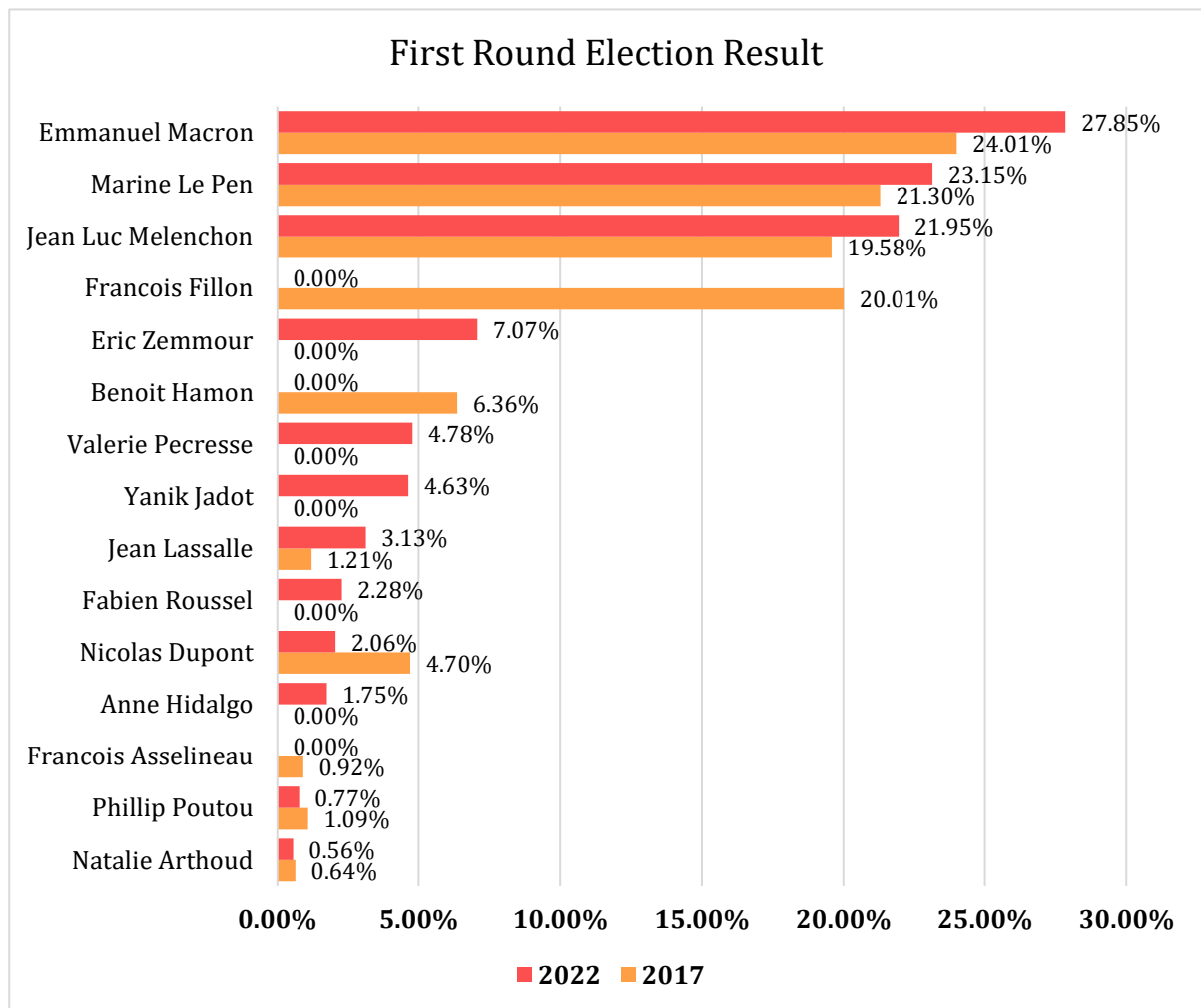
The presidential election witnessed widespread voters' apathy with 2 per cent abstaining voters in the elections. Among the abstainers were mainly France's youth bulge who have been reeling under rising unemployment, inflation and restricted labour laws for a decade.

After his re-election, Macron and his allies have pledged to govern differently but his pro-business reforms, including a law that makes it easier to fire people, have earned much discontent. Deemed as the "president of the rich," the large working middle class of France has reeled under the capitalist industrial class who remains profited from Macron's free market policies. Pegged by the COVID-19 pandemic, the conditions of the middle and lower class further deteriorated, as France struggled to insulate its market from debt shocks. Although Macron promised a new package of laws to address the inflation, he focused less on his own manifesto in his final days and more on preventing the win of Le Pen.

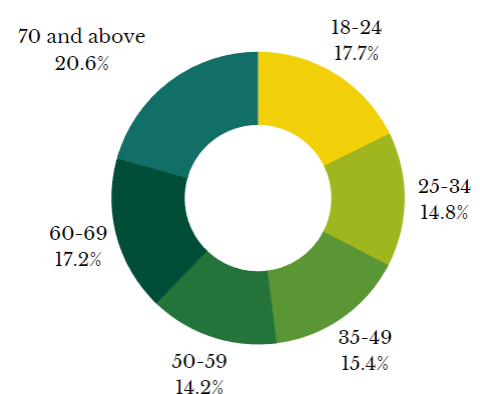
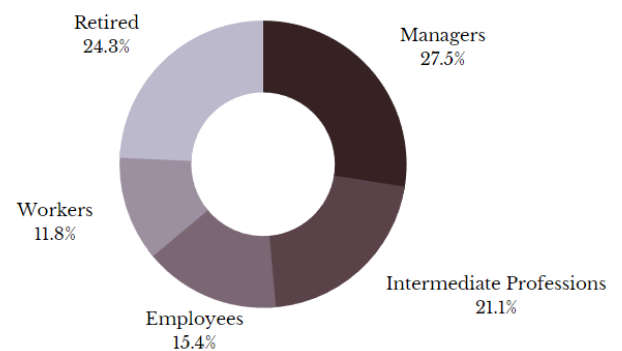
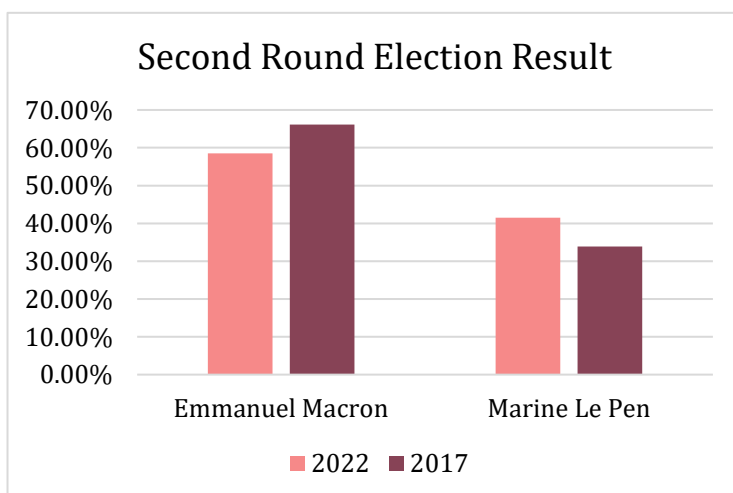
2. A divided body politic

Macron's biggest challenge will now possibly be to create a sense of cohesion in a fragmented country where the far-right political party received 41 per cent of the vote share. Le Pen has succeeded in delivering the political right its largest win in the postwar period with campaign agenda to fight inflation, ban Muslim headscarves in public places and prioritise native French for jobs, housing, and healthcare. It will be difficult to overlook the divisions of the polarised French society, post the killing of the school teacher Samuel Paty.

In spite of swift policy changes by Macron's government such as the anti-separatism law that defines Laïcité/secularism with strict public adherence, the social norms of France have struggled to arrest religious radicalisation and violence. Rather, the



Vote by Occupation and Age Group



country has remained plagued with questions of immigration reception, integration and racism. With clear support for Le Pen in the presidential voting, it remains to be seen whether a polarized body politic tilts more to the nationalist reforms of the political right in an election focused more on the domestic issues.

3. New political alliances

Macron's re-election has shown the weakness of the traditional conservative Les Républicains. As the party scrabbles for alliances to remain relevant in the legislative elections, it opens a path for a political reconfiguration, where the once grand old party will not be decisive anymore. Republicans could now be seen crafting a new message and joining a more conservative far-right force.

The party controls the Senate and municipal councils across France, but its leadership has split since the defeat of Sarkozy in 2012. This gives Macron's centrist party a leeway for an alliance as the Gaullists within the Republicans have considered joining. Challenge remains as another Republican leader Christian Jacob insists that the party remain independent before defections. "We are preparing for the legislative elections, without being mixed up into Le Pen-ism or Macronism," he told Le Figaro in an interview.

"As Macron moves towards a "big new political movement" of rebranding his party, both Le Pen and Mélenchon are set to increase their lawmakers within the legislative assembly."

4. The challenge from far-left

Even though in much of Macron's presidency, the left parties never had a united voice, in April, this culminated with a clear front-runner win for the La France Insoumise leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Following this, La France Insoumise, Europe Ecology–the Greens and the French Communist Party have now engaged in

advanced talks to make Mélenchon's legislative campaign appeal to a broad left-leaning and working-class electorate. Discussions have also begun with the centre-left Socialist Party and the New Anticapitalist Party. Mélenchon's campaign promises such as a hike in the minimum wage, reversal of labour law, re-implementation of wealth tax and repealing recent laws on national security and Islamist 'separatism' have more people's focus. However, building a parliamentary majority and cohabitation with a left-wing government is easier anticipated than done as the idea of left unity has long been rejected. More recently, the Socialist party has failed to reinvent the party politic stuck within the bureaucratic middle classes.

Keeping with the challenges, as much as Macron moves towards a "big new political movement" of rebranding his party, both Le Pen and Mélenchon are set to increase their lawmakers within the legislative assembly. Macron's policy for tax cuts and hint to pick a women Prime Minister "who understands labour, environmental and economic issues," is yet another appeasement policy, but it remains to be seen whether France will be divided or edge towards a political cohesion in the June 2022 elections.

II

Five reasons why Emmanuel Macron won

1. Macron as a progressive champion for pro-European liberals

Macron has always been on a mission to create a new centrist party. He could bridge the traditional divide in French politics and attract voters from both sides – left and right. In 2017, he won the elections with the support of centrist voters of the right and the left. Jean-Luc Mélenchon's elimination in the first round of elections boosted Macron's vote share in the second round. It restored his image as a progressive champion for pro-European liberals and the left's votes.

Macron was also supported by a larger number of candidates post the first round. Candidates such as Valerie Pécresse, Les

Républicains; Yannick Jadot, Europe Ecologie Les Verts; Fabien Roussel, Parti Communiste; and Anne Hidalgo, Parti Socialiste supported his case. Le Pen was endorsed only by Eric Zemmour and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan.

2. The Jean-Luc Mélenchon factor

In the first round of elections, Macron majorly won the votes of the French populace on mainland France. Mélenchon and Le Pen shared the votes of France's overseas territories. In the second round, with Mélenchon asking his voters not to support Le Pen, Macron won the majority of the vote share in the overseas regions and on the mainland.

Regions like Reunion, Mayotte, Martinique and Guadeloupe voted in favour of Macron. Le Pen pushed her social populist strategy while Macron too pushed to attract Mélenchon's vote share. Le Pen did win in some areas of France and its overseas territories. However, she could not obtain a larger vote share as Mélenchon's supporters were inclined to vote for Macron as he belonged to a sociological profile similar to Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

3. Rise of the right and the far-right

In the 2022 elections, compared to the polls in 2017, Le Pen reduced the gap in vote share between Macron and her. In 2017, she had won 33.0 per cent, while in 2022, she won 44.5 per cent. Le Pen conceded her defeat and mentioned, "We have nevertheless been victorious." Her statements come as the right and far-right in France have gained ground since the previous elections. In addition, Le Pen attracted a majority of the working-class voters from many rural and suburban districts, which indicated that Macron's second term would receive resistance unless he won the June 2022 elections and created political cohesion in France. Yet, Macron could secure the majority of votes for her policies and manifesto. The majority in France did not favour her anti-Europe stance and her position with Russia.

Zemmour's rise highlights the recent trend of the rising far-right in France acquiring more prominence. His quick advancement to

political candidacy indicated that the French public had moved further right in a country where policies like social welfare and labour protections have dominated society's backbone. Thus, even though his vote share was not as expected at the polls, he did help Le Pen distinguish herself from the far right, which helped her gain more votes than Mélenchon in the second round.

Due to the rise of the right and especially the far right of France, Macron was able to secure his candidacy as a centrist appealing to both spectrums of people.

4. Invalid ballots and 28 per cent of abstentions

The Presidential elections witness 28 per cent abstentions, the highest in France in over 50 years. Many young people in France have been abstaining from voting, citing that they could only vote for a candidate than an individual they support. The issue of France's voting system was highlighted in the 2022 and the 2017 elections, as many voters who abstained from voting said the system did not represent them. And with the rise of inflation, the COVID-19 pandemic, rising femicide in France and the war in Ukraine, the younger generation feels the voting practice is not an effective participation practice.

The 13,600,000 voters in France who abstained from voting could have changed the outcome of the result if they had participated. If one adds the invalid ballots and abstentions among the recognised votes, then technically, Macron was re-elected with only 38.5 per cent votes. Therefore, if the young voters had not abstained and had voted for Le Pen in a hypothetical scenario, she could have become the President.

"Due to the rise of the right and especially the far right of France, Macron was able to secure his candidacy as a centrist appealing to both spectrums of people."

5. Macron's global image

Macron had far-sighted visions for the EU and Italy's prime minister Mario Draghi, who

endorsed a plan to bring fiscal reforms to the bloc to help the region recover from future shocks. This comes as France has the opportunity to take over the EU's rotating presidency of the 27-member bloc. Thus with former German chancellor Angela Merkel leaving the office, Macron was set to be the next critical leader of Europe. Macron also played a critical role in the war in Ukraine as he shuttled between Eastern European countries and Russia to be a mediator in the war.

He also retained France's role in the Middle East region by involving the country and the EU in reviving the JCPOA talks. This was a part of the E3 of France, Germany, Britain, and the US, trying to save the 2015 Vienna agreement. Furthermore, Macron announced the end of French troop deployment in Mali after nine years. However, that did not undermine France's role in Africa's Sahel region, as Niger had agreed to host some withdrawing troops and forces. Thus, Macron's rise in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa was crucial in attracting the vote shares in mainland France. Africa was crucial in attracting mainland France's vote shares and its overseas territories. His initiatives also launched him from a regional leader to a global leader, paving the way for him to win his second term successfully.

III The rise of Marine Le Pen

A notable aspect of 2022 France election was the rise of right-wing parties in terms of vote share. This election saw not one but two far-right parties gain ground with the electorate. Eric Zemmour and Marine Le Pen representing the far-right received around 30 per cent of the votes in the first round of polling.

Contextualizing Le Pen's gradual rise

Rassemblement National was founded by Marine Le Pen's father Jean-Marie Louis Le Pen in 1972. The party was perceived as racist and anti-Semitic. When Marine Le Pen took over from her father, she rebranded it. Though she is more moderate than Jean-Marie, she continues to be far-right in her views.

Le Pen first competed in the presidential elections in 2012, against the incumbent, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the Socialist candidate, François Hollande. Though she could not reach the second round, she finished third with 18 per cent of the vote share. These were the best numbers National Front had ever won in the French presidential elections, even more than when her father earned a place in the runoff in 2002, against Jacques Chirac.

In 2017, Le Pen finished second to Emmanuel Macron. Just before the second round of the 2017 elections, thousands of internal emails from the Macron campaign were leaked, but that could not effectively dent Macron's win. In the second round, Macron got 66.10 per cent of the votes, to Marine Le Pen's 33.90 per cent.

2017 thus saw Le Pen's party reach the second round for the first time under her leadership, a trend that will be repeated in the next two elections as well. Marking an increased acceptance of her right-wing ideology, it also cemented her position as a heavyweight in the presidential race.

2022: A loss for Marine Le Pen, but, a win for the far-right

In the 2022 election, while the net result has been similar to that of the previous, the numbers indicate a different story. Macron and Le Pen received the most votes in the first round, this time as well. In the second round, Macron secured a win again, but unlike last time, Le Pen was successful in reducing the gap between the number of votes received by her and Macron. While Macron got 58.5 per cent of the votes, Le Pen's share increased from 33.9 per cent in the last elections to 41.5 per cent this year.

"Marine Le Pen's views have gained ground in France because she chose not to go into the campaign with the most radical factions of her camp."

In 2017, Le Pen had topped only 12 of France's 101 departments. But in 2022, the

situation is different, with her beating Macron in 30 of them. Her performance in the first round had been even more impressive with her topping 42 departments, including the big cities, where Macron had greater popularity, as in Marseille, Lille, and Montpellier. Macron, however, managed to recover 12 of those, primarily because he won the support of the left-wing voters, viewing him as the better of the two evils. In the north and east, which has been a victim of deindustrialization and job losses, Le Pen's party established their strongholds.

Le Pen's success in France: Four reasons

First, Le Pen's position. Le Pen advocated a France-for-the-French policy, whereby social housing, reducing the cost of living, increasing welfare, and fighting Islamism was her 'national priority.' She was also for lesser dependency on the European Union and openly appreciated the UK for Brexit, contemplating a similar fate for France as well. This anti-foreigner, anti-system viewpoint has found its way into the French psyche and political landscape. Polls have revealed that many believed that Le Pen will be successful in calming the political unrest in France and Europe at large.

Second, Zemmour's extremism. The radical and aggressive nature of Eric Zemmour has further helped in softening the image of Le Pen, thus appealing to a greater population. Eric Zemmour, a famous TV and radio personality, known for his anti-Islam stance, also competed for the presidential elections in 2022. Representing Reconquete, and with the backing of French billionaire Vincent Bolloré, Zemmour spoke for his racist and polemic views. Zemmour, who has previously been convicted of inciting racial discrimination in 2011 and again in 2018, argued that France is declining because of immigrants and the "Islamisation" and "feminization" of society.

Third, her policy recommendations. She proposed cutting the income tax for everyone under 30, reducing VAT on fuel from 20 to 5.5 per cent, and abolishing VAT on several other essential items. She also proposed that the wages at businesses and of teachers be upped by a certain

percentage. She suggested a rise in the minimum state pension to EUR 1000 and rejected Macron's suggestion of increasing the pension age from 62 to 65. Stricter rules for entering France and becoming naturalized citizens, and French nationals being given housing and social services ahead of foreigners were also some of her policy suggestions. Acting on an anti-Islam stance, Le Pen wanted to ban women from wearing headscarves in public places and to be fined if they did. According to her, headscarves represent a sort of uniform, allied with the radical vision of Islam.

Fourth, the instability faced by France, regarding the yellow vests protests and the Covid-19 crisis and Macron's inability to properly control the narrative, strengthened Le Pen's projection that Macron was a "president of chaos" responsible for dividing France's populace.

To conclude, Marine Le Pen's views have gained ground in France because she chose not to go into the campaign with the most radical factions of her camp. She rather attempted to be more palatable, transforming her public image from before, appealing to a larger crowd as the level-headed leader, more capable of running the country than Macron. Her campaign also highlighted issues like the cost of living, more than immigration and national identity. She also attempted to break down ideological barriers. This strategy worked for her as she gained 17 per cent of far-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon's electorate but also 18 per cent of the centre-right Valérie Pécresse's voters, between the first and second rounds.

IV

What does Macron's victory mean for France and the EU

The victory of La République En Marche does not just end with Macron's continuity but opens the stage to look into an increased share of the Right in the elections, France's looming domestic issues, and the larger threat posed to EU's integration. The commentary strives to bring out the possible outcomes of the French elections at the domestic and the regional level.

Three issues at the domestic level

First, the split in the political landscape. Comparing the election results of the first round of 2017 and 2022, there is a split amongst the voters. While the traditional Les Républicains have lost a major vote share. It is not only the rise of the far-right but also the far left where Jean-Luc Mélenchon has won close in the first round against Marine Le Pen. It indicates the failure of Macron's centrist party to establish a long root in France. The vote share of the other parties combined comes to 68 per cent with that of La République En Marche. With the split widening amongst the parties, questions about the future leadership of France. The upcoming parliamentary elections provide two possibilities. One, French President Emmanuel Macron's win, will give him a chance to change the minds of the divided voters, and two, it gives a chance for the next leader to prove for the next round of elections. Observing the French democracy, the coming years will reflect fluctuating results.

Second, social, business, and economic fallouts. The effect of the Ukraine war and post-covid recovery have been the testing factors for Macron's presidency. Although both the issues were well dealt with at the regional level, France Macron's policies did not meet the expectations at the domestic. The business groups saw the election result as a boon, but with increasing sanctions and restrictions to operate in Russia, which holds the biggest share of French businesses, the expectations are higher than ever for Macron to come up with alternate policies. Other

issues include rising energy costs, food prices, unemployment, tax breaks, inflation, and immigration reform. Macron's promise to launch the initiative on the "purchasing power package," and pressure from the far-right for anti-social reforms provide less hope for larger development due to the complex variety of internal issues.

Third, immigration reform. In his first term as French president, Macron's migration policy did not go well. He was criticized by the UN in 2018 for regressive policies, inhuman conditions, and ill-treatment of asylum seekers. As per January 2021 data, 3.7 million were non-EU residents which was a lesser count compared to other EU states. With a shift in the polls amongst the minority groups towards the far-left and the influx of refugees from Ukraine, provides a second chance for Macron to re-correct his missteps. The push at the local level to house and assist Ukrainian children in French schools and EU-wide protection to allow Ukrainians to process "residence permit" are expected to remain. Macro's refugee reform will also extend to the welfare of Muslim immigrants to rebuild the relations and ensure the favour returns in the 2027 elections. Through this, the vote split can be avoided.

"The temporary threat of the right to win the elections might have been deterred, but the upcoming political landscape of France will be a decider in making or breaking the long-aimed united defence posture of Europe."

Three issues at the regional level

First, the ideology game. The 2022 French elections were not mere choosing of the next president but a war between two ideologies. With Russia's launching war in Ukraine, the far-right parties were observed to have adopted Russian leader Vladimir Putin's ideology, "political model, and nationalist claims," which has created a greater threat to the fundamental values of Europe, freedom, democracy, and rule of law. Grave concerns

have risen amongst the EU and the neighbouring states, Portugal, Spain, and Germany with the far-right candidate Le Pen gaining 41.46 per cent in the elections. Therefore, keeping the centrist leader Macron in position is not the party's responsibility but a regional concern to keep a democratic leader in place. Letting a far-right lead France will further cause the breakage of European Unity, and the practice of democracy. The parliamentary elections pose a threat to maintaining peace in the EU, as the left and the right plan to unite. EU's law-making decision will be in trouble with any other party winning the election.

Second, the French invoked EU solidarity. Macron's equation with the EU is also observed to benefit the region's unity and cooperation. This can be evidenced by how France's presidency of the Council of the European Union persuaded the EU in "common debt to fund programmes" taking united efforts in tackling COVID-19, improving the role of the euro at the international, and supporting Ukraine against Russia. Under Macron, the EU has gained more solidarity through implementing "social protection systems," which is a historic recovery plan. Apart from this increased participation in new tech investments, European defence, social justice, and also towards carbon-neutral sustainable practices. Therefore, with Macron continuing his leadership, it will help in blend relations, and make France a forerunner to bring EU member states together.

Third, France and NATO. The rise of the right and Le Pen's campaign proposal to remove France from NATO alarmed the member states, especially Finland and Sweden who were considering applying for membership due to security threats from Russia. With the ongoing Ukraine war and Macron's efforts, the defence collaboration amongst the states has grown towards establishing larger EU-NATO defence cooperation. The temporary threat of the right to win the elections might have been deterred, but the upcoming political landscape of France will be a decider in making or breaking the long-aimed united defence posture of Europe.

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War in Ukraine: Daily Updates*

By Padmashree Anandhan, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, Rishma Banerjee, and Emmanuel Selva Royan



Source: BBC, Reuters/Zohra Bensemra, Ukrainian Presidential Press Service/Handout via Reuters, UK Ministry of Defence, Reuters/Alexey Pavlishak/File Photo, Reuters

War in Ukraine: Day 65

War on the Ground:
Zelenskyy's address, people stuck in Ukraine ports

Zelenskyy's address

On 29 April, President Zelenskyy in his daily address spoke about Russia's continuous attacks in the Kharkiv and Donbas regions. He referred to increasing aggression by Russia and said: "Constant brutal bombings, constant Russian strikes at infrastructure and residential areas show that Russia wants to make this area uninhabited. Therefore, the defence of our land, the protection of our people is literally a struggle for life." Zelenskyy also spoke about talking to president Biden about the Lend-Lease program and thanked him for it. He also mentioned how the country was looking how to prevent a fuel deficit in the country, in spite of Russia trying its best to destroy the infrastructure in place for proper

production, storage and supply of fuel. He also criticized Russia's strike on Kyiv, during his talks with UN chief, António Guterres and said: "and this says a lot about Russia's true attitude to global institutions, about the efforts of the Russian leadership to humiliate the UN and everything that the organisation represents."

Ukraine sends a letter to WHO

On 29 April Ukraine's diplomatic mission in Geneva, Switzerland sent a letter to the WHO, requesting a meeting urgently. This is to discuss the impact of Russia's invasion on the health and health care infrastructure in Ukraine. The letter which was signed by 38 members in the European region like France, Germany and the UK was addressed to the regional director of Europe, Hans Kluge, requesting him to convey a meeting before 9 May.

*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.

Peace talks with Russia might collapse

President Zelenskyy in an interview with Poland's journalists said that he was pessimistic about the continuation of negotiations with Russia. He said that given the nature of Russian aggression and the public anger with Russian atrocities it might become difficult for Ukraine to conduct peace talks.

About 500 people still stuck in ships in Ukraine's ports

Ukraine's shipping officials said that the skeleton crew stuck in the 109 ships in Ukraine's ports were still stuck there. The number of people who still have not been evacuated was just under 500. These crew members were left on board to facilitate the evacuation of their crewmates. International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) association along with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) reported that around 1,500 merchant sailors have been evacuated from these vessels. Natalie Shaw, an official at the ICS said: The escape route out of 'the apocalypse' must be open to these seafarers as well."

The Moscow view:**Claims by Russia****Russia's defence ministry claims**

On 29 April, Russia's defence ministry released a video that showed a series of Kalibr missiles emerging from the sea and going off to hit what the ministry said were Ukraine's military targets. Russia reportedly used a diesel submarine, and this is the first time they have made an announcement about using their submarine fleet in Ukraine. The ministry also released a picture of shows a person from the UK who has been captured and is being questioned by Russia's forces. The man, who says his name is Andrew Hill, seems to be injured, with a bandaged left arm and head, and with blood on his right arm. The defence ministry said that he has been captured after he surrendered to Russia's troops in the Mykolaiv region in southwestern Ukraine. The defence ministry also confirmed their use of two "high-precision, long-range air-based weapons" in Kyiv, on the day UN Chief Antonio Guterres was visiting the city. They reported that they had destroyed the Artyom missile and space enterprise in Kyiv.

Sergei Lavrov's comments about nuclear war

The foreign minister said that the country is not considering a war against NATO when it comes to its invasion of Ukraine. He said that this would increase the risks of a nuclear war significantly. As cited by the *RIA news agency*, Lavrov also said that Ukraine was responsible for stalled peace talks between the two countries.

Most senior lawmaker says Ukraine is mortgaging itself to the US

On 29 April, Russia's parliamentarian, Vyacheslav Volodin said that by accepting the Lend-Lease loan, Zelenskyy was driving the country into a veritable debt trap. The speaker of the lower house of the Parliament said: "Lend-Lease is a commodity loan, and not cheap: many future generations of Ukrainian citizens will pay for all the ammunition, equipment and food that the United States will supply."

Separatist official reports shelling by Ukraine in Donetsk

On 29 April, the separatist mayor of Donetsk, Alexey Kulemzin reported that Ukraine's army had damaged an oil depot in Donetsk by shelling. He said: "As a result of the bombardment of the Kirovsky district, a Ukrainian missile damaged a container at an oil depot... Four electric substations have been damaged, 50 residents are without electric power."

Reports of evacuation to Russia from Ukraine

On 29 April, it was reported that Russia's National Defence Management Center's Colonel General Mikhail Mizintsev has said that a total of 19,442 people were evacuated to Russia. He also spoke about how they have been evacuated from the 'dangerous areas in Ukraine' without any assistance from the Ukrainian authorities.

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

On 29 April, close to 200 Ukrainians were sent back from the US border in Mexico. It was due to the closure of the San Diego border checkpoint by the US authorities which allows the entry of refugees from

Ukraine. More than 100 have reached Mexico through trans-Atlantic flights, which has become the new point for processing asylum requests.

On 29 April, upon Russia's move to cut down the gas supplies, the EU and the US vowed to expand their exports of liquified natural gas to Europe till 2030. Previously both parties were against the exchange as it mandates the use of fossil fuels, in the reduction of greenhouse gases and conflicts with policy goals. According to the senior director for climate and energy at the National Security Council: "There's a real potential here for Europe to signal the demand for U.S. LNG and for our U.S. LNG providers to provide that gas to them in the form of long-term contracts."

The EU

The eurozone which grew at a diffident pace in the first three months of the year currently faces a risk of economic recession due to the Ukraine war. On 29 April, the European Union statistics agency reported that the eurozone's GDP, a measure of goods and services had shot by 0.2 per cent higher in the last three months of 2021. As far as the US is concerned, the economy is constricted by 1.4 per cent. According to the vice president of the European Central Bank: "This surge in energy prices is reducing demand and raising production costs. The war is also weighing heavily on business and consumer confidence and has created new bottlenecks. These developments point to slower growth in the period ahead."

Poland

On 29 April, Poland sent 240 soviet styled tanks to Ukraine which will help last for two tank brigades. Apart from this T-72 tanks were provided along with self-propelled howitzers, grad rocket launchers and other weaponry from Poland. The continued supply of heavy equipment by Poland shows the increase in pace to help out Ukraine. Other European countries, the Czech Republic, Germany, and the US have also sent their T-72 tanks, 50 Flakpanzer Gepard anti-aircraft cannon tanks and USD 33 billion as military aid.

Latvia

On 29 April, Latvia's banking sector which was known for its scandals tried to reverse its reputation using the Ukraine war. It has done so by obliging to the sanctions imposed by the EU and has limited its operations with both Belarus and Russia. According to the deputy head of anti-money-laundering at Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken: "We are tracking all transactions in [Russian] rubles, it doesn't matter which side of the transaction [they are on]. We are stopping them, and checking those customers and their counterparties."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

The UN

On 29 April, United Nations secretary-general António Guterres after his visit to Kyiv. He said: "Two rockets have exploded in Kyiv. I was shocked to be informed that two rockets exploded in the city where I am." He assured that the UN would work towards a ceasefire and in helping Ukraine with cash assistance to reduce human suffering.

Indonesia

On 29 April, Indonesia's president Joko Widodo who will host the G-20 cooperation meet has come forward and stated that Indonesia was ready to coordinate the peace talks between Russia and Ukraine. Earlier, the US had called for the expelling of Russia from the G20 forum, and now with Indonesia's announcement on remaining fair means Russia will be invited to attend.

Brazil

The food crisis for certain commodities have risen because of the huge share Russia and Ukraine held in Agriculture. The possibility for Brazil to become the next biggest wheat producer is at peak now. According to analysts, they predict an increase of 40 per cent in the national wheat production. Previously if Brazil had planned on producing a protein rich variety of tropical wheat it would have not been profitable, but with the war in place, the farmers of Brazil are considering to switch patterns to shoot up the volumes and fill the gap of demand left out by Russia and Ukraine.

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War in Ukraine: Day 64

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy's address, cruise missile attacks on Kyiv, and Mariupol

Zelenskyy on the Russian missile strikes

On 28 April, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressed the two Russian cruiser missile strikes on Kyiv. He called on the people of Ukraine and mentioned that the recent strikes were a reminder not to let their guard down. He stated how Russia's shelling of Mariupol did not stop even when the UN secretary-general visited Moscow and Kyiv. He added: "Russian missile strikes at Ukraine - Kyiv, Fastiv, Odesa, and other cities - again prove that we cannot let our guard down. We cannot think that the war is over. We still have to fight. We still have to drive the occupiers out." He further thanked the US for their support and for approving the WWII-era lend-lease program to bring military equipment to Ukrainian forces and called for a strong response to Russia's strikes.

Zelenskyy on Ukraine's estimated damages

On 28 April, Zelenskyy claimed that the total damages of war inflicted upon Ukraine totaled USD 600 billion. He added: "More than 32 million square meters of living space, more than 1,500 educational facilities and more than 350 medical facilities have been destroyed or damaged." In addition, according to him, more than 11.5 million Ukrainians had fled their home, and about five million had gone abroad. He stated that most of the damage inflicted was on railways, roadways and bridge infrastructure.

Russia's cruise missile attacks on Kyiv

On 28 April, following a missile strike on the western part of Kyiv, the citizens said they were still in shock. A person inside the building mentioned: "We heard the first strike. And then a second missile hit the building. We don't know if people died." The attack occurred as the UN secretary-general was visiting Kyiv.

Russian soldiers accused of human rights abuses in Bucha

On 28 April, Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Venediktova mentioned that they were able to identify and name 10 Russian soldiers that were allegedly involved in human rights abuses at Bucha. The ICC has been ramping up its investigation of alleged war crimes committed in Ukraine. On the same day, she mentioned that Russia had handed over 12 civilians and 33 soldiers. However, she did not mention how many Russians were involved in the exchange.

Deported Ukrainians in Russia mistreated

On 28 April, a red cross volunteer Volodymyr Khropun shared how Russians were detaining Ukrainians and torturing them in occupied regions. Volodymyr said: "We were beaten with rifles, punched, and kicked. They blindfolded me and tied my hands with duct tape. They used Tasers and kept asking for information about the military."

Foreign Minister Kuleba on missile strikes in Kyiv

On 28 April, Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba called the strikes by Russia on Kyiv an act of heinous barbarism. He added: "Russia [struck] Kyiv with cruise missiles right when UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres and Bulgarian PM Kiril Petkov visited our capital. By this heinous act of barbarism, Russia demonstrates once again its attitude towards Ukraine, Europe and the world."

Bomb strikes on Azovstal plant

On 28 April, a local official mentioned that the Russian forces were shelling the Azovstal steelworks as hundreds of fighters and civilians are still believed to be trapped. Chief of the Mariupol patrol police said:

"First, there was a massive airstrike using seven Tu-22M3 aircraft. Then there were more than 50 airstrikes. Apparently, either the Su-25s worked, or the Su-24s."

Concerning the exhibits in the museums of Mariupol

On 28 April, the Mariupol city council claimed that Russian forces removed more than 2,000 unique exhibits in museums. The council stated: "Mariupol City Council is preparing materials for law enforcement agencies to initiate criminal proceedings and appeal to Interpol."

Presidential advisor thanks Germany

On 28 April, Ukraine's presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak thanked Germany for providing "heavy weapons and complex [weapons] systems". This comes as the Bundestag passed a vote to shift Germany's policy on sending heavy equipment to Ukraine. The petition read: "Alongside the broad economic isolation and decoupling of Russia from international markets, the most important and effective means to stop the Russian invasion is to intensify and speed up the delivery of effective weapons and complex systems including heavy arms."

Ukraine's parliamentary energy committee reassures the country

On 28 April, Ukraine's parliamentary energy committee head Andriy Herus assured the country that it had enough gas and electricity for its needs. He added: "Today, if we talk about gas volumes, we have enough. We consume less gas than is produced and even Today gas is pumped into underground storage facilities."

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Protests in Russia against the withdrawal of Western brands

On 28 April, mysterious art installations were set up in St Petersburg, which read: "we will replace". The word ZAMESTIM was made up of letters, and each first letter was for an international brand that suspended operations in Russia. *BBC* stated: "Z is for Zara. A is for Adidas. M means McDonald's..." This comes as hundreds of international companies had pulled out of Russia in protest of Moscow's invasion of Kyiv.

Putin threatens the West

On 28 April, Russia's president Vladimir Putin warned against any foreign intervention in Ukraine. He mentioned that if any country intervened in Ukraine, they would face a lightning-fast response. He further said: "We have all the tools no one can boast of... we will use them if necessary...in what is seen as a reference to ballistic missiles and nuclear arms."

Blasts in Russian city near Ukraine

On 28 April, Russian authorities said two blasts were heard in the Russian city of Belgorod near the border with Ukraine. Russia has been reporting a series of attacks lately by Ukrainian forces near Belgorod and other southern regions that border Ukraine. Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that the Ukrainians were testing their patience.

Russia accuses OSCE of mishandling information

On 28 April, authorities in Russia accused the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) of handing over the information of Russian forces to the West and Ukrainian intelligence. OSCE has been monitoring its missions since 2014 in eastern Ukraine, where Russian backed separatists have been fighting Ukraine's army.

Russia alleges cyber provocation by Ukraine, the US, NATO

On 28 April, Zakharova said Moscow had evidence that mentioned how the Kyiv regime was preparing major cyber provocations against Russia. She said: "The Kiev regime, the US and the West, including NATO and EU institutions, collectively have started preparations for a major cyber provocation. We have been getting the evidence." Earlier, Ukraine's vice prime minister said that "the world's first cyber army composed of around 300,000 technicians has been formed," in Ukraine.

Zakharova on the West encouraging Kyiv to attack Russia

On 28 April, foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused the US of pushing Kyiv to attack Russia using NATO weapons. Zakharova mentioned: "We have already

commented the other day on statements by British Deputy Defence Minister [James] Heappey about okaying Ukraine's strikes on Russian military targets." She further stated that the Ukrainian military's criminal activities would be held accountable, and Ukraine's strikes would lead to a harsh response from Russia.

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

On 28 April, the US Justice Department brought focus on "sanction evasion and export control violations" in its white-collar enforcement program. According to deputy attorney general Lisa Monaco: "The way that multinational companies have to think about how these sanctions regimes are going to be affecting their businesses is critically important, and something we should be having conversations about." Through this, the acts of bribery and payments by the MNCs to foreign officials will be banned and prohibited.

On 28 April, a research team from Microsoft Corp found that close to six hacker groups from Russia had been involved in hundreds of cyberattacks in malfunctioning of computers in Ukraine. When tracking the attacks, it saw that many kinetic military manoeuvres had been used to disrupt the operations and along with cyber espionage. According to Microsoft's vice president of customer security and trust: "The attacks have not only degraded the systems of institutions in Ukraine but have also sought to disrupt people's access to reliable information and critical life services."

NATO

On 28 April, Finland and Sweden approached NATO for membership, secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said that NATO will be open to welcoming both countries into joining the alliance. He said: "Finland and Sweden are our closest partners, they are strong, mature democracies, EU members, and we have worked with Finland and Sweden for many, many years." Apart from this he also remarked that both countries met the standards of NATO armed forces and the

alliances hoped to work together to build forces and enhance military exercise.

Poland and Bulgaria

On 28 April, on Russia's move to halt the gas supply to Poland and Bulgaria, Europe accused Russia, of calling it to blackmail. As a result, the prices of natural gas increased across Europe.

Bulgaria's prime minister, Kiril Petkov on his visit to Kyiv discussed on energy exports and promised to import electricity into Bulgaria and the Balkans. He also vowed to supply natural gas through a "trans-Balkan pipeline."

Germany

On 28 April, Germany's parliament officially agreed to supply Ukraine with heavy weapons to fight against Russia. The announcement comes after approval from the conservatives, and a smaller far-Right Alternative. Previously the government had announced a U-turn policy marking the supply of modified tanks to Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

MNCs

One of the renowned France automakers, Renault SA announced to transfer of 68 per cent of Russia's share to a NAMI which is a state-owned automotive company. The plan has been set in a way for the France car company with an option to buy back the share after five to six years. The entity was observed to be continuing its operations earlier in Russia and had attempted to reform its supply chain to meet the gaps in missing parts for manufacturing due to sanctions. Once the attempts failed, leading to the depletion of cash reserves of the company, the decision was made.

On 28 April, agricultural companies such as Archer Daniels Midland Co., Bunge Ltd. BG and Cargill Inc. have largely benefitted due to the Ukraine War. The gain comes due to sustaining demand for global foods despite the rising prices. The supply of wheat, corn, livestock feed, and vegetable oils has narrowed down due to the war and bad weather conditions in South America.

Thereby the above companies which deal with the exchange of the agricultural commodities have benefitted from the crop-supply crunch. According to chief executive Greg Heckman: "These market disruptions are rerouting many traditional trade flows and contributing to crop price inflation. Industry margins spiked globally due to the combination of continued strong demand and an even tighter supply outlook."

The UN

On 28 April, secretary-general of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres post the visit to Moscow, met president Zelenskyy. After the meet, Guterres observed Bucha, where mass graves were found and the area has come under the target of the war-crime investigation. During his visit, he said: "I appeal to the Russian Federation to accept to cooperate with the International Criminal Court. But when we talk about war crimes, we cannot forget that the worst of crimes is war itself." Apart from his visit to Bucha, during the meeting with president, he expressed his deep concerns about the view of damaged buildings and on families that were killed in the war.

The UN high commissioner reported that so far 5,372,854 people had left Ukraine, out of which three million have crowded into Poland. This has resulted in 200,000 children registering for Poland's public school system since the Ukraine war.

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War in Ukraine: Day 63

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy's address; derussification

On 27 April, in his daily address, president Zelenskyy said that he presented a proposal to president Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission, and they have agreed to remove all duties and quotas on Ukrainian exports for a year. He said: "Russia is trying to provoke a global price crisis. To start chaos in all basic markets and especially in the food market. Ukrainian exports will help stabilize markets. So it is beneficial not only for us but also for all Europeans. For residents of all countries that can be affected by Russia's destructive ambitions." He mentioned that he had spoken with the president of Indonesia about food security.

According to Zelenskyy, president Widodo has extended an invitation to him to attend the G20 meeting to be held later this year. He also said that he had talked to the prime minister of Italy and thanked him for their commitment to investigate the crimes committed by Russia.

Ukraine undergoes a process of derussification

On 27 April, the city council said that it had identified 467 locations that would be renamed to avoid triggering memories of Russian aggression in the nation. This came after a huge monument signifying friendship between Russia and Ukraine was dismantled on 26 April. The list includes a central square named after Leo Tolstoy, and another street named after Lake Baikal, in Russia. Ihor Terekhov, the mayor of the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, suggested that after the war was over, he would introduce a bill to rename all Russia-affiliated names and said: "Even without these names, there will be too many scars that will remind us for a long time about what kind of neighbour is beyond our eastern and northern borders,"

Russian forces stop a pro-Ukraine rally

On 27 April, the prosecutor general of Ukraine said that Russia had used tear gas and stun grenades to stop a pro-Ukraine rally in Kherson. The city has been occupied by Russian forces and was the first one to fall, and it reportedly has appointed its own mayor. The rally received a mark of appreciation from president Zelenskyy, who thanked everyone who has not yet given up.

Russia captures several eastern villages

On 27 April, it was reported that in an effort to further consolidate their attack on Donbas, Russian forces have been successful in capturing several villages in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's defence ministry reported that Velyka, Komyshevukha and Zavody, in the north-eastern Kharkiv region, Zarichne and Novotoshivske in Donetsk saw Russian forces push Ukraine's troops out.

Odesa's bridges attacked

Russia struck a strategically important bridge in the Odesa region, with two missiles. Ukraine says that this will be

affecting their export plans through Danube ports. This bridge links the mouth of the Danube river with Odesa and was being considered by Kyiv as one of the ways to carry on exports given that their Black Sea ports are blocked.

Mariupol offensive continues

On 27 April, it was reported that the steelworks in Mariupol was still under attack, and there had been no let-up in airstrikes in the region. This is in the context of UN secretary-general Guterres's talks with Putin about establishing humanitarian corridors in the region. On the Telegram messaging app, Petro Andriushchenko, an aide to the city mayor said: "Air attacks on Azovstal are not subsiding. No ceasefire, but attempts to storm again and again. Despite the statements (by Putin)... At the same time, street fighting continues again in the sector between the Azovstal plant's management (buildings) to the street."

Attacks in western Ukraine

While the offensive in the eastern part of the country in the Donbas region continues with full gusto, Russian forces have started focusing that aggression on the Western parts of the country as well. This may be an effort to destabilise the national economy as well as the connectivity roots like the railway network and bridges and fuel depots.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin's address

On 27 April, president Putin said that the sanctions that have been imposed on Russia, at the request of Ukraine, by several countries, were "rude" and "clumsy". In an address to the parliament, Putin said that countries trying to interfere in the Ukraine war should expect a 'lightning-fast' response. He said: "All the tasks of the special military operation we are conducting in the Donbas and Ukraine, launched on 24 February, will be unconditionally fulfilled."

Russia's defence ministry claims

On 27 April, Russia's defence ministry reported that their missiles have hit an arms depot in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, which especially stored weapons received

from the United States and European countries. Reportedly, 59 Ukrainian military targets had been hit overnight.

Tensions increase in Moldova

On 27 April, Transdniestria reported that explosions had damaged two radio masts and that one of their military units have also been attacked. The offensive has been escalating in the Transdniestria region of Moldova which Ukraine had accused Russia of dragging into the war. However, the self-styled president of Transdniestria, Vadim Krasnoselsky blamed Ukraine and said: "The traces of these attacks lead to Ukraine...I assume that those who organised this attack have the purpose of dragging Transdniestria into the conflict."

Russia bans British parliamentarians

On 27 April, 287 parliamentarians from the UK would be banned from entering the country. They have been accused of fuelling Russophobic hysteria in Britain. The foreign ministry issued a statement that said: "These persons... took the most active part in the establishment of anti-Russian sanctions instruments in London, and contribute to the groundless whipping up of Russophobic hysteria in the UK."

Blasts in South Russia

On 27 April, blasts were heard in the south of the country and a fire broke out at an ammunition depot. Blasts were also heard in Kursk and in Voronezh. These incidents follow the reports of a major fire at a Russian oil storage facility in Bryansk, and an attack on a fuel depot in Belgorod. But, Ukraine's presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak without directly admitting to the offensive said: "If you (Russians) decide to massively attack another country, massively kill everyone there, massively crush peaceful people with tanks, and use warehouses in your regions to enable the killings, then sooner or later the debts will have to be repaid."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 27 April, the US secretary of state Antony Blinken mentioned to Congress about the US plans to open its embassy in Kyiv. However, he cautioned the people going back, saying

the Russians were "booby-trapping things like peoples' washing machines and toys so that when people are able to return home and go about their lives, they're killed or injured."

On the same day, the US announced to provide USD 670 million in food assistance to combat food insecurity across the globe. The Guardian reported: "The agencies are allocating \$282m in US food commodities to six countries in the Horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen. Another \$388m will go toward logistics, including transportation and shipping." This comes as a pandemic, the war in Ukraine and a severe drought in the eastern regions of Africa had caused food shortages.

The UK

On 27 April, UK's foreign secretary Liz Truss mentioned that as part of the West's long term support to Ukraine, the western powers should provide warplanes to Kyiv. She added: "must be prepared for the long haul and double down on our support." She further stated that NATO had only provided lighter weaponry amid fears of escalation. Truss said: "If Putin succeeds, there will be untold further misery across Europe and terrible consequences across the globe. We would never feel safe again." She also called on the West to overhaul its approach to international security.

On the same day, Truss mentioned how the West needed to straighten their collective defence to deter another invasion. She said the G7 group of leading nations should act as an "economic NATO" and that they should be prepared to open their doors to countries such as Finland and Sweden as they plan on joining NATO. Truss added: "We need a global Nato...By that, I don't mean extending the membership to those from other regions. I mean that Nato must have a global outlook, ready to tackle global threats."

Also, on 27 April, UK's prime minister Boris Johnson responded to Russia sanctioning members of the house of commons. He said: "Within the last hour or so, it's been reported that 287 members of this House have been sanctioned by the Russian state," he called it "a badge of honour."

Poland

On 27 April, a former head of Poland's army Gen Waldemar Skrzypczak accused Jhonson of "tempting evil" as the UK trained Ukrainian soldiers in Poland with anti-aircraft missiles. Furthermore, the individual accused Jhonson of revealing the military secrets of Poland as this could escalate tensions with Russia. Skrzypczak said: "The prime minister may not be aware of it, but with such statements, he puts the success of the entire military operation at risk, as well as the safety of the soldiers."

On the same day, Poland's prime minister Mateusz Morawieck accused Russia of directly attacking the country by cutting its gas supplies. Morawieck said Russia was pushing the boundaries of its "gas imperialism" after carrying out murderous attacks on Ukraine.

Belarus

On 27 April, the lower house of parliament approved a law that made attempted acts of terrorism punishable by the death penalty. This comes as activists in the country were sabotaging parts of the railway network to cause hindrances for Russia to deploy its forces into Ukraine. House speaker Vladimir Andreychenko said: "Destructive forces are continuing terrorist extremist activity by trying to rock the situation in Belarus, provoking domestic instability and conflicts."

Bulgaria

On 27 April, Bulgaria's energy minister mentioned that the country was prepared to provide alternative sources of energy to the country. This comes as Bulgaria stated that it would not use Gazprom's new payment system. He added: "The two-stage payment procedure proposed by Russia poses significant risks. In practice, we would lose control over our money when paying in US dollars – since the Russian bank is responsible for converting into rubles, there is no clarity about the exchange rate."

Moldova

On 27 April, Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria mentioned that Ukraine had launched drone attacks and fired shots on the village of Kolbasna, Rybnitsa region. The statement said: "On the morning of 27 April,

at 8.45 am, shots were fired from the Ukrainian side in the direction of the Pridnestrovian settlement of Kolbasna."

The EU

On 27 April, the European Commission said it was proposing to suspend the import duties on all Ukrainian products to help the country economically. The proposal was for a one-year suspension to support the country as it continues to defend itself against Russia. The bloc's economy commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said: "It will help alleviate the difficult situation of Ukrainian producers and exporters in the face of Russia's military invasion."

On the same day, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen condemned Russia for blackmailing Europe by cutting off supplies to Poland and Bulgaria. She said: "The announcement by Gazprom that it is unilaterally stopping delivery of gas to customers in Europe is yet another attempt by Russia to use gas as an instrument of blackmail." She further said that the EU was prepared for this scenario but what Russia did was unjustified and unacceptable.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Australia

On 27 April, Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison blamed the war in Ukraine and the pandemic for supply chain distortions that caused inflation. His comments come as Australia faces a record rise in living costs which could hinder his re-election possibilities.

Kazakhstan

On 27 April, Kazakhstan said it might declare a prominent Russian TV host persona non grata for his comments on the country. The host had mentioned: "Central Asian nations could meet the same fate as Ukraine if they did not side decisively with Russia."

Kazakhstan's foreign ministry spokesperson Aibek Smadiyarov stated that the reporters comments were insulting and lacked any objectivity.

The UN

On 27 April, the UN tourism body announced that it had suspended Russia's membership.

However, Moscow claimed that it had left the organization. UNWTO secretary-general Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The message is clear: Actions will always have consequences. Peace is a fundamental human right. Guaranteed to all. Without exception."

On the same day, Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney urged the UN to focus on international justice for war crimes in Ukraine. He added: "Ukraine is, today, a slaughterhouse. Right in the heart of Europe." He stated that the UN should do something about the evidence collected instead of keeping it in storage.

Also, on 27 April, UN secretary-general António Guterres said he had reached Kyiv. Guterres said: "the sooner this war ends, the better – for the sake of Ukraine, Russia, and the world." His visit comes a day after visiting Russia's president Vladimir Putin and foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow.

Microsoft

On 27 April, the company disclosed the onslaught of Russian cyberattacks on Ukraine and how Russia's military launched attacks online and ran online propaganda campaigns. Microsoft, in its report, claimed that Russia's onslaught of cyber-attacks began a year prior to its military invasion.

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War in Ukraine: Day 62

War on the Ground:
Zelenskyy's address, shelling in Kharkiv, and Mariupol

Zelenskyy's address

On 26 April president Zelenskyy spoke remembered the anniversary of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl. He also mentioned that in spite of the significance of the date Russia's forces continued their attacks on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant with a targeted motive. He said: "Instead, today they launched three missiles against Ukraine

so that they flew directly over the blocks of our nuclear power plants. Over three nuclear power plants at once. Over Zaporizhzhia, Khmelnytskyi and South-Ukrainian NPPs. What is it? Are they threatening? Are they targeting? There are no words..."

Ukraine's foreign ministry claims

On 26 April, the foreign ministry said that they were concerned about how the situation in the pro-Russian breakaway region of Transnistria. This Russia backed region of Moldova has witnessed several explosions. They issued a statement that said that these actions by Russia coincided with their statement about their plans to occupy the entire south of Ukraine and create a corridor to the Transnistria region.

Ukraine's war crime charges against Russians

On 26 April, Ukraine's prosecutor general's office said that they were preparing to bring war crimes charges against at least seven Russian military personnel. Among them are also three pilots suspected of bombing civilian settlements in the Sumy and Kharkiv regions. They said that the two the other individuals include two rocket launcher operators, who allegedly shelled settlements in the Kharkiv region and two army servicemen who are suspected of murdering a Kharkiv resident and raping his wife. The prosecutor's office also said that these individuals have been notified of the investigations and some were being held captive, while for others charges were being prepared in absentia.

Shelling in Kharkiv continues

On 26 April, the Kharkiv region's governor, Oleh Synegubov gave an update on the casualties caused by Russian shelling on 25 April. He said four people had died, and nine were wounded as a result of it.

Zaporizhzhia's farmers don bulletproof vests

On 26 April, it was reported that the farmers in Zaporizhzhia have resorted to wearing body armours to plough their fields. Energoatom, Ukraine's state-run atomic energy company reported that Russian missiles flew over the nuclear power plant at a low altitude.

Ukraine accuses Russia of further shelling in Mariupol

On 26 April, Petro Andryushchenko, an adviser to the mayor of Mariupol, said that the attacks on Mariupol have been increased further, which made the evacuation of civilians from the area impossible. This is in the context of how UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres also urged Putin to allow the humanitarian corridors in the area. Andryushchenko also mentioned that there had been 35 airstrikes against the Azovstal plant. One of the strikes caused a fire to break out in a workshop where civilians were hiding.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Putin's meeting with Antonio Guterres

On 26 April, president Putin met with UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres and spoke about the Minsk Agreement and how historically that had been signed for a peaceful settlement regarding the Donbas region. He spoke about the coup d'état performed in Ukraine in 2014 and said how agreements had been signed after a popular referendum.

He said: "This was the attempt of peaceful settlement of the situation in Donbas. However, to our regret, people living there found themselves in blockade for eight years - and Kyiv authorities publicly announced that they had organized a blockade of this territory, dared to announce that this was the blockade, although initially had renounced that, and continued military pressure."

Russia's foreign ministry's comments

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Kyiv's proposal to conduct talks with Russia about Mariupol was merely "theatrical" in nature. He also mentioned how the proposal for conducting the talk had been sent from the Russian side a long time back, and how Ukraine should be more prompt in replying. He said: "Ukrainians do like to stage things so they apparently wanted to stage one more heart-breaking scene."

On 26 April, Lavrov also met with UN secretary-general Guterres. After the conference, he said that the war was at too early a stage to talk about mediators. In a news conference on Tuesday. However, he

mentioned that they were in favour of a 'negotiated solution' but it was Ukraine's representatives including president Zelenskyy who seemed to be disinterested in conducting bilateral talks.

Moreover, Lavrov also spoke about NATO's interference in the war, and said that the US-led organization has been fighting a "proxy war." He said: "NATO, in essence, is engaged in a war with Russia through a proxy and is arming that proxy. War means war."

State Duma Speaker wants to hold Zelenskyy accountable

On 26 April, the state Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin wrote on his Telegram account about how Ukraine has become a terrorist state as they have resolved to the killing of Russian terrorists. He mentioned that President Zelenskyy should be held accountable for the same, the ad said: "Having unleashed a war against its own people, Kiev is now targeting civilians from other countries."

Russia's talks with Turkey's president

On 26 April, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Putin had spoken with Recep Tayyip Erdogan about Ukraine. Reportedly, Erdogan had been expecting to talk about achieving a ceasefire and eventual peace. It was said that the details of the conversion will be released later.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 26 April, the US defence secretary Llyod Austin said that he hoped to see Russia losing to Ukraine, and for Ukraine to win it only needed the right support. The US further announced to grant USD 713 million as military aid to Ukraine along with other European countries. According to Austin: "Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine."

In the meeting with the NATO defence ministers, US secretary of defence Lloyd Austin appreciated the enduring and skilled stance of Ukraine forces against Russia's attacks. He also pointed out that Russia was carrying out "indefensible atrocities."

NATO and the EU

On 26 April, defence ministers of NATO and the EU met in Germany to discuss increasing the military aid to Ukraine. The meeting was chaired by US defence secretary Lloyd Austin, and ahead of the meeting Germany pledged to send anti-aircraft systems to Ukraine. Till now NATO and its members have been resistant to providing offensive weapons as they fears it might lead to the use of nuclear-armed weapons.

Poland

Poland's state gas company PGNiG reported that Russia had stopped supplying natural gas. Gazprom which is a major supplier to Poland comprises of 60 per cent share, is confirmed to have suspended providing stocks. The issue is not expected to cause an immediate effect on Poland as it has 70 per cent underground storage and the current demand in the summer is reduced.

Germany

On 26 April, the government of Germany announced to deliver the heavy range weapons for the first time to Ukraine. This will include, Germany's twin-cannon system, 100 marder infantry vehicles and 50 Gepard Flakpanzer anti-aircraft tanks

Moldova

On 26 April, Moldova's president, Maia Sandu held a meeting between the Supreme Security council to discuss on the blasts that occurred in Transnistria. Two explosions were observed to have attacked with "rocket-propelled grenades." Post the fall of the Soviet, Transnistria has remained independent but has not gained any international recognition. As reported in *RIA*, Transnistria had found three infiltrators from Ukraine on the recent grenade attack in security headquarters. It named the act as "terrorist act," and observed it as a way to instigate the country to launch war in the Ukraine conflict. On the same, Sandu said: "internal differences between various groups in Transnistria that have an interest in destabilising the situation."

The Nordic countries

On 26 April, Finland and Sweden are found to be preparing for a common

announcement of their will to join NATO. Despite Russia's nuclear warning in the Baltic, questions have arisen with the increasing Russia offensive, should Finland and Sweden join NATO. Finland's foreign minister Pekka Haavisto, has denied commenting on the announcement but said that he would support the idea of both Nordic countries joining together.

The UK

On 26 April, the UK government announced to remove all the tariffs on all goods and imposed a ban on exports of technological products of Russia. The decision came as a response to Ukraine President's demand to support the economy. UK's international trade secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said: "We stand unwaveringly with Ukraine in this ongoing fight and will work to ensure Ukraine survives and thrives as a free and sovereign nation." Apart from the announcement, the UK also announced to close down the loopholes to make sure Russia does buy any commodity from the UK.

The UK Ministry of Defence reported on the ground development that the Kreminna city located in Luhansk had fallen and was taken under control by Russia. It also said that Russia was trying to encircle Ukraine's positions in the east and observed that Ukraine's forces were prepared in defence in Zaporizhzhia waiting for Russia's attacks. On 26 April, UK's Armed Forces minister James Heappey said that it was clearly legal for Ukraine to target the supply chains of Russia. He said: "Firstly, it's Ukrainians that take the targeting decision, not the people who manufacture or export the kit in the first place. And secondly, it is entirely legitimate to go after targets in the depth of your opponents to disrupt their logistics and supply line."

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

The UN

On 26 April, UN secretary general Antonio Guterres is expected to meet president Putin to discuss on Mariupol, and Azovstal steelworks. He first began talking to Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov pointing out

the need to bring the war to end. Calling for a ceasefire “as soon as possible,” he also discussed on establishing humanitarian corridors in Mariupol. On the corridors he said: “ready to fully mobilise its human and logistical resources.” Post the discussion with the Russia’s diplomats, he remarked that it was a “frank discussion.” He said: “It is my deep conviction that the sooner we end this war the better for the people of Ukraine, for the people of the Russian Federation and those far beyond.” He finally ended his speech by highlighting the need to adhere to international laws and cooperation to beat climate change and epidemics. When asked on UNs stance in the war, Guterres said that his aim was to “safe lives and end suffering in Ukraine.”

India

India which is currently facing immense pressure from the west to seclude Russia since the invasion. On 26 April, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, on her visit to the US assured that India will be a “good friend,” to the western countries, but pointed that it had to prioritise protecting its interest and security. The tension arises between India and the West is due to Russia which remains the largest weapons partner for India.

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War in Ukraine: Day 61

War on the Ground:

President meets with the US secretary of state and initiative to start a special tribunal Zelenskyy's meet and address

On 25 April, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a meeting with US secretary of state Antony Blinken and US secretary of defence Lloyd Austin. The meeting focused on military assistance, increasing sanctions on Russia, and financial aid to Ukraine. Zelenskyy highlighted the USD 3.4 billion military aid received from the US till now and also remarked how the US has been helpful in boosting the military capabilities of Ukraine. He said: “We understand what the next steps on this track should be. And we count on the support of our partners.” Apart from this, “peace process and prospects for strengthening the anti-war coalition,” were also discussed. In the everyday address, Zelenskyy summarised the worsening humanitarian situation in the cities, Kherson, Kakhovka, Melitopol, Dnipro, Enerhodar, and the lack in basic necessities for people in that region. He also brought out the points discussed with the US secretary of the state and defence secretary on further tightening of sanctions to block opportunities for Russia and on the continuation of security guarantees. Apart from this he also pointed out the discussion with Turkey’s President

Erdoğan on the evacuation of wounded people in Mariupol, the need for military exchange and the rising threat to the food market due to Russia's block in Black Sea ports. He also remarked that, in the last two months, a total of 1,100 missiles had been launched against Ukraine by Russia and 9,781 defenders had been awarded. In the end, Zelenskyy highlighted the signing of the decree to award war heroes for courage and effectiveness on the battlefield.

Ukrainian deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk appealed to the UN and ICRC to open an agreement to establish a humanitarian corridor from the Azovstal steel plant to Mariupol. She pointed out that, unilaterally agreed corridors are being constantly under breach by the Russian troops and hence an agreement or presence of both the international bodies will help evacuate citizens. She said: "It is important to understand that a humanitarian corridor is opened by agreement of both parties. The corridor, announced unilaterally, does not provide security, and therefore, is not a humanitarian corridor."

Ukraine's president's office deputy head, Andriy Smyrnov said that Ukraine was preparing draft statutory documents to begin a special tribunal to look into the "crimes of aggression" by Russia. He also noted that the initiative was supported by Europe and international lawyers. According to Smyrnov: "daily work on the Book of Torturers is being carried out in coordination with the President's Office together with the Ukrainian pre-trial investigation bodies, intelligence agencies and the Ministry of Digital Transformation. This is a set of information about every Russian war criminal involved in the war and atrocities committed and being committed in Ukraine."

Ukraine's president's office head, Andriy Yermak pointed out that, the way to bring an end to the war was through an increased supply of weapons, stricter sanctions on Russia and other parties who are expelling Ukrainians. Apart from this he also announced the establishment of an international expert group comprising, the director of the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI), and former US

National Security adviser Michael McFaul to examine the sanctions imposed on Russia and to bring up proposals to further them.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin's comments

On 25 April, Russia's President Vladimir Putin highlighted the humanitarian violations carried out by the Ukraine nationalists and mercenaries. He said that such violating acts were discovered during Russia's special military operation. According to Putin: "blatant provocations against Russian Armed Forces, including via foreign mass and social media, require scrupulous investigation as well. It is also necessary to thwart any crimes on the Russian territory in the most decisive way." Apart from this, on the sanctions levied by the US and Europe, he confirmed that it had impacted Russia's economy vastly reversing the post-cold war scenario. Former Russian finance minister Alexei Kudrin predicted that Russia's GDP will fall by 10 per cent due to sanctions from the West. Putin added: "The Russian economy has every opportunity to work stably and without fail in the new realities."

On 25 April, Russia's Foreign Ministry announced the expelling of 40 German diplomats after Germany's move of expelling Russia's diplomats under the allegation of war crimes.

On 25 April, Lugansk People's Republic head reported that Ukrainian military forces had targeted a mass number of civilians in the city of Rubezhnoye. He said: "Mines are delivered in such locations, the fire ensues and the deliveries [of the humanitarian cargo] are sabotaged under such conditions."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 25 April, US defence secretary Lloyd Austin mentioned that he wanted to see Russia weakened to the degree that it could not continue its invasion of Ukraine. Along with the secretary of state Antony Blinken, Austin also met with Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv. He added that Ukraine could win the war if it had the right

equipment and the proper support. US officials also said they would reopen the embassy in Ukraine following the visit of Austin and Blinken.

On the same day, the US said it was planning for a new package that would be a part of a long term aid to Ukraine. This package would require the approval of US lawmakers. The White House press secretary Jen Psaki mentioned that the US would impose further economic sanctions against Russia. Psaki added: "No one is safe from our sanctions." This comes as the US had also sanctioned Putin's wife. US president Joe Biden spoke to France's president Emmanuel Macron and agreed to increase their telephonic conversations on global issues and the war in Ukraine. The White House stated: "Biden conveyed his readiness to continue working closely with President Macron on our shared global priorities."

The UK

On 25 April, the UK said it planned to send more medical aid to Ukraine. The package would include ambulances, fire engines and medical supplies. UK's prime minister Boris Johnson said: "The new ambulances, fire engines and funding for health experts announced today will better equip the Ukrainian people to deliver vital healthcare and save lives."

Canada

On 25 April, Canada's defence minister Anita Anand stated that she would travel to Germany and the US to discuss providing support to Ukraine. Canada's government stated: "Chief of Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre and Deputy Minister of National Defence Bill Matthews will travel to Germany with Anand on Monday."

Moldova

On 25 April, a government building in Transnistria was shelled by a hand grenade launcher. This comes as a Russian commander had mentioned how Russia's new offensive was to gain access to Transnistria by seizing control of Southern Ukraine.

Poland

On 25 April, Poland announced that it would send tanks to Ukraine. Poland's prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki confirmed supplying Ukraine with tanks. But regarding the offer to send planes, he said: "There is no such necessity, there are no such demands, there are no such requests."

NATO

On 25 April, Finland and Sweden announced that they would submit their applications together by the mid of May to join the military alliance. Sweden's prime minister Magdalena Andersson justified the country's stance and said they had to be prepared for all kinds of actions from Moscow as everything changed once Russia invaded Ukraine. Finland's prime minister mentioned that they had to be prepared since they shared a 1,300-kilometre border with Russia.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

South Korea

On 25 April, an active-duty South Korean marine who went to Ukraine to fight the war in Russia was arrested upon his return to Seoul. The ministry stated: "We will take stern measures in accordance with laws and regulations after investigating why he had left his duty." South Korea had announced a travel ban on its citizens for travelling to Ukraine, citing safety concerns right after the war began and the marine had violated the ban.

Australia and New Zealand

On 25 April, on Anzac Day, thousands of protestors gathered on the streets to honour their military personnel and to pay tribute to the people of Ukraine who were fighting against Russia's invasion. Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison said: "On this particular day, as we honour those who fought for our liberty and freedom, we stand with the people of Ukraine who do the same thing at this very moment."

TikTok

On 25 April, TikTok emerged as a platform for false videos about the war in Ukraine. Although Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been labelling false videos as

misleading, TikTok has not taken any precautions to deter such videos from going viral.

The ICC

On 25 April, the international criminal court announced it would join the EU-backed team to investigate crimes in Ukraine. The joint investigation team (JIT) comes under the purview of Eurojust, the EU agency for criminal justice cooperation. ICC's prosecutor Karim Khan said: As I have stated since taking up my position as prosecutor, the effective exercise of the mandate of my office requires us to deepen cooperation and collaboration with all relevant actors. The Ukraine situation, in particular, demands collective action so as to secure relevant evidence and ultimately ensure its effective use in criminal proceedings."

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War in Ukraine: Day 59 & 60

War on the Ground: Shelling in Mariupol; casualties in Odesa Zelenskyy's address

President Zelenskyy informed about his talk with prime minister Boris Johnson about the situation in Mariupol, and the general state of hostilities so far. He also thanked him for the "significant defensive and financial support" that the UK had sent to Ukraine. He also spoke about a press conference in Kyiv, which was attended by both local and foreign journalists. He also said that he was preparing to talk to the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin.

On 24 April Zelenskyy said on Sunday that the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan had held talks. They discussed the need for evacuation of the civilians in Mariupol.

Luhansk under intense shelling

On 23 April, the governor of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai said that eastern Luhansk was constantly under heavy shelling. Amidst, Ukraine's forces trying to regroup in the region the Russian barrage was also intensifying. However, he said that it was not a critical setback. He also informed about an artillery strike on the front line town of Zolote, which killed two civilians and wounded two.

Continued shelling in Mariupol

On 23 April, Ukraine's presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovych said that the offensive in the Azovstal steelworks has been resumed. In an address on the national television, he mentioned how the Russians were conducting airstrikes in an effort to storm the Avovstal, where the last forces are holding out.

On 24 April, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk informed that it had not been possible to set up any

humanitarian corridors in Mariupol. She blamed the Russian forces for not holding their fire and urged U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to talk about this when he visits Moscow next week. Ukraine also reiterated how Russian forces continued to storm the Azovstal steelworks.

Casualties reported in Odesa

On 23 April, Russia conducted a missile strike on Odesa. On national television, the region's spokesperson, Serhiy Bratchuk said: "There are casualties - killed and wounded," while mentioning that the exact toll was still being counted.

On 24 April, the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said that Russia has deployed Iskander-M mobile battlefield missile launchers within 60 km of Ukraine's border. He said: "Then enemy has increased the number of troops in the Belgorod region by transferring and concentrating additional units."

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Russia's Defence Ministry claims

On 23 April, Russia's defence ministry informed that they have shot down one of Ukraine's Su-25 fighter jets, along with three MI-8 helicopters, in an airfield in Kharkiv. They also mentioned that a logistics terminal in Odesa had been hit by high precision missiles. Reportedly a large number of weapons given by the USA and European nations were being stored in the terminal. On 24 April, The ministry also reported that nine Ukrainian military targets were hit by high-precision missiles. This included four arms depots in Kharkiv region. They also allegedly hit a facility in Dnipropetrovsk which produced explosives for Ukraine's forces.

Russia looks into British SAS special forces in Ukraine

On April 23, Reuters reported that Russia was looking into the alleged sabotage experts that are part of Britain's SAS special forces. A Russian security source alleged that about 20 SAS members have been sent to Lviv, though the British Defence Ministry was not available for comment on this. This is especially of consequence because of the

repercussions Russia has promised to unleash, if the West, especially a NATO country gets in the way of their "special military operation"

Ukraine's aggression in Russia

On 23 April, Roman Starovoit, the Russian governor for the Kursk region said on his Telegram account that Ukraine had shelled a crossing point in Russian territory. He also said that an office building of Rosselkhoz nadzor, a Russian agriculture watchdog also caught fire as a result of it. On 24 April, according to TASS, a village in the Belgorod region was shelled by Ukraine. This region is on the border of Ukraine. Russia said that no casualties were reported and one of the projectiles landed in a field.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 24 April, US state department spokesperson Ned Price spoke about the war in Ukraine and said: "This is going to be a victory for Ukraine. On the other hand, it is going to be a strategic defeat for Russia. However and whenever that happens, we are confident of that." He added that Ukraine would win because of their grit, determination, tenacity, and due to the immense security assistance from the US. On the same day, US defence secretary Lloyd Austin and secretary of state Antony Blinken visited Kyiv and met with Zelenskyy. The leaders discussed the war in Ukraine and the US arms supplies to Kyiv. Also, on 24 April, the Institute for the Study of War released a report on how the Russian forces will likely increase their ground offensive in Eastern Ukraine. Nevertheless, they added: "...it is too soon to tell how fast they will do so or how large those offensives will be." On the Ukrainian soldiers stuck in the Azovstal Steel Plant, they predicted that Russia would attempt to starve out the remaining defenders, and they would not allow trapped civilians to evacuate.

The UK

On 24 April, UK's prime minister Boris Johnson assured Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy to send more armoured vehicles, drones and anti-tank weapons. Johnson also mentioned that

Russia would be held accountable for its actions in Ukraine. He added that the UK would also help in collecting evidence of war.

On the same day, the UK's defence ministry released an intelligence update that stated that Russia was planning to conscript Ukrainian civilians from Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. They added that this plan would also be followed in Crimea and Donbas eventually. The ministry added: "Any enlistment of Ukrainian civilians into the Russian armed forces, even if presented by Russia as being voluntary or military service in accordance with Russian law, would constitute a violation of article 51 of the fourth Geneva Convention."

On 23 April, the UK stated that it would be reopening its embassy in Kyiv. Apart from that, it also announced to provide additional military aid and assured to issue new sanctions against members of the Russian military.

Germany

On 23 April, former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated that he would resign if Russia cut Germany's gas supply. Schröder said: "It won't happen...But if it did, then I would resign." Schröder is the current head of the supervisory board of state energy company Rosneft. On the same day, Germany's finance minister Christian Lindner extended his support to chancellor Olaf Scholz's policies on arms deliveries to Kyiv. Scholz was being criticised domestically and internationally for refusing to supply Ukraine with heavy weapons. Germany also stated that it would do everything to help Ukraine win, but without endangering its security and NATO's defence capability.

Poland

On 23 April, Poland and Ukraine said that they created a joint logistics company to help Kyiv send out its grain exports to the EU and its global markets. The leaders of Ukraine and Poland signed an MoU to officially declare the initiation of the venture. It was launched in response to Russia's invasion and blockade of Ukraine's ports cities.

Latvia

On 23 April, Latvian ambassador Ilgvars Klava said he had returned to Kyiv. Klava returned to Kyiv since Russian forces had withdrawn their troops from and around the capital.

Turkey

On 23 April, Turkey closed its airspace to Russian planes carrying soldiers to Syria. Turkey's foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said: "We have closed our airspace to Russian military planes and also civilian planes flying to Syria and carrying soldiers."

OSCE

On 24 April, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said it was highly concerned about the war in Ukraine and several of its members who are believed to be arrested in pro-Russian separatist territories. The OSCE stated: "The OSCE is extremely concerned that a number of @OSCE_SMM national mission members have been deprived of their liberty in Donetsk and Lugansk."

Pope Francis

On 24 April, Pope Francis said he used the Orthodox Easter weekend to re-appeal for a truce between Russia and Ukraine. He added: "I renew the appeal for an Easter truce, the smallest tangible sign of a willingness for peace. Stop the attacks to ease the suffering of exhausted people." At St Peter's Square, a blue and yellow flag of Ukraine flew among the people gathered.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Indonesia

On 24 April, Indonesia announced a ban on its palm oil exports. This comes as Indonesia faces a shortage of palm oil supplies for its domestic markets. Indonesia's president Joko Widodo said it was to "...ensure the availability of food products at home, after global food inflation soared to a record high following Russia's invasion of major crop producer Ukraine."

The UN

On 24 April, the UN stated that almost 5.2 million Ukrainian had fled the country since

the start of the war. The report mentioned:

"The total figure of 5,186,744 increases 23,058 over Saturday's data, the UNHCR said. More than 1,151,000 Ukrainians have left during April so far, compared with 3.4 million in the month of March alone."

On the same day, the UN's Ukraine crisis coordinator, Amin Awad, urged for an end to the fighting in Mariupol to evacuate the civilians trapped in the city. He added: "The lives of tens of thousands, including women, children and older people, are at stake in Mariupol...we need a pause in fighting right now to save lives." The UN estimates that around 100,000 civilians are still trapped in Ukraine.

Also, on 24 April, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said he would be visiting Turkey before travelling to Moscow and Kyiv. This comes as Turkey has been a crucial mediator between Ukraine and Russia and has hosted peace discussions between the two countries.

The IAEA

On 24 April, the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Ukraine had asked for a "...comprehensive list of equipment" to run its nuclear power plants. This comes as IAEA officials are visiting the nuclear power plants in the country.

The Mount Everest

On 23 April, a BBC report mentioned the repercussions of the War in Ukraine on Mount Everest. The mountaineering industry, which was already impacted by the pandemic, was now facing cancellations due to the war.

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War in Ukraine: Day 58

War on the Ground:

Civilian evacuation; Russia's warships in Black Sea

Zelenskyy's address

On 22 April, in his daily update, Zelenskyy said that the Russian stronghold in the east of Ukraine was only temporary and would eventually be forced to retreat by Ukraine's troops. He referred to various Russian tactics to establish control and said they would be futile. He said: "None of these steps will help Russia in the war against our state. They can only delay the inevitable - the time when the invaders will have to leave our territory. In particular, Mariupol - a city that continues to resist Russia, despite everything the occupiers say." According to BBC, Russia has been successful in capturing 42 villages in the eastern Donetsk region. Zelenskyy also reiterated how all countries "must immediately be prepared" to cut-off ties with Russia and accept the necessary sanctions to help Ukraine. He mentioned that Ukraine's allies were finally delivering the weapons they had promised, and it was coming at the most crucial time in the war.

Ukraine's Defence Ministry on Russia launching further strikes

Ukraine's defence ministry spokesperson Oleksandr Motuzyanyk said that Russia's army identified the areas east of the country where it will launch its main strikes. He also said that the Russian activity had been most pronounced in the Izyum-Barvinkove direction, near Popasna, Severodonetsk, on the Zaporizhzhya-Donetsk road and in Mariupol. He also reported the presence of two Russian warships, which can carry Kalibr cruise missiles, in the Black Sea.

Mariupol mayor on civilian evacuation

On 22 April, the mayor of Mariupol, Vadym Boychenko, expressed his discontent about how the civilians in Mariupol were being evacuated amidst rising tensions and dwindling resources in the port city. In an interview with *Reuters*, He said that 100,000 people were still stuck in the city, but Russia was not cooperating with the process of establishing humanitarian corridors. He said: "They asked us to give them a map of where the evacuation will start from - we gave them the map. (They asked) how many buses do you have? We gave the number of buses. And they destroyed and demolished all of those places, they destroyed our buses." He also mentioned that these people's lives were solely in Putin's hands. The mayor's advisor, Petro Andryushchenko, said that a new mass grave has also been discovered near Mariupol. He urged journalists to find photos of the grave on satellite images and said that it was in the Livoberezhnyy district near the Vynohradne village cemetery.

Zaporizhzhia: Transport aircraft goes down

On 22 April, according to the BBC, one of Ukraine's planes, AN-26, undergoing a "technical flight" crashed in the Vilnia district of the Zaporizhzhia region. It was a military transport aircraft. The Zaporizhzhia regional military administration said there were casualties, and the causes and reasons for the crash are being verified.

Kharkiv: 30 per cent of the population has fled, says the mayor

On 22 April, according to the BBC, Kharkiv's mayor told *BBC* that about 30 per cent of the population had fled the city, but still, about one million people were there, awaiting evacuation. He mentioned that Russian forces continued shelling residential areas and said: "This is not a war of soldiers against soldiers, it is the killing of a nation."

The World Bank said that Ukraine's building and infrastructure had sustained damages worth an estimated USD 60 billion. This, does not include the economic costs of the war. President Zelenskyy also referred to this and said that Ukraine would be needing

an estimated USD 7 billion per month to make up for the heavy economic losses.

On 22 April, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk, who is in charge of coordinating the humanitarian corridors, said that Ukraine will not be able to establish any humanitarian corridors. She said on social media: "Due to the danger along the routes today, 22 April, there will be no humanitarian corridors... To all those waiting to be evacuated: be patient, please hold on!"

The sinking of the flagship of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, the Moskva has been a veritable turning point in the war. On 22 April, it was declared that the wreckage of the ship will be declared one of Ukraine's underwater cultural heritage. The ship which sank 80 miles from Odesa, is at a depth of 45-50 metres, according to the Ukrainian Military TV

It was also reported that Ukraine's national postal service Ukrposhta experienced a cyberattack on Friday following the sales of a postage stamp which was offensive to the Russian eye. After the sinking of the Moskva, queues had formed outside the postal headquarters to buy this stamp, when it went on sale.

**The Moscow view:
Claims by Russia****President Putin's remarks**

Russia's President Vladimir Putin during the call with the European Council, President affirmed that the direct talks will be possible only with Ukraine's President Zelenskyy. He also pointed out that Ukraine was rigid in mutual solutions and varying in negotiations.

Russia Defence Ministry claims

The Defence Ministry agreed to stop the attacks on the Azovstal steelworks to allow the workers and civilians trapped inside the factory. In the statement issued: "We once again declare that Russia is ready at any moment to introduce a regime of silence and announce a humanitarian pause for the evacuation of civilians."

On 22 April, Defence Ministry claimed that it had taken down 58 military targets of

Ukraine over one night, the damage also includes striking of S-300 anti-craft missiles, fuel depots and military equipment. On 22 April, Russia's deputy military commander, Maj Gen Rustam Minnekayev said that Russia was planning to take complete control of the eastern and southern part of Ukraine. He said: "Since the beginning of the second phase of the special operation, which has already begun just two days ago, one of the tasks of the Russian army is to establish full control over Donbas and southern Ukraine. This will provide a land corridor to Crimea, as well as affect the vital facilities of the Ukrainian economy." He added a significant development on southern Ukraine, stating Minnekayev in southern Ukraine would give Russia access to Transnistria which will enable take a part of Moldova to Russia's troops.

The West view: Responses from Europe

The US

On 22 April, the Organization of American States (OAS), announced that until the hostility situation ends, Russia will be banned from participating in the forum as a permanent member. The US secretary of the state said: "We do not stand on the sidelines in the face of the Russian government's violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses."

The EU

European Council President, Charles Michel reiterated Russia's losses and mistakes in a call with President Putin. He also urged Putin to give immediate access to Ukraine for evacuation through humanitarian corridors.

Germany

Germany which has been under recent public criticism for sending military support to Ukraine still continues to train the Ukraine soldiers with German-made weapons. Till now 55 per cent of Germans have voted to send 55 per cent of heavy weapons and 37 per cent have voted against it. When compared to the US and the UK, Germany has sent fewer number weapons, but the chancellor sees the supply of tanks as reasonable.

The UK

On 22 April, the UK prime minister Boris Johnson disclosed on the training of the Ukraine forces on using armoured vehicles of the UK. To support Ukraine, the UK has provided 120 armoured vehicles to be used as patrol vehicle. Along with this, the schedule is also set for training on Samaritan ambulance, and Samson armoured reconnaissance vehicles. Johnson said: "I can say that we are currently training Ukrainians in Poland in the use of anti-aircraft defence, and actually in the UK in the use of armoured vehicles." Apart from this, Johnson appreciated Ukraine's efforts in withstanding and fighting hard against Russia. On the question of India's stance, Johnson remarked that prime minister Modi strong language on the violence in Bucha and India's need for peace was accepted. He added: "The only option he now has, really, is to continue to try to use his appalling, grinding approach driven by artillery, trying to grind the Ukrainians down."

UK defence ministry reported that Russia's move to lay block on Azovstal steel plant was an indication of Russia's strong resistance in Mariupol. According to the ministry: "A full ground assault by Russia on the plant would likely incur significant Russian casualties, further decreasing their overall combat effectiveness." It also observed on the continued attacks by Russia in Krasnyy Lyman, Buhayikva, Barvinkove, Lyman and Popasna. Apart from that it also found that due to the losses suffered by the Russia's troops, Russia was recuperating by sending back its inoperable machines into Russia to repair.

The UK announced to send "challenger 2 main battle tanks" to resupply the T-72 tanks which in turn will be sent by Poland to Ukraine. It will be an addition to the armoured vehicles sent by the UK to Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Japan

On 22 April, amid the war in Ukraine, Japan stated that Russia illegally occupied the disputed islands between Moscow and

Tokyo. Japan last called these islands illegally occupied back in 2003. This comes as relations between the two countries have been deteriorating.

Taiwan

On 22 April, Taiwan's foreign minister, Joseph Wu, mentioned to Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko that their country was feeling the situation faced by Ukraine. He added: "...and therefore feel the current situation faced by Ukraine as though it is happening to ourselves." Taiwan also announced that it would donate USD three million to Kyiv and USD five million to Ukrainian medical institutions.

The UN

On 22 April, a report by the UN stated that more than 11 million people fled their homes in Ukraine. According to the UN's international organization for migration, about 6.5 million people were internally displaced within Ukraine. The UN currently is working on providing cash to the refugees to pay for food and rent. They also provided folding beds to people in the bomb shelters and set up reception and transit points for the internally-displaced people. Furthermore, the report mentioned the countries that the refugees headed to, the mode of transportation and what help these countries offered to the refugees.

On the same day, UN chief António Guterres announced that he would be meeting with Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. UN chief's spokesperson Eri Kaneko said: "Guterres hopes to talk about what can be done to bring peace to Ukraine urgently." This comes as Guterres had asked Russia's president Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy to receive him separately in Kyiv and Moscow. Also, on 22 April, the UN monitoring mission in Ukraine documented the unlawful killings of 50 people in Bucha. The UN human rights commissioner Michelle Bachelet added: "We know much more needs to be done to uncover what happened there and we also know Bucha is not an isolated incident." The mission received allegations that Russian forces had killed more than 300 civilians unlawfully in the regions of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy.

IMF

On 22 April, the IMF stated that Europe could stay without Russian gas supplies for six months, But after that, the economic impact of independence from Russian gas would be severe. IMF's European department head Alfred Kammer said: "...if that gas shut off were to last into the winter, and over a longer period, then that would have significant effects." He further called for steps to prepare for the worst possibilities and stated that the loss of Russian gas could cost the EU three per cent of its GDP.

IAEA

On 22 April, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head Rafael Grossi stated that he would be visiting nuclear plants in Ukraine in the upcoming days. This was in an effort by the IAEA to deter a nuclear accident during the conflict in the country. Grossi said: "The IAEA's presence at Chernobyl will be of paramount importance for our activities to support Ukraine as it seeks to restore regulatory control of the plant and ensure its safe and secure operation."

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War in Ukraine: Day 57

War on the Ground:

Fighting in Mariupol; President address Zelenskyy's address

On 21 April, president Zelenskyy said that Ukraine has "offered all options" to Russia for the swapping of citizens in Mariupol for Russian soldiers but is still waiting on Moscow's reply. He also said that 120,000 civilians were being blocked from leaving the besieged city. He also spoke about his session with Mrs Kristalina Georgieva, the chairperson of IMF. Zelenskyy said that they spoke in general about the condition in Ukraine, and especially the state of Kharkiv, the largest city in the east of Ukraine, which has been under Russian attack. In his address, he also touched upon the food shortage that is bound to plague the world and said: "Without Ukrainian wheat, corn, vegetable oil and other commodities, this will result not only in physical food shortages in many countries in Africa and Asia but also in political instability and possibly a new migration crisis."

Civilians bodies found in Kyiv

On 21 April, it was reported that the bodies of 1,020 civilians were being stored in morgues in and around Kyiv. This is after the bodies of nine civilians were found in Borodyanka, a town near Kyiv. The head of police of the Kyiv region, Andriy Niebytov, said, "these people were civilians. The

Russian military knowingly shot civilians who did not put up any resistance."

Fighting in Mariupol

On 21 April, Ukraine's deputy prime minister, Iryna Vereshchuk, said that Ukraine had demanded the immediate establishment of a humanitarian corridor in Mariupol. The Mayor of Mariupol, in a news conference, said that around 200 people were waiting to be evacuated, but no buses were available. Serhiy Volyna, a commander from the 36th separate marine brigade fighting in Mariupol, said the forces "may be facing our last days, if not hours. This is in light of how Putin has ordered his troops to seal the Azovstal Factory amidst increasing offending in the city.

On 21 April, the United Nations refugee agency reported that more than 5 million refugees had fled Ukraine, while 7.7 million people have been displaced internally. The report also said that an additional 13 million people were stranded in various parts of the country, unable to leave, due to heightened security leaks.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Claims on Mariupol

On 21 April, Russia's defence minister Sergey Shoigu met with president Vladimir Putin and updated him on the situation in Mariupol. He stated that the Russian armed forces, along with the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) forces, have liberated the city.

On the same day, Putin hailed the liberation of Mariupol and called off the operation to storm the Azovstal steel plant in the city. The plant is said to be the last resort of 2,000 Ukrainian militants. Putin called off the offensive, saying that the troops would need about three to four days to breach the plant, which would be unreasonable.

Bank of Russia

On 21 April, the governor of the Bank of Russia, Elvira Nabiullina, stated that Russia had all the financial resources to pay off its debts. She added: "...there is no threat of default."

More restrictions on foreign agents

On 21 April, Russia's lawmakers said they would submit a few amendments to the law on foreign agents. The amendment would ban journalists and other people designated as foreign agents to not investing in strategic industries or working with children. Which meant that the agents would be banned from investing in defence, security, aviation and teaching.

Russia sanctions 61 Canadians

On 21 April, Russia announced that it would sanction 61 journalists, officials and military experts from Canada. *Reuters* reported: "The list includes Special Operations Forces commander major-general Steve Boivin, Central Bank governor Tiff Macklem as well as John Tory and Jim Watson, the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa." They justified the ban by saying the entities supported a "Russophobic" stance.

Russia bars entry to US officials

On 21 April, Russia stated that it had expanded its ban on US officials including vice president Kamala Harris and 28 other American officials, journalists and businesspeople. The Russian foreign ministry said: "These individuals are denied entry into the Russian Federation indefinitely."

Russia to close its consulates in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia

On 21 April, Russia's foreign ministry confirmed the closure of its consulates in three former Soviet Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. The ministry informed that it was done in reciprocity. They further added that it was also on account of their support of the regime in Kyiv.

Russia-Ukraine talks continue in video format

On 21 April, Russia's foreign ministry member Alexey Polishchuk stated that the talks between the two countries would continue in a video format almost every day. He added: "Direct Russian-Ukrainian negotiations are currently ongoing. Interdepartmental delegations of the sides are discussing possible agreements on the settlement of the situation in Ukraine, its

future neutral, non-aligned status, and other issues."

Russia to end military operation after NATO's colonisation of Ukraine is eliminated

On 21 April, Russia stated that its special military operation would end once threats related to NATO's colonisation of Ukraine ended. Polishchuk said: "The special military operation will end once its tasks are fulfilled. Among them are the protection of the peaceful population of Donbass, demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine, as well as the elimination of threats to Russia coming from the Ukrainian territory due to its colonisation by NATO members."

Russia to make Ukraine nuclear-free and restore a neutral status

On 21 April, Russia's ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, stated that their special operation in Ukraine was focused on demilitarisation and denazification. He also slammed the Organization of American States (OAS) decision to suspend Russia's observer status. He added: "We need a confirmation of this eastern European country's non-nuclear and neutral status. We will ensure it. This is vital for our Slavic peoples living in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus."

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

On 21 April, US president Joe Biden announced a USD 800 million package for new arms supplies sent to Ukraine. He said he would ask Congress for more funding for Ukraine to fend off Russia's new offensive in the east and south. Biden added: "And the United States and our allies and partners are moving as fast as possible to continue to provide Ukraine the weapons their forces need to defend their nation."

On the same day, the US disproved Russia's claims of liberating Mariupol. US spokesperson Ned Price said: "We understand that Ukraine's forces continue to hold their ground, and there is every reason to believe that President Putin and his defence minister's show for the media that we saw in recent hours is even yet more

disinformation from their well-worn playbook.” Price further mentioned that Russia was still battling thousands of Ukrainian troops defending the Azovstal steelworks.

Also, on 21 April, Biden announced that the US would accept up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees under their ‘Uniting for Ukraine’ program. The program will commence next week, and will allow Ukrainians to move to the US if they have sponsors there temporarily.

The UK

On 21 April, the UK government said it was training Ukrainian soldiers to use their armoured vehicles. This comes as UK’s prime minister Boris Johnson revealed that they would be sending at least 120 armoured vehicles to Ukraine. Out of the 120 vehicles, 80 of them are the Mastiff, Husky and Wolfhound protected mobility vehicles, which the UK uses for combat, combat support and combat services roles. This would help Ukraine to fight the Russian offensive in the east.

On the same day, the UK announced the ban of imports of Savia and other high-end products from Russia in its latest round of sanctions. UK’s international trade secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said: “We are taking every opportunity we can to ratchet the pressure to isolate the Russian economy, and these further measures will tighten the screws, shutting down lucrative avenues of funding for [Vladimir] Putin’s war machine.” The import ban would include silver and wood products, while the tariffs on the import of diamonds and rubber from Russia and Belarus would be increased by 35 per cent.

Ireland

On 21 April, Ireland’s prime minister Micheál Martin said it would look to open more areas to offer shelter to Ukrainian refugees. Martin met with Ukraine’s prime minister Denys Shmyhal and discussed the possibility of taking in more Ukrainian refugees and extending financial support to Ukraine. Ireland has welcomed 24,438 refugees from Ukraine, and out of that, 16,128 are currently living in state accommodation.

Spain

On 21 April, Spain announced that it would be sending 200 tonnes of ammunition and military supplies to Ukraine. The shipment will include heavy transport vehicles and ammunition to defend against Russian forces. Spain’s prime minister Pedro Sánchez added: “The ship carries 30 trucks, several special heavy transport vehicles, and ten small vehicles loaded with the military material that will be transferred to Ukraine.” This comes as the prime ministers of Denmark and Spain were visiting Kyiv to meet with Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Sweden

On 21 April, a poll carried out by the polling institute Novus stated that 51 per cent of Sweden’s citizens favoured joining NATO. This is more than last week’s toll of 45 per cent.

Latvia and Estonia

On 21 April, the parliaments of Estonia and Latvia announced that they would recognise Russia’s actions in Ukraine as genocide. The parliament of Estonia stated: “These crimes are ideologically incited by Russia’s political and military leadership and its national propaganda authorities.” A Latvian MP mentioned how the killings, torture, and abuse of the civilians in Ukraine were genocidal and urged the world to #StandupForUkraine.

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Ethiopia

On 20 April, upon Russia’s offer to recruit soldiers to fight against Ukraine, numerous Ethiopian men lined up before the Russian embassy in Addis Ababa. The spokesperson of the embassy later cleared that the recruitment was rumour and said that there was no selection going on. She said: “We have a lot of visitors to the embassy in order to express support for Russia. Some of them are telling us they are willing to help in any way they can. But we are not a recruitment agency.”

Fiji

On 20 April, a public prosecutor from Fiji disclosed that the US has been attempting to seize a superyacht of a Russian oligarch who was subject to sanctions by the West. It has applied for a restraining order against the Russian and the ship that has been docked in the port. The US is yet to confirm on the same, but the penalty notice has been issued by authorities of Fiji. According to the police commissioner, upon fines becoming overdue, the captain will be taken into charge.

Netflix

On 20 April, due to the war in Ukraine, Netflix for the first time reported a decrease in the count of subscribers in past 10 years. The company has also come under a suit by the Russian subscribers for blocking its service in Russia.

WTA

On 21 April, the Women's Tennis Association criticised the decision to ban players from Russia and Belarus from the Wimbledon tournaments. In the statement issued: "of the WTA is that individual athletes may participate in professional tennis events based on merit and without any form of discrimination." The Association urged for allowing individual players to compete in the tournament and asked to not impose penalties on players for government's decisions.

China

On 21 April, China's minister of National Defence, general Wei Fenghe held a 45-minute call with the US defence secretary Lloyd Austin. Upon Austin stressing the significance of China not supplying weapons to Russia and in response, Fenghe said: "If the Taiwan issue were not handled properly, it would have a damaging impact on Sino-US relations." The response comes as US sent arms to Taiwan to defend China in case of a conflict.

On 21 April, China's President Xi Jinping stressed back China's opposition to the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia. China has not condemned the invasion of Russia and also continues to maintain economic trade with Russia.

MNCs

SpaceX company has provided Ukraine with increased internet connectivity and the civilians were provided full access. The Ukraine military said that, with access to speed internet, it was able to connect to satellites located in the low orbit. The minister of Digital Transformation said that there were currently 10,000 terminals installed in Ukraine, which has become the alternative to the damaged infrastructure.

World Bank

On 21 April, World Bank president, David Malpass said that the organization was facing the worst food crisis due to the war in Ukraine. He said: "It's a human catastrophe, meaning nutrition goes down. But then it also becomes a political challenge for governments who can't do anything about it - they didn't cause it and they see the prices going up." The World Bank estimated that there was an increase of 37 per cent in food prices which has pushed many under the poverty line. He compared the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect the crisis situation being faced by the population who are in poverty. Another highlight was the rise in the unsustainable debt seen in the poorest countries, which are turning into a debt burden.

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War in Ukraine: Day 56

War on the Ground:
Attacks in Azovstal steel and iron factory
Zelenskyy’s address

On 20 April, president Zelenskyy in his daily address spoke about his meet with the president of the European Council Charles Michel. Reportedly, they discussed the ways in which the European Union could help Ukraine, especially with defence, finances and with sanctions. They also spoke about the integration of Europe. Zelenskyy said: “This is the historic moment when we can develop maximum speed in joining the European Union. We have already proved that the Ukrainian state and public institutions are effective enough to withstand even the test of war. We are already doing as much to protect freedom on the European continent as other nations have never done.”

Mariupol

On 20 April, Ukraine Military reported on the assaults on the Azvstal steel and iron factory, where Ukraine’s troops and people remain trapped. The same was confirmed by deputy mayor of Mariupol, he said: “It’s mostly citizens of nearest destroyed buildings and a lot of workers of steel plants. They know that steel plants had good bomb shelter and some stocked food and water in the bomb shelter. That’s why they decided with their families to live in this bomb shelter.” He added that Russia had set a new time of 1100 GMT for the Ukraine troops to surrender and the forces continue to fight against Russia. It was also reported that Russia had blocked all the supply corridors, to trap the people in Mariupol from water, food, medicine and any form of aid.

On 20 April, Ukraine said that Russia violated a ceasefire that had been decided upon to evacuate women, children and elderly people from Mariupol. Regional governor, Pavlo Kyrylenko said that fewer buses than had been decided upon could be evacuated. Deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk, who is in charge of these humanitarian corridors said they “did not work as planned today.” Ukraine’s troops in Mariupol have not stopped fighting even after Russia issued an ultimatum. Senior Ukrainian negotiators on the other hand said that they were open to holding special talks with Russia in Mariupol provided they are unconditional in nature.

Sloviansk

On 20 April, Ukrainian troops could stop the progress of Russian forces from Izyum in the northeast to Sloviansk. Ukraine's presidential advisor commented on this and said: "They have focused their forces there, that is where they are trying to advance, but so far they are not succeeding."

Other cities in the east such as Donetsk, Tavriya, the village of Popasna, Rubizhne and Severodonetsk districts have been under attack by Russia's military. It was confirmed that "twelve tanks, 28 armoured vehicles and one artillery system, and Ukraine's air force, one plane, one helicopter, six UAVs and a cruise missile," were destroyed by Russia.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Russian tycoon criticised the atrocities by Russian troops

On 20 April, Oleg Tinkov, a tycoon, lambasted Russia's role in the Ukrainian citizen massacre and called for an end to the war. After him, the businessman Boris Mint voiced his criticism of the president. Mint added: "every right-thinking person has a duty to speak out against this appalling war and Vladimir Putin's growing authoritarianism."

Russia tests new intercontinental ballistic missile

On 20 April, Russia's president Vladimir Putin was seen at the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile launch in Plesetsk. Putin said the missiles had "the highest tactical and technical characteristics". He added that anyone who would make threats to Russia would now have to think twice. Putin further congratulated the Russian forces saying: "I congratulate you on the successful launch of the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile. It is a great and landmark event in the development of advanced weapon systems in the Russian army."

Russia on draft agreement handed over to Ukraine on 15 April

On 20 April, Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said they

had not received any reaction from Ukraine on their draft agreement. She criticised the Kyiv regime's negotiations team as they did not respond to Russia's proposal. Zakharova further mentioned how Kyiv was debunking other issues than responding to Russia's draft agreement.

On the same day, Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated: "We've said it repeatedly that the rate of work of the Ukrainian side leaves a lot to be desired, and the Ukrainian do not display great willingness to intensify the negotiations process." He further accused the Ukrainians of backing out from previously achieved agreements or even their own words each time. This caused terrible consequences for the efficiency of the negotiations.

Russia calls for probe into fake news of them using nukes in Ukraine

On 20 April, Zakharova called for action against the developers and customers of the fake news that stated Russia had used nuclear arms in Ukraine. She added: "Someone has been manufacturing these materials, and there must be someone who designed the concept. I think it would be correct and timely to look into the entire chain."

Medical gear supply from the West restored

On 20 April, Russia was concerned about a potential shortage and a near-total collapse of the supply of essential medical devices as it depends on the West for its medical equipment, such as pacemakers and radiotherapy devices. Even though these devices and prescription drugs are exempted from the sanctions, their supply has been disrupted due to customs and insurance hurdles caused by the sanctions.

Russia to sue Apple

On 20 April, Russia's lawyers mentioned that they would be suing Apple for shutting down its payment service in the country. The lawyers accused Apple of causing intentional moral damage to Russian users. Attorneys added: "...the amount of the recovery must be substantial in order to compensate for the moral damage caused."

Peskov on Wimbledon

On 20 April, Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov warned Wimbledon that the tournament would be harmed if Russian players were banned. The Grand Slam tournaments are scheduled to run between June and July. The Wimbledon officials are hinting toward banning players from Russia and Belarus. Peskov added: "We reiterate that it is inadmissible to hold athletes hostage to various political beliefs, political intrigues and hostile behaviour in regard to our country. We can only regret this."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 20 April, in response to the launch of Russia's ICBM with nuclear capacity, Pentagon said that the launch was not viewed as a threat and "It was not a surprise." The launch strikes a warning signal as President Putin indicated as a threat to the western powers.

US Defence Department spokesperson, John Kirby confirmed the delivery of the additional aircraft and parts to Ukraine. He denied supplying complete aircraft, only spare part was being sent to Ukraine. It is also expected that the US will be sending helicopters soon to Ukraine.

Belarus

The Wimbledon organizers have accused Belarus of helping Russia invade and attack Ukraine from its region and banned the Belarusian tennis players from entering the tournaments. The ban will include the high-ranked player, Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus who ranks four in the women's category.

The UK

On 20 April, UK Defence Ministry in the update on Ukraine's ground situation stated that Ukraine forces were deterring Russia's attempts, despite the shelling continuing to increase in the eastern Donbas. It observed that Russia's forces faced "environmental, logistical and technical challenges," which showed its inability to reach its targets rapidly.

The Ministry also found that Russia had positioned a new offensive on its eastern border with Ukraine. It warned that Russia could use its forces to break into the defence held by Ukraine. Apart from this it also

tracked those offences in northern Ukraine were deteriorating due to the withdrawal of Russia's forces. It said: "However, there is still a risk of precision strikes against priority targets throughout Ukraine. Russian attacks on cities across Ukraine show their intent to try and disrupt the movement of Ukrainian reinforcements and weaponry to the east of the country."

Germany

Germany's Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock post her meeting, with the Latvian leader said: "'we have delivered anti-tank missiles, Stingers and other things that we have never spoken about publicly so these deliveries could happen quickly.'" She assured that Germany will support Ukraine with advanced weapons and soldiers to help against the new offensive of Russia in the Donbas region. As per the statement released by the German Foreign Ministry: "Reaction from the EU, NATO and the international community to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine."

The EU

On 20 April, European Council president, Charles Michel tweeted after his visit to Ukraine and meeting with Zelenskyy. He said: "in the heart of a free and democratic Europe."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

China

On 20 April, China criticised the west for providing weapons for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia. China's ambassador Zhang Jun added: "We call on Russia and Ukraine to adhere to the general direction of dialogue and negotiation, continuously narrow differences, and accumulate conditions for a ceasefire." He further mentioned that providing Ukraine with weapons would only prolong and escalate the conflict.

Meta

On 20 April, an appeal was made against Russia's court banning Meta from operating in the country. The court accused Meta of operating in Russia on the grounds of extremist activity.

The UN

On 20 April, UN chief Antonio Guterres asked Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to receive him and discuss the possibility of peace. UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric mentioned that separate letters were handed to Russia and Ukraine. Dujarric added that Guterres wanted to also look at the future of multilateralism based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The UNHCR chief said: "Eight weeks into the conflict, we are at 5 million and counting, with 5 million unique stories of loss and trauma." This comes as 218,000 third-country nationals, primarily students and migrant workers, have had to flee the country. The UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) said 7.1 million people were displaced inside Ukraine.

G20

On 20 April, the US, France, the UK, and Canada finance ministers walked out of the G20 meeting as Russia's representatives initiated to speak. Chancellor Rishi Sunak said: "We are united in our condemnation of Russia's war against Ukraine and will push for stronger international coordination to punish Russia." Responding to the walk out staged by the countries, Russia's finance minister, Anton Siluanov, urged the G20 group not to politicise the group's work.

IAEA

On 19 April, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was informed by the Ukrainian authorities that communications had been restored between the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the state atomic power regulator. IAEA's director general Rafael Grossi mentioned that the development was good news and added that he would lead a team to the plants and carry out a series of assessments.

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War in Ukraine: Day 55

War on the Ground

Deputy prime minister report; attack in Donbas

Zelenskyy's address

On 19 April, President Zelenskyy talked about the escalating Russian offensive in the eastern parts of the country, especially in the Kharkiv, Donbas and Dnipropetrovsk regions. He referred to how destructive the Russian forces were, and said: "They still consider ordinary housing infrastructure normal targets for them. In this war, the Russian army will forever inscribe itself in world history as perhaps the most barbaric and inhuman army in the world."

Donbas attacks

On 19 April, the Russian attack on the Donbas line of control continued its escalation, even though the Ukrainian forces managed to repel several advances. UK Defence said that the Russian offensive has been somewhat impacted by the environmental, logistical and technical challenges that the region offers along with the determination of the highly motivated Ukrainian Army.

Kreminna occupied by Russia

On 19 April, Serhiy Gaidai, the governor of the Luhansk region said in a briefing that the Kreminna in the eastern part of Ukraine has been occupied by the Russian forces. Kreminna which has a population of 18,000 people becomes the first city to fall to the Russians since their renewed offensive in the east of Ukraine.

On 19 April, the deputy prime minister of Iryna Vereshchuk reported that Russia has over 60 soldiers and 16 civilians to Ukraine. She said: "This was the fifth exchange of prisoners of war. A total of 76 people." This swap also included 10 Ukrainian officers. Vereshchuk also informed that no humanitarian corridors had been

established for the third consecutive day due to rising Russian offensive making it difficult to conduct negotiations.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin's decree

On 18 April, Russia President Vladimir Putin signed a decree titling the 64th Motor Rifle Brigade "Guards" for their heroism and courage in a war in Bucha. Along with this he also announced an additional pay-out of USD 62000 for the soldiers who are serving in the Ukraine war within the eastern Ukraine borders. According to TASS: "in order to provide additional measures of social support to service personnel of the border agencies of the Federal Security Service and members of their families."

Russia Foreign Ministry claims

Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said that the "next phase" of Russia's operations had begun. He also affirmed that Russia will use only "conventional weapons," on the question of the possibility of using nuclear weapons. He said: "The real reason is the complacency of most countries in the world after the end of World War II when our Western colleagues led by the United States declared themselves the winners, and in violation of their promises to the Soviet and Russian leadership, [they] started moving NATO eastward."

On 18 April, Russia's Foreign Ministry expelled all employees in Dutch, Austrian and Belgian embassies as a counter to the European country's move in expelling Russia's diplomats. This includes 15 Dutch diplomats, four Austrian diplomats and several Belgian employees.

On 18 April, Bank of Russia head Elvira Nabiullina said that Russia was preparing for a lawsuit against the frozen assets, gold and foreign currency reserves in the West. She commented: "unprecedented on a global scale." No further details were given on how Russia would approach the lawsuit, but Russia's Finance Ministry estimated USD 300 billion to be frozen in Russia's gold and currency reserves.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 19 April, the US said it was planning to seize a superyacht Amadea which was docked in the Pacific Island nation of Fiji. The yacht is suspected of belonging to Suleiman Kerimov, a Russian oligarch sanctioned by the US and EU. Fiji's director of public prosecutions, Christopher Pryde, filed an application to prevent the yacht from leaving Fiji.

On the same day, US president Joe Biden at an event mentioned that he was unsure if he would visit Kyiv. His comments come as Ukraine's president Zelenskyy urged him to visit the country depending on the safety situation.

Also, on 19 April, reports stated that Biden would be announcing another USD 800 million military aid package for Ukraine. Last week, he announced a similarly sized package and sent Ukraine artillery systems, artillery rounds, armoured personnel carriers and unmanned coastal defence boats. The new package would bring the US military aid to a total of USD three billion.

The UK

On 19 April, the UK said it had only delivered GBP 60 million in humanitarian aid to Ukraine until 01 April. Commons international development committee chairwoman said she was disappointed at the speed the aid was being delivered as only GBP 60 million was dispersed out of the GBP 220 million. She said that it was shocking and disappointing as the people needed the help immediately. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss mentioned that the delivery would be expedited.

On the same day, the defence ministry stated that they would be sending armoured missile launchers to Ukraine. This would help Ukraine to resist the Russian forces and take control of the eastern region. Truss also mentioned that the UK would be stepping up their supply of arms.

Boris Johnson called on the world leaders and reiterated a critical need for military support to Ukraine. Johnson said: "The leaders agreed to work together to find a long-term security solution so that Ukraine

could never be attacked in this way again. They discussed the need to increase the pressure on Russia with more sanctions against Putin's war machine, as well as further diplomatic isolation."

On 19 April, UK's top negotiator, Mykhailo Podolyak, who is also a political advisor to Zelenskyy said that Kyiv and Moscow had not had face-to-face talks since March 29. He also mentioned that given the situation in Mariupol and failing to arrange for humanitarian corridors, the situation regarding peace talks has gotten more complicated.

France

On 19 April, France's president Emmanuel Macron stated that his dialogue with Putin had stalled since the mass killings were discovered in Ukraine. He added: "Since the massacres we have discovered in Bucha and in other towns, the war has taken a different turn, so I did not speak to him again directly since, but I don't rule out doing so in the future."

Moldova

On 19 April, Moldova's president Maia Sandu urged the people and opposition politicians to refrain from using any Russian symbols during the celebrations that marked their victory in the second world war. Her calls came as the country protested against Russian troops killing Ukrainian civilians. Sandu added: "It is impossible to combine in the same symbol the memory of lives given for peace and the current inhumane war."

Spain

On 19 April, Spain's prime minister Pedro Sánchez announced that he would be visiting Kyiv soon. He said that his visit would be a symbol of showing Spain's commitment to the Ukrainian people and government.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Japan

On 19 April, Japan announced that it would send masks and clothing designed to protect Ukrainians from chemical weapons and drones attacks. This would be a part of

Tokyo's latest shipment consisting of defence supplies, NBC suits, NBC masks and drones.

Ethiopia

On 19 April, Ethiopians stormed the Russian embassy at Addis Ababa at a rumour that stated Russia was recruiting soldiers to fight in the war in Ukraine. The embassy's spokeswoman, Maria Chernukhina clarified that this was not true; however, she added that the crowd showed their solidarity with Russia.

The UN

On 19 April, the UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres called for a four-day Orthodox Easter humanitarian ceasefire. He said: "Humanitarian needs are dire. People do not have food, water, supplies to treat the sick or wounded or simply to live day-to-day." He further mentioned how a humanitarian pause would help create a safe passage for civilians willing to leave the conflict.

IMF

On 19 April, the IMF said it had cut its global growth forecasts because of the war in Ukraine. In its half-yearly reports, the IMF said it had worsened significantly in the past three months as it reduced from 4.4 per cent to 3.6 per cent. The organization further mentioned that all members of the G7 would grow less rapidly and could even experience a significant risk.

WHO

On 19 April, WHO's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus condemned the attacks on healthcare workers and provisions in Ukraine. He said: "WHO unequivocally condemns the continued increase in attacks on health care in Ukraine. They must stop. To date, WHO has verified 147 attacks, including 73 people killed, and 53 injured. War will not be a solution. Once again, I call on Russia to end the war."

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War in Ukraine: Day 54

War on the Ground:

Missile strikes; Mariupol under control

Zelenskyy's address

On 18 April, president Zelenskyy talked about the increasing offensive in the Donbas region of Ukraine and said that it was the beginning of the "Battle of Donbas." He said: It can now be stated that Russian troops have begun the battle for Donbas, for which they have been preparing for a long time. A very large part of the entire Russian army is now focused on this offensive." But he also clarified that Ukraine is not planning to be intimidated by what is to come and that they will keep on fighting and defending their land.

Chief of staff's message

On 18 April, Ukraine's presidential chief of staff, Andriy Yermak said: "the second phase of the war has started." This is in reference to Russia's aggression in the Donbas region. He however emphasized the strength of the army and how they could hold off the offensive.

Lviv missile strikes

On 18 April, the relatively safer city of Lviv reported missile strikes. In the Western part of the country, Lviv has been a city for people searching for refuge from the regions under active war, humanitarian organizations and media personnel. Ukraine's officials have said that seven people died and 11 people were injured as a result of four missiles hitting the city.

Russia forces take control of Mariupol

On 18 April, the city council of Mariupol said that around 1,000 civilians are hiding in underground shelters beneath the vast Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol. Street

battles are also taking place in the city as Russian forces try to take full control over the region.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin on the economic blitzkrieg by the West

On 18 April, Russia's president Vladimir Putin said the economic blitzkrieg launched by the West to destabilise the economy with sanctions had failed. He said: "The situation is stabilising, the ruble exchange rate has returned to the levels of the first half of February and is supported by a strong balance of payments." He added how the sanctions were released to quickly undermine the economy, create panic, and trigger a banking system collapse. But the economic policies of Russia were able to withstand the blitzkrieg.

Russian economy

On 18 April, Putin noted that the country's economic situation was stabilising as unemployment remained low. Concerning the Ruble, he said: "Russia has withstood this unprecedented pressure. The situation is stabilising, the Ruble's exchange rate has returned to the levels of the first half of February and is being defined by the objectively strong payment balance."

On the same day, Putin regarding inflation mentioned how even that was stabilising. He said: "consumer prices grew notably over the last 1.5 months - by 9.4%, while in annual terms as of 8 April inflation amounted to 17.5%."

Implications of sanctions on the West

On 18 April, Putin claimed that the sanctions by Western countries were deteriorating their own economies. This comes as Putin mentioned how Russia was able to stabilise inflation and that the retail demand in the country had normalised.

At the same time, Putin also mentioned the increase in assistance to entrepreneurs to help them solve the hindrances created by Western sanctions. In addition, he mentioned that the government is looking to stabilise the financial system at the federal and regional levels.

Report on foreign mercenaries in Ukraine

On 18 April, Russia released a report that stated 6,824 foreign mercenaries from 63 countries had come to Ukraine to fight alongside the government of Zelenskyy. The report mentioned that 1,035 fighters were "destroyed" while thousands remain. In addition, Russia says that about 400 foreign fighters were holed up in Mariupol along with nationalist and neo-nazi fighters.

The Donbas offensive

On 18 April, the buildup in the eastern city of Izyum was a sign of a possible upcoming offensive by the Russian forces. The article by the *Moscow Times* reported on how the army was facing issues of declining morale, continuing counterattacks by Ukrainian forces and disrupted supply lines that could cause difficulties to reach their goal in Donbas. Furthermore, according to the institute of war: "Military reversals are likely to have a significant impact on Russian morale."

Missiles launched on Ukrainian military

On 18 April, Russia said it had launched multiple missile strikes overnight on Ukrainian targets. They claimed to have hit targets in the southern region of Ukraine and destroyed 16 military facilities, fire command posts, a fuel depot and three ammunition warehouses. The strikes were carried out in Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk and in the port of Mykolayiv.

Claims by the Russian defence ministry

On 18 April, the defence ministry claimed that Ukraine was plotting to shell Orthodox churches and cathedrals in various regions of Ukraine. The ministry accused Ukraine of planning "monstrous provocations" to cause civilian deaths, which would be used to portray Russian forces in a bad light. It asserted that it had evidence for its claims but did not provide anything.

The West view: Responses from the US and Europe

The US

US deputy treasury secretary Wally Adeyemo, in his recent speech, forecasted the next possible steps that can be taken by Russia. He said with economic sanctions

being imposed to slow down Russia's progress on the ground, to go next step, he recommended: "Even as we continue to pursue rigorous financial sanctions against Russia and its key financial institutions, the next phase of our work will be to take apart Russia's war machine, piece by piece, by disrupting their military-industrial complex and its supply chains." He added that the US was imposing sanctions accordingly aiming at Russia's aerospace, electronics and defence to block Russia's military from restocking, and rebuilding.

On 18 April, the US Defence Department confirmed Russia's airstrikes on Lviv city using "air-launched cruise missiles." The Pentagon confirmed that the missiles targeted ammunition depots and observed that the strikes aimed at blocking Ukraine's capacity from restoring combat forces ahead of the eastern offensive. It also expects to train the Ukraine troops with howitzers in the coming days.

The UK

On 18 April, the UK Ministry of Defence reported on renewed shelling in the western Ukraine cities of Kyiv and Lviv. It said that there had been severe casualties in Mariupol and accused Russia of targeted shelling in populated areas such as Chechnya and Syria. Till now Russia has denied all such targeting.

NATO

On 18 April, NATO has scheduled to conduct its cyber defence exercise by engaging its alliance countries and Ukraine. The Annual cyber exercise is called as Locked Shields exercise, which will begin in Estonia. As part of the routine, fictional cyber-attack exercises will be tested under a time target. International policy adviser in the cyber policy unit of Estonia's ministry of defence, Anett Numa said: "Like-minded countries have to work together in order to protect themselves." The NATO Cyber Security Centre chief, Ian West remarked on the effectiveness of the exercise, highlighting the participation of cyber techies from different countries to exchange about various types of attacks and technology products.

EU

On 18 April, the EU's ambassador in Ukraine, Matti Maasilta said that the EU membership

questionnaire was completed and returned in just 10 days' time. Similarly, Georgia and Moldova have submitted their questionnaires.

Finland

Post Finland's announcement to join NATO has led to the withdrawal of many foreign investors has been observed. The move comes due to fear of safety and stability of operations. It was seen that the businesses were transferred from the Nordic to the Baltic States. According to Finland's president: "All these alternatives have an advantage that our security will improve. Or we make sure that our stability remains and that we can make sure we live in [a] secure environment. Our main headline is: Finnish security."

Turkey

The relations between Turkey and the US have taken a shift due to the war in Ukraine. Since Joe Biden became president, the relations between both countries were on deteriorating. It has taken a turning point with the US decision to send Turkey the F-16 fighter jets along with modernization kits as the US considers the rising security threat of Russia in the region. The former foreign minister of Turkey, Yasar Yakis said: "The Turkish-US negotiations on F-16s look like a breakthrough in the relations between these two NATO allies, but one swallow does not make a summer."

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International implications of the Ukraine war

Egypt

To suit its demand for wheat, Egypt has shifted its import contract from Russia and Ukraine wheat to India. The same was confirmed by commerce minister Piyush Goyal. Therefore, Egypt will import close to 240,000 tonnes of wheat out of one million tonnes in total from India. Goyal said: "Indian farmers are feeding the world. Egypt approves India as a wheat supplier. Modi Govt. steps in as the world looks for reliable alternate sources for a steady food supply. Our farmers have ensured our granaries overflow and we are ready to serve the world."

UNHCR

UNHCR reported that more than 4.9 million Ukrainians had left the country, the count has increased along with the internally displaced people. The UNHCR, head said: "The Ukrainian government was fast to adapt its social protection programmes and IDP registration to respond to the emerging needs. But a crisis of this magnitude needs everyone's support. This partnership will further strengthen our collective efforts to help displaced people access assistance and services, and rebuild their lives wherever they have found safety in the country." On the count of internally displaced, close to 7.1 million is estimated by UNHCR. She stressed on supplying emergency service and needed items that include doors, blankets, mattresses and items for personal hygiene in six areas of Donetsk and Kramatorsk regions. According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), those who fled the country included majorly students and migrant workers.

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War in Ukraine: Day 52 & 53

War on the Ground

Zelenskyy’s address

On 16 April president Zelenskyy spoke about negotiation with Russia and said it has reached a “dead end because we will not trade our territory and our people.” He spoke about reconstruction efforts, and how this moment in history can be considered a turning point to rebuild the country, only better. He said, “we can make quality urban planning where it did not exist. We can take into account real traffic flows. Guarantee energy saving, environmental friendliness of materials, and inclusiveness. This is when it comes to the organization of living space and the quality of reconstruction.” He also mentioned housing queues and giving back to the people who work for society. Zelenskyy mentioned that he had spoken to both Boris Johnson and the Swedish prime minister Magdalena Andersson on further support for Ukraine and against Russia.

On 17 April Zelenskyy addressed the growing Russian aggression at the eastern cities of Kharkiv and Mariupol. He said: “This is nothing but deliberate terror: mortars, artillery against ordinary residential quarters, against ordinary civilians.”

Zelenskyy also spoke with the managing director of IMF Kristalina Georgieva, about Ukraine's financial stability and post-war reconstruction. He said that he had a fruitful conversation with the managing director about Ukraine's post-war financial stability. He assured that if IMF's cooperation is present, his plans and vision for the country will also be realised. “Discussed with IMF Managing Director Georgieva the issue of ensuring Ukraine's financial stability & preparations for post-war reconstruction. We have clear plans for now, as well as a vision of prospects. I’m sure cooperation between the IMF & Ukraine will continue to be fruitful.”

Kyiv shelling increased

On 16 April, the attack on Kyiv intensified further. Even though the Russians had withdrawn at Kyiv, they renewed their attack on the capital city, recently after their Black Sea fleet flagship Moskva sunk. Mayor Vitali Klitschko urged residents to be vigilant and strikes occurred in the southeastern part of the city and air raids went off in the morning.

On 17 April, a missile attack in the early hours of Sunday in Brovary, near Ukraine's capital of Kyiv destroyed infrastructure in the area. The mayor of Irpin, to the west of Kyiv said that Russian forces have destroyed 70 per cent of the buildings in the town. The mayor, Oleksandr Markushin said that as per an UN study, 115 buildings were completely destroyed, 698 suffered significant damage, and 187 were partially damaged.

More wounded in Kharkiv

On 16 April, the Russian offensive continued in Kharkiv. The regional major reported that one person was killed and 18 were wounded by a Russian missile.

On 17 April Zelenskyy reported that in the last four days, 18 people have been killed and more than 100 wounded in shelling in Kharkiv. A community kitchen, by the World

Central Kitchen, set up by celebrity chef José Andrés was amongst the buildings that was destroyed by Russian bombing. They have been operating kitchens in 30 cities in Ukraine, and providing nearly 300,000 meals daily.

Rocket attacks in Mykolaiv

On 17 April, the governor of the Mykolaiv region said that the city has been witnessing constant rocket attacks since the morning. Reportedly, the Russians have been attacking the power grids, houses, as well as playgrounds. The governor, Vitaly Kim said: "They [Russian forces] can't advance in one day, even in one a week, they can't advance and reach Mykolaiv. So people will have some time to leave Mykolaiv, if it becomes dangerous. And if I see it becoming dangerous in the city, I will tell everyone to leave."

Fighting continues in Mariupol

On 16 April Russian forces in Mariupol issued a surrender-or-die ultimatum by 17 April This is in light of the fact that they have been closing in on Ukraine's troops in order to establish control on the strategically important port city.

On 17 April, Ukraine's prime minister Denys Shmyhal however said that troops in Mariupol were still fighting despite the ultimatum. He mentioned that Ukraine's soldiers continue to occupy some southeastern parts of the city.

Nine humanitarian corridors agreed

On 16 April, Iryna Vereshchuk, the deputy prime minister said that nine humanitarian corridors had been agreed upon in order to evacuate civilians, including from the besieged city of Mariupol by private cars. Five of those nine corridors were from Luhansk region, which has been under heavy shelling.

On 17 April, Ukraine and Russia failed to agree on humanitarian convoys for the evacuation of civilians, and as a result no humanitarian corridors were made functional on Sunday. Vereschuk said that they have also asked for an opportunity to evacuate civilians from the besieged port of Mariupol.

Ukraine also completed a questionnaire that will be a starting point for the EU to consider their membership. This questionnaire was given to Zelenskyy by European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, when she visited Kyiv on 08 April.

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Russia Defence Ministry claims

On 17 April, Russia issued a warning to the Ukrainian soldiers in Mariupol. It threatened the soldiers to surrender to avoid being "eliminated." Russia's Defence Ministry pointed that the Ukraine forces located in the steel plant of Mariupol had rejected the talks to surrender and it warned saying: "In case of further resistance, all of them will be eliminated." Capturing Mariupol means Russia will have control to build a bridge between the east and Crimea.

On 16 April, the Defence Ministry claimed of destroying military troops in Kyiv and Mykolaiv as a counter to the missile hit on Moskva, Russia's cruise missile ship. It also reported on attacking one of the military plants outside Kyiv and killing people in Kharkiv using a rocket. Apart from this Russia claimed that it had circled the steel plant in Mariupol where Ukraine forces are observed to be defending. The same was confirmed by major general. Igor Konashenkov, who stated that 2,500 Russia's troops had circled the steel plant. He said: "The only chance to save their lives is to voluntarily lay down their arms and surrender."

On 16 April, Russia announced a ban on UK's prime minister Boris Johnson and imposed sanctions on U.K. foreign secretary Liz Truss, defence secretary Ben Wallace, treasury chief Rishi Sunak and home secretary Priti Patel. It further added Scotland's first minister and former UK prime minister. As per the ministry, the decision comes as a response to UK's attempts in isolating Russia from the international and for trying to target its domestic economy.

Upon Finland and Sweden approaching NATO to submit its applications for future membership, Russia warned on unintentional incidents in the Arctic.

Russia's representative to Arctic Council's said: "The internationalization of military activity by the alliance in the high latitudes cannot but cause concern." Earlier, Russia threatened on using nuclear if Finland and Sweden joined NATO.

The governor of St. Petersburg gave a statement confirming the death of Russia's general, Vladimir Frolov. There were no further details, till now seven generals have been recorded to have died in the war.

The West view: Responses from Europe

The EU

On 17 April, the EU announced EUR 50 million aid to support people injured during the war. It will be used for medical services, ensure safe drinking water, shelter and help those hurt by gender violence.

Austria

On 17 April, Austria's chancellor Karl Nehammer expressed on the meeting with Putin. He assured that Austria will cooperate with ICC for investigation into the war crimes and also said he does not trust the West. Nehammer also remarked that although Russia does not seem to be winning the war, he observed from the meeting that Putin was believing Russia to be winning.

Italy and Bulgaria

On 17 April, Italy and Bulgaria banned Russian ships from entering their national ports to abide by the recent sanctions levied by the EU. Although the supplies on energy and food have been excepted, the Italy Coast Guard issued a statement saying all the ships with Russian flags will be under the rule and existing ships in the Italian ports will be allowed to remain till the commercial activities are completed. Similar to Italy, Bulgaria also imposed the port ban. In terms of the EU, the sanctions imposed provide exceptions for certain products such as natural gas, oil, petroleum products, metals, pharmaceuticals, wheat, fertilizers, nuclear fuel and for humanitarian purposes.

Estonia

According to the Estonia Information System Authority (RIA) head, Lauri Tankler reported on Estonia's vulnerable position on

the cyber domain. Tankler said that Tankler had become the biggest target due to its supporting stance for Ukraine. It is being targeted using misinformation campaigns, which urges people to click and through which the malware steals information to use to spread false information.

Netherlands

On 17 April, the Dutch Ministry of Defence sent its Patriot missile unit to Slovakia as part of the NATO eastern flank reinforcement. The supply comes due to colliding of five vehicles from a convoy due to poor sight and bad roads. It announced further supply of 150 personnel to strengthen Slovakia, apart from this, Netherlands has also vowed to join with Germany in boosting the air defence of the country.

The UK

On 17 April, UK Defence Ministry tweeted that Russia was keen on persuading Ukraine in restraining its "Euro-Atlantic orientation," and to focus on its key role in the region. It added that, Russia was deploying combat and equipment to the east of Ukraine from Belarus and has been constantly shelling through the east with renewed attacks.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

India

On 17 April, India's defence ministry stated that the impact of the Russian war on Ukraine would be discussed at the five-day Army Commanders' Conference in New Delhi. The defence ministry stated: "During the conference, the senior leadership of the Indian Army will review the operational situation along the active borders, assess threats in the entire spectrum of conflict and undertake analysis of capability voids to further focus on capability development and operational preparedness plans."

On 16 April, India's Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) announced that it would set a record for exports of wheat to become a global supplier. The war in Ukraine led to the shortage of wheat from the world's breadbasket and has been a significant concern for countries that rely on

wheat imports. The APEDA would be sending delegations to Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Lebanon to extend the possibility of increasing Indian exports of wheat to these countries. Egypt, one of the world's largest wheat importing countries, has already sent officials to India to monitor the export systems.

Nepal

On 15 April, a report by *Deutsche Welle* mentioned that the war in Eastern Europe intensified Nepal's economic crisis. Nepal does not have strong economic ties with both Russia and Ukraine. But, the global implications of war, the rising fuel and food costs have deepened the economic crisis in the country. The war has also discouraged tourists and the tourism industry, which was already weakened by the pandemic. Furthermore, the fall in remittances, a trade deficit and depletion of foreign reserves are other reasons for the economic situation.

China

On 16 April, concerns arose about China's investments in Russia's Bashkortostan region as the war continued. The project was earlier stalled due to budget issues, the COVID-19 pandemic and local protests. With the sanctions in place by Western countries, the project has again received a setback and is likely to perish due to the uncertainties.

Japan

On 16 April, in a united effort, Japan and five Central Asian countries pledged to communicate their responses to the war in Ukraine closely. Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said: "The international community needs to keep in step to deal with (the Ukrainian crisis)." The foreign ministers of Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan met virtually to discuss the war in Ukraine and celebrate the 30th anniversary of Japan's establishment of diplomatic ties with the five Central Asian countries.

Central Asia

On 17 April, a report by *Eurasiareview* highlighted that the war in Ukraine meant that Russia would be less focused on the central Asian countries. In addition, it talked about how Russia's security guarantees for

Central Asian states and the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) would have implications due to the war.

The UN

On 16 April, the UN stated that another 40,000 had fled the country as the war escalated with the recent attacks on Kyiv. The UN also mentioned that nearly five million people who have fled Ukraine would not have homes to return to. *France24* reported: "The UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) says nearly 215,000 third-country nationals -- largely students and migrant workers -- have also escaped to neighbouring countries, meaning more than five million people in all have fled Ukraine since the war began."

World Food Programme

On 16 April, the World Food Programme (WFP) mentioned that it had delivered aid to 1.4 million people in Ukraine since the war began. It further mentioned that it would need safe access to deliver the additional aid to 2.3 million people. But, unfortunately, they were not allowed to access Mariupol due to the selling. Concerning Mariupol and Mykolaiv WFP, executive director David Beasley said: "It's one thing when people are suffering from the devastation of war. It's another thing when they're being starved to death."

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War in Ukraine: Day 51

War on the Ground

Zelenskyy's address

During his everyday address, president Zelenskyy detailed how Ukrainians were returning to "normal life" in areas that have been rid of Russian occupiers. He also called on allies for more heavy weapons and to tighten the sanctions on Russian oil. Praising the armed forces of the country, he emphasised how the situation in the south and the east of the country was still quite difficult. Zelenskyy said: "The successes of our military on the battlefield are really significant, historically significant. But they are still not enough to clean our land of the occupiers."

Zelenskyy also corresponded with Biden and made a direct appeal to him. He asked if the United States could designate Russia a "state sponsor of terrorism."

Prime minister's address

On 15 April, Ukraine agreed to receive financial help from Japan and Canada. Japan will be sending JPY 13 billion yen and CAD 500 million. In a televised video address, prime minister Denys Shmygal said: "These are funds to finance our primary needs We are negotiating assistance at all levels with everyone who can help."

Russian troops withdraw from Kyiv

Russian troops started withdrawing from Kyiv on 29th March, and since then and relative peace has prevailed. . But given the fact that Russia's prized Black Sea fleet flagship Moskva sunk unexpectedly, they have warned that tensions in Kyiv will be on the rise. On 15 April, for the first time since

the withdrawal of Russian troops, residents of Kyiv heard huge explosions.

Mariupol under siege

Mariupol has been under siege since 24 February when the war began, but recently the Russian offensive there has increased in an increased attempt to take over the strategically important port city. Explosions rocked the area, and according to *Reuters* reports, an attack was made at the Azovstal iron and steelworks, amidst dwindling Ukrainian forces. The Defence Ministry said that for the first time, Russia had used long-range bombers to attack the city.

Cluster munitions in Mykolaiv

On 15 April, The southern city of Mykolaiv witnessed cluster munitions being used. The governor of the region informed via the Telegram app that five people had been killed due to shelling.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Update from the Russian military

On 15 April, Russian defence ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov informed that they destroyed hundreds of drones and thousands of tanks during their special operations in Ukraine. He stated: "Russian forces have eliminated 132 aircraft, 105 helicopters, 456 unmanned aerial vehicles, 2,213 tanks and other armoured vehicles and 249 multiple rocket launchers since the beginning of their special military operation in Ukraine." The troops had also eliminated seven Ukrainian military facilities and a Tochka-U missile launcher using airborne precision missiles. He further updated on the targets eliminated in the Ukrainian strongholds and the shooting down of Su-27 fighters of their Air Force.

Responding to North Macedonia's expulsion of Russian diplomats

On 15 April, Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova stated that Moscow would retaliate against Macedonia's explosion of Russian diplomats. The Russian foreign ministry stated: "The North Macedonian administration is continuing on a confrontational path without paying any attention to the fact that such steps damage bilateral relations." This comes as Macedonia

expelled six diplomats from the Embassy of the Russian Federation.

Moscow to eliminate Ukrainian nationalist battalions

On 15 April, the Kremlin announced that it prioritised the elimination of nationalist battalions. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov added: "Peaceful life is returning where nationalist battalions do not take civilians hostage and where these nationalist battalions do not open fire on social facilities and houses." He further accused nationalist battalions of engaging in fierce struggles and hence justified their reason to be eliminated.

Deputy PM on buyers paying in roubles for Russian gas

On 15 April, Russian deputy prime minister Alexander Novak said many countries who buy Russian gas had already agreed to convert their payments into roubles. He added: "I would like to emphasise that the transfer of payments for gas into the national currency on the Russian side is logical and caused by objective reasons - the desire to receive payment for the delivered goods with a 100% guarantee." He further mentioned that the EU's plans to move away from Russian gas by importing it from the US would not work out. The EU would face logistical nuances as the necessary infrastructure for receiving LNG was unavailable.

Federation council deputy on cooperation with the EU

On 15 April, the federation council deputy Konstantin Kosachev said Russia was willing to continue its cooperation with the EU. However, it also mentioned that it would have to reconsider its relations. He added that the EU's steps and accusations that stated Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to switch to ruble payments for gas ran counter to the EU sanctions. He further mentioned that their accusations were approaching a red line for Russia.

The sinking of the Moskva missile cruiser

On 15 April, a report by *Reuters* mentioned how much impact the sinking of the Moskva missile cruiser would cause Russia. Russia claimed that a fire and explosions involving ammunition stowed aboard caused the ship

to sink. However, the loss of the ship would degrade the fleet's defences in the Black Sea but would not change the course of the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it would raise questions about Russia's naval capabilities.

Russia hit the Kyiv missile factory in retaliation to the Moskva attacks

On 15 April, Russian strikes hit a military factory near Kyiv that made the missiles that had likely sunk the Russian ship Moskva. The strike was Russia's first significant strike around the capital in the last two weeks.

Russia blocks The Moscow Times

On 15 April, the Moscow Times' Russian-language service was blocked by Russia for publishing false reports on police officers refusing to fight the war in Ukraine. State communications watchdog Roskomnadzor banned the service, citing an order from the prosecutor general's office.

Russia expels 18 EU diplomats

On 15 April, Russia announced that it was expelling 18 EU diplomats in retaliation for Brussels declaring 19 Russian diplomats as *personae non-gratae*. In addition, Russia's foreign ministry handed the EU ambassador to Russia, Markus Ederer, a note of protest. The ministry stated: "The Russian side declared that the EU is responsible for the consistent destruction of the architecture of bilateral dialogue and cooperation that had taken decades to form."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

Whitehouse press secretary, Jen Psaki said that the US president will not be sent to Ukraine for dialogue, instead, they are considering the secretary of the state, Antony Blinken. Apart from this, an official from the Defence Ministry confirmed that the Russian cruise missile ship was hit by Neptune missiles of Ukraine.

On 15 April, Ukraine's army chief and US general held a phone call, where they discussed sending more weapons and the fight on the Kharkiv-Izium border. Ukraine's chief remarked that there was a "critical situation," persisting in Mariupol.

The UK

On 15 April, the UK Ministry of Defence reported the sinking of Russia's ship vessel Moskva. It said: "will likely lead Russia to review its maritime posture in the Black Sea."

France

On 15 April, the Forensic department of France, through a team of experts investigated the mass burials graves located in Bucha. The aim of the investigation is to observe and collect evidence to use for the legal case against Russia in the ICC. Russia's media controller, Roskomnadzor blocked the website access to French radio station RFI. It blocked stating that RFI had violated the law of false and extremist information. The site was providing live updates on Ukraine, Russia did not mention the exact reason for blocking, but it is found to be on a spree to shut down independent media.

Estonia

The soldiers of Wales, belonging to the Royal Welsh regiment conducted training exercises in Estonia. The 1,200 NATO task force was led by the Welsh to "deter and defend," future possible Russian attacks. Estonia's permanent secretary for defence, Kusti Salm said: "as clear as anything can be." He also urged NATO to double the troop count in Estonia. Estonia's president gave a warning that it was possible for Russia to launch a hybrid war in the coming days. He said: "Regardless of what happens we are ready for that. That's what this exercise is about and it's given confidence to our people. We are ready."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

MNCs

On 14 April, Oreo makers Mondelez, Nestle, and PepsiCo were questioned by workers from Ukraine and eastern Europe for continuing their operations in Russia. *Reuters* reported on the internal communications within the organization and interview six employees. It observed that the demand from the employees came from Ukraine's repeated request to western companies to take a step further and cut down its businesses with Russia. According

to *Reuters*, it found an internal memo that indicated the exit of many employees from Nestle and close to 130 employees from the Baltic countries has filed a petition against Mondelez asking to stop its business.

IMF

On 15 April, IMF warned that Bulgaria's economy will be affected due to rising inflation from the Ukraine war. From the recent staff visit, IMF estimated that Bulgaria's growth which was 4.4 per cent, due to inflation reduced to three per cent. Bulgaria's banking sector is expected to remain "well capitalised and liquid," but IMF asked the central bank to be wary of any after-effect of war. In the statement released: "The economic effects of the war will materialize primarily through higher commodity prices, lower trading partners' demand, and the impact of uncertainty on investment, while refugees need to be cared for. High energy dependence from Russia is a significant vulnerability." As far as Bulgaria is concerned, it proposes to join the eurozone in 2024 to fasten its structural reform and control corruption.

Metinvest

One of the biggest steelmakers in Ukraine, Metinvest has promised to not re-open its businesses until the invasion. It reported that due to war, one-third of the country's metallurgy producing capacity was down. Ukraine's major steel and coal assets are located in the eastern part and it supplied the largest to Europe. With war slowly shifting to the east, it becomes a challenge for the country's steel industry to operate. According to Metinvest: "The country has therefore lost 30-40% of its metallurgical production capacity since the plants are not working. We have no doubt that their work will be resumed, but for this Mariupol must remain Ukrainian."

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War in Ukraine: Day 50

War on the Ground:
Zelenskyy on 50 days of war
Zelenskyy's address

On 14 April, president Zelenskyy referred to how the Ukrainians had survived 50 days of the war when the Russians had said that they will take Ukraine over in just five days. He said: "But they didn't know how brave Ukrainians are, how much we value freedom and the possibility to live the way we want." He also said that the European countries who are still buying oil from Russia were "making money out of blood." Zelenskyy called for further support, especially with regard to weapons, emphasising how urgently they need the weapons.

Ukraine's military statement

Ukraine's military also released a statement on the occasion of 50 days of the war in Ukraine. They also highlighted the war proceeds from a defence perspective. With the rising Russian offensive in the east of the country, like in the Ukrainian-Belarusian border of Brest, and Gomel, along with Kharkiv and Donetsk. They also mentioned how the Russian forces stormed the port-city of Mariupol but were unsuccessful and that they were conducting the investigation in Slobozhansky in northeastern Ukraine. The military also claimed on destruction of a tank, four armoured units, six vehicles, and a Russian artillery system.

Ukraine's foreign ministry claims

Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba urged Germany to make their decision regarding a promised delivery of weapons soon. The consignment of arms, as coordinated by the Federal Chancellery has been delayed by red tape and because of the approval needed by several ministries to do so.

They also elaborated on their fears of Ukrainian children being trafficked by Russia. They said that the self-proclaimed republics of Donetsk and Luhansk were allegedly planning to sign memorandums with the Russian Education Ministry, about the children in this region. The ministry also wrote letters to the UNHCR, UNICEF, and the Red Cross about possible kidnappings of Ukraine's children.

Russia's missile cruiser sinks

On 14 April, the Black Sea fleet sank. This happened after a huge explosion destroyed its vessel. Moscow and Kyiv had different explanations for the same, but Ukraine

offered the narrative that they had struck the ship with a Neptune Missile. This move will definitely be boosting Ukrainian morale, as this is the first Russian ship to sink since the Second World War. This also marks the first time that Ukraine used their 300 km range missiles, which they had reportedly received in March last year.

On 14 April, Deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk reported that 2557 people had been evacuated from the country through the humanitarian corridors that have been established. Out of them, 289 people left by their own transport from the besieged port of Mariupol.

On 14 April a UN committee said that 2.7 million Ukrainian people with disabilities were at risk in the war-torn country. Many were reportedly trapped or without the safety of their homes, care centres or orphanages. The committee said: "People with disabilities have limited or no access to emergency information, shelters and safe havens, and many have been separated from their support networks, leaving them unable to respond to the situation and navigate their surroundings."

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Putin's comments

On 14 April, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's energy export will be expanded to Asia. He warned the European countries for adopting alternatives in place of Russia's energies and causing economic instability. The revenue from the energy sector accounts for 36 per cent of Russia's spending and a larger part came from Europe.

Warnings and accusations

Russia's Security Council deputy chairman Dmitry Medvedev warned that if Sweden and Finland joined NATO, Russia will boost its defence. He also added that the possibility of being "nuclear free" will close down. Russia accused Ukraine of targeting its residential area. It reported that two low-flying military helicopters armed with heavy arms were launched in Klimovo, which injured seven people along with a child. The governor of Russia's Belgorod region

reported similarly on the shelling of residential towns. In the statement released: "Two military helicopters... carried out at least six airstrikes on residential buildings in the settlement of Klimovo."

Russia's Defence Ministry claims

On 14 April, Russia's Defence Ministry reported on the explosion of its vessel Moskva. In the statement released, it said: "The cruiser Moskva's ammunition has detonated as a result of a fire on the warship. The vessel is seriously damaged. The entire crew have been evacuated. The cause of the blaze is being investigated." The Ukrainian forces had stated that that vessel was attacked using Neptune missiles. Previously, the Moskva warship was under attack by Ukrainians calling for surrender, later Russia confirmed that the ammunition which were stored in the ship had exploded. Russia's Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Troops, chief, Igor Kirillov confirmed on Ukraine's purchase of 50 drones that are usable to spray deadly chemicals. He said: "According to available data, in January 2022, Ukraine purchased through intermediary companies over 50 such craft that can be employed for using biological substances and toxic chemicals." Russia claimed that close to 1000 troops of Ukraine marines in Mariupol have surrendered. The information was denied by the deputy mayor of Mariupol, but Russia broadcasted a video showing the marines giving up their steelworks in the port.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 14 April, the US was deliberating about sending high ranking US officials to meet Zelenskyy in Kyiv. However, the White House is likely to send the secretary of state or secretary of defence instead of Biden or vice-president Kamala Harris.

Poland

On 14 April, Poland's border guard stated that 2.73 million people had fled to Poland since the war began. However, the number of refugees crossing the border has decreased since Russian troops started withdrawing from the north and from around the Kyiv region. At the same time,

many refugees have already left Poland, with only about 1.2-1.4 million remaining.

The UK

On 14 April, the UK government announced that two more men linked to Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich would be placed on the sanction list. Eugene Tenenbaum and David Davidovich were also owners of the Chelsea Football Club. The assets frozen under the new sanctions amount to GBP ten billion.

France and Jersey

On 14 April, the countries of France and Jersey said they had frozen assets belonging to Roman Abramovich as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. France froze assets worth GBP 20 billion while Jersey froze assets of GBP five billion. The Jersey police have also stepped up their search to find properties belonging to Abramovich. On 14 April, France's foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian announced that France would move its Ukrainian embassy back to Kyiv. He added: "This redeployment will happen very soon and allow France to deepen its backing for Ukraine even further in all spheres to face the war unleashed by Russia on 24 February."

Ireland

On 14 April, Ireland's foreign and defence minister Simon Coveney visited Kyiv in a show of support for Ukraine. Ireland's department of foreign affairs stated that his visit was to "provide political, security and humanitarian support to Ukraine; assist Ukraine in its application for EU candidate status; take forward further EU sanctions on Russia; and hold Russia to account for its brutal and unjustified invasion". On the same day, Coveney mentioned that even though Ireland was a neutral country, it was not neutral in this war and conflict. He further announced EUR three million in funding to the ICC and EUR one million to the prosecutor's office.

Moldova

On 14 April, Moldova's foreign minister Nicu Popescu said: "These are not actions that contribute to peace for all of us, for our citizens, for our families, and these are dangerous things and should be

discouraged." His statement came as a response to a question by a journalist about Russia's attempts to recruit people in Transdnistria. Transdnistria is a part of Moldova controlled by Russian separatists.

Lithuania

On 14 April, Lithuania's prime minister Ingrida Šimonytė dismissed warnings of Russia on Vilnius joining NATO. She added: "That Russia threatens, it is nothing new. Kaliningrad is a very militarized zone, has been for many years, and it is in the Baltic region." Šimonytė has supported the Baltic countries joining NATO as it greatly benefits the countries and their security.

The EU

On 14 April, the EU stated that it was able to close a loophole that allowed its member countries to export weapons worth tens of millions to Russia in 2021. The EU had placed an embargo on its members from exporting weapons to Russia since its annexation of Crimea in 2014. However, member countries were able to export weapons worth EUR 39 million through the loophole.

On the same day, The EU stated that its payment for Russian gas in rubles would violate the bloc's sanctions. The EU commission released an internal note on this matter saying: "This mechanism would lead to a breach of the existing EU restrictive measures adopted in respect of Russia, its government, the Central Bank of Russia, and their proxies."

Also, on 14 April, European Central Bank chief Christine Lagarde said the war in Ukraine was severely impacting the eurozone economy. He added: "The impact of the war on the economy will depend on how the conflict evolves, on the effect of current sanctions and on possible further measures."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

China

On 14 April, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian defended China's

stance in the war by saying: "Time will prove that China's position is on the right side of history." In addition, Zhao responded to the US' criticism for not participating in Western sanctions against Russia. However, earlier, Beijing clarified that it was not doing anything to circumvent sanctions.

Citigroup

On 14 April, Citigroup said it set aside USD 1.9 billion in reserves to counter uncertainties created by the War in Ukraine. The group said: "related to Citi's exposures in Russia and the broader impact of the conflict in Ukraine on the macroeconomic environment." The measures come as a response to its 46 per cent decline in profits for the first quarter, while its revenues dipped two per cent.

World Cup

On 14 April, the match between Ukraine and Scotland, which was postponed due to the war, was scheduled for 01 June. The teams will have their playoff at Hampden Park in Glasgow. The winner of the match would play against Wales for a spot in the World Cup in Qatar in November and December.

IMF

On 14 April, the International Monetary Fund warned that the war in Ukraine and the resurfacing of COVID-19 cases in China were directly lowering this year's economic growth. The IMF's managing director stated: "We are facing a crisis on top of a crisis... "We will be projecting a further downgrade in global growth for 2022 and 2023." The war in Ukraine accentuated high inflation rates globally amid concerns about oil and gas, wheat and fertiliser supplies.

UN

On 14 April, the UN stated that its World Food Programme (WFP) would increase by USD 136 million in West Africa due to the rise in global prices of food and fuel. The WFP regional director Chris Nikoi said: "With the unfolding conflict in Ukraine, ports and suppliers are no longer accessible with shipments from the wider Black Sea delayed or simply cancelled." West African countries import 30-50 per cent of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine.

On the same day, a UN committee stated its concerns for the lives of 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine who were at risk due to the war. The committee stated: "People with disabilities have limited or no access to emergency information, shelters and safe havens, and many have been separated from their support networks, leaving them unable to respond to the situation and navigate their surroundings."

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War in Ukraine: Day 49

War on the Ground

Zelenskyy's address

On 13 April, president Zelenskyy addressed Estonia's parliament and highlighted the plight that is being faced by the Ukrainians. He said that Russia was using phosphorous bombs and also accused them of intimidating civilians with terror tactics. He added: "The Russian army is using all types of artillery, all types of missile, air bombs in particular phosphorous bombs against residential districts and civilian infrastructure." He also thanked Estonia for their 'principled support' and how they were supporting Ukraine's accession to the EU.

Zelenskyy's talks with world leaders

Zelenskyy continued his correspondence with the US president Joe Biden, to discuss further defensive and financial aid. They also

spoke about the alleged war crimes committed by Russia and about the imposition of the impending sanctions. Biden announced that he will be authorising USD 800 million in military aid for Ukraine. On 13 April, a deluge of European leaders visited Kyiv. The presidents of Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia promised to increase military support, and said that Russia must be held accountable for its action. The four presidents also visited places in and around Kyiv. Poland's president Andrzej Duda said: "This is not war, this is terrorism... We're not just talking about the soldiers who committed those crimes, but those who issued orders - all of them should be brought to justice."

Destruction uncovered in Kyiv

On 13 April, the head of police for the Kyiv region said that they were still uncovering horrors from below the rubble of destruction. In a televised message, he said: "We are finding terrible things: buried and hidden bodies of people who were tortured and shot, and who died as a result of mortar and artillery fire,"

Soldiers surrender in Mariupol

On 13 April, Russia's defence ministry announced that 1,026 soldiers from Ukraine's 36th Marine Brigade had surrendered in Mariupol. The Russian forces captured the Azovstal industrial district, which also granted them full control of the Sea of Azov port. This will enable them to further strengthen their occupation of the east of Ukraine.

Bombing in Kharkiv

On 13 April it was reported that there has been a significant increase in bombing in the Kharkiv region. Kharkiv has been under siege since 24 February, but the Russian offensive has increased significantly in the last few days. Governor Oleh Synehubov wrote that four people were killed and ten wounded by strikes.

Nine humanitarian corridors were announced for Thursday, and a prisoner swap with Russia was also agreed upon. Due to it, 30 Ukrainians will be returning home. The World Bank is planning to provide financial support worth USD 1.5 billion to Ukraine, in order to keep essential services

like hospital wages, government services and social programmes for vulnerable people, up and running.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Russian projects in the arctic to continue

On 13 April, Russian president Vladimir Putin demanded that the projects in the Russian arctic must not be postponed due to the ongoing situation and sanctions. He also mentioned that the implementation of these projects must be increased. He added: "Not to postpone them, not to shift them right, but, instead, we must respond to attempts to curb our development with a maximum increase of the pace of work both on current and upcoming tasks."

1,000 Ukrainian marines surrender in Mariupol

On 13 April, Russia claimed that over 1,000 Ukrainian marines surrendered in Mariupol days after Russian forces besieged the port city. Russian forces had encircled Mariupol for weeks; they had even blockaded the ports and called on the defenders to surrender. However, only on 13 April did the marines of the 36th Marine Brigade, which included 162 officers and 1,026 soldiers, lay down their arms.

US and NATO weapon transports deemed legitimate targets

On 13 April, deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov announced that Russia proclaimed that the US and NATO weapon transports were legitimate military targets. Ryabkov said: "We are warning that US-NATO weapons transport across Ukrainian territory will be considered by us as legal military targets." He added that these moves were made to deter further damage to Russian contingents and formations by the Americans and the West.

AUKUS a narrow security pact in the Asia Pacific

On 13 April, presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov called the AUKUS pact a "narrow pact" that was incapable of serving as a security pact for the Asia Pacific region. He added that these narrow pacts would unlikely grow into a broad platform that

could provide stability and security in such a vast region.

Kremlin on statements by Kyiv

On 13 April, Peskov mentioned that all statements by Kyiv needed to be checked as Ukraine was creating a fake narrative against Russia. He said: "That's why I want to urge everyone to treat all the information that way: Don't take it at face value, don't believe what you see but just try to double-check everything and at least look for an alternative point of view." He added that the Ukrainian politician Viktor Medvedchuk's detaining video was also not legitimate and said it was too early to determine the video to be authentic.

The West view: Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 13 April, US president Joe Biden declared additional military assistance of USD 800 million to Ukraine. The previous package included heavy artillery, armoured personnel carriers and coastal defence boats. In the additional package, the US has agreed to supply "11 Mi-17 helicopters, 40,000 artillery rounds, counter-artillery radars, 200 armored personnel carriers and 300 additional "Switchblade" drones." According to Pentagon spokesperson, John Kirby, highlighted that in terms of Howitzers and radars, the Ukrainian forces needed training in using the equipments. On the same the Pentagon released a statement: "focused primarily on accelerating production and building more capacity across the industrial base for weapons and equipment that can be exported rapidly, deployed with minimal training, and prove effective in the battlefield."

The UK

On 13 April, UK Ministry of Defence released its observation on the war situation in Ukraine and Russia's movements. On Russia's appointment of Army general Alexander Dvornikov. It observed Russia's attempt in centralising command and control. The change of leader also shows Russia's inability to coordinate its military activity. Apart from this it showcases Ukraine's resistance and ill-planning of Russian forces in carrying out its operations.

On 13 April, the UK imposed a new set of sanctions on 206 Russian individuals, out of which 178 were suspected to be involved in supporting the separatists group in the eastern Ukraine region. In the list several oligarchs and cousins on billionaires have been sanctioned. According to foreign secretary Liz Truss: "In the wake of horrific rocket attacks on civilians in Eastern Ukraine, we are today sanctioning those who prop up the illegal breakaway regions and are complicit in atrocities against the Ukrainian people."

Poland, and the Baltic states

Poland's president Andrzej Duda called the Russian attacks in Ukraine as "terrorism." He urged to account the crimes committed by Russia and demanded for justice. Although Russian has strongly denied the allegations of war crimes, Duda during his meeting with Zelenskyy said that it was not war but it was terrorism. Along with Duda, Latvia's president stressed that it was their responsibility to support Ukraine with necessary weapons. Whereas the leaders of Lithuania and Estonia uniformly support for Ukraine to win the war and criticised Putin for launching the war.

Germany

Chairmen of German's three parliamentary committees asked the EU to levy oil embargo on Russia. In contract, Kiel Institute's vice-president said that such cut down on energy supplies will push Germany's economy into recession. The German Economy Ministry on the impact of economy said: "They depend heavily on the duration and intensity of the war."

Switzerland

Switzerland imposed next round of sanctions against Russia and Belarus for the growing military operations in Ukraine. Similar to UK, 200 individuals were targeted with sanctions. Till now, it has frozen assets of Russians worth Swiss francs 7.5 billion, but it is yet to expel Russian diplomats.

The Global Fallouts:
International implications of the Ukraine war
China

On 13 April, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian stated that US sanctions on Russia were unacceptable and would have negative implications around the globe. He added that the US had a responsibility to maintain the economic system and stability. However, the sanctions would lead to other countries paying for its ramifications instead of Russia. On the same day, *the Guardian* reported the increase in trade between Russia and China. The overall trade with Russia had increased by 12.76 per cent.

The WHO

On 13 April, the World Health Organization's head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the world was not giving equal attention to other issues apart from the Ukraine war. He added: "I need to be blunt and honest that the world is not treating the human race the same way. Some are more equal than others." However, he mentioned that the Ukraine crisis was significant as it affected countries worldwide.

The UN

On 13 April, the UN released an advisory to the UK government to not match Ukrainian women and children with single men. The UN was concerned for the refugees and stated: "Matching done without the appropriate oversight may lead to increasing the risks women may face, in addition to the trauma of displacement, family separation and violence already experienced." However, the UK government said it had set up "robust security and background checks". The UK's spokesperson added: "Councils must make at least one in-person visit to a sponsor's property and they have a duty to make sure the guest is safe and well once they've arrived."

Also, on 13 April, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres appealed for a ceasefire in Ukraine. However, he said: "it does not seem possible". He said it was impossible as Russia had not responded to the UN evacuating Ukrainian civilians from war zones.

The ICC

On 13 April, the international court of justice's chief prosecutor Karim Khan visited Bucha and mentioned: "Ukraine is a crime

scene". This comes as the ICC is investigating the crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. Khan added: "We have to pierce the fog of war to get to the truth. That requires independent, impartial investigation." Khan met with Ukraine's prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova and said they planned to collaborate and deepen engagement to deliver accountability to the people of Ukraine.

Mercedes-Benz

On 13 April, the former parent of Mercedes-Benz, Daimler Truck, said that it was looking to possibly sell its stakes in the Russian vehicle and engine maker Kamaz. Rostec CEO Sergey Chemezov said he was interested in acquiring the stakes of Kamaz owned by Mercedes-Benz. Rostec currently owns 49.9 per cent of the stake but was looking to acquire the 15 per cent owned by Daimler Truck. The sanctions against Russia and Western companies were disinvesting from Russia.

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War in Ukraine: Day 48

War on the Ground Zelenskyy’s address

On 12 April, Zelenskyy asked the European Union to further tighten the sanctions on Russian banks and oil, to choke the funding for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. He has also appealed to the African Union for their support in the fight and from Senegalese, Macky Sall confirmed the same.

Deputy defence minister’s address

Deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar again issues a warning against Russia using chemical weapons against her country. She reiterated Zelenskyy’s words and said that the unverified reports of usage of chemical weapons in Mariupol were being checked.

Havoc in Kyiv

Bucha, near Kyiv was one area where the Russian forces had wreaked havoc, killing, raping and torturing innocent civilians. French forensic experts have come down to Bucha, to examine what happened to the hundreds of bodies that have been discovered here.

No stocks in Mariupol

On 12th April, Ukraine’s marines stationed in Mariupol expressed their dissatisfaction with Zelenskyy, as they were facing a dwindling of ammunition and stocks. They accused the president of abandoning them amidst a siege as if the fight in Mariupol was over. The brigade posted on Facebook regarding this and said: “For over a month, the marines fought without replenishment of ammunition, without food, without water, drinking from a puddle and dying in batches.”

Ukraine’s human rights representative reported that a cargo ship kept in the Mariupol port was detained by Russian forces. The ship contained 18 Ukrainians and one Egyptian who were taken along by the Russians.

More offensive in Kharkiv

As the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine grows with each passing day, Kharkiv faced another round of anti-tank mine showers. Residents were forced to stay indoors while the de-mining unit arrived. Ukraine’s officials have said that this is the first time that the Russian forces have used such a tactic so far.

On 12 April, Ukraine also captured Moscow's most high-profile ally Viktor Medvedchuk, of the For Life party, who is also the leader of the Opposition platform. Ukraine's officials said that the prisoners of war in Ukraine would need to be released if Russia wanted Medvedchuk to be freed. The Kyiv Independent released a photo of a handcuffed Medvedchuk on Twitter.

On the same day, the government also announced that the Russians had tried to hack into the country's power grid, but Ukraine could manage it well. However, experts are of the opinion that the Russian military group Sandworm is responsible.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin's speech

In his address on Russia's cosmonautics day, Russia's president Vladimir Putin praised the troops for bravely and efficiently carrying out the military operations using modern weapons. He said: "This is the way it will be. There is no doubt about it. The objectives are absolutely clear, they are noble." On the relations between Russia and Belarus, Putin said that both countries will collaborate on space infrastructure projects. In response, Belarus President Lukashenko said: "Know that no matter what the situation is, you can count on us, and the Russians can count on us. We will always be there." On the constant levying of sanctions on Russia by the West, Putin said that Russia will become stronger with the sanctions. In the speech, he continued to deny the claims of killings in Bucha and stated them as "fake."

Warnings and accusations

Upon Finland and Sweden taking the initiative to join NATO, Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has warned against the move. The initial demand placed by Russia before the invasion was to prevent NATO from extending its membership, with both the Nordic countries coming forward to submit applications to NATO has furthered tensions. According to Peskov: "the alliance remains a tool geared towards confrontation."

Russia's human rights commissioner declined the claims on refugees from Donbas regions being moved into Russia. The commissioner said that the refugees were not forced but had chosen to move into Russia. According to her: "I am saying with a high sense of responsibility that there have been no cases of forcible resettlement of refugees to Russia. Such allegations are lies. I have met with people at temporary accommodation centres personally. They told me the Ukrainian forces had kept them in cellars and used them as a human shield. All those people wished to be taken to safety in Russia."

Russia's representative to OSCE accused the West of triggering Ukraine to take a stanch military stance instead of diplomatic negotiation. He said: "We see how foreign patrons of the current Ukrainian authorities are persistently dissuading them from political and diplomatic ways."

Russia's Foreign Ministry claims

On 12 April, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova questioned the operations of the special monitoring mission (SMM) of OSCE in Donbas. The SMM, which was established earlier in 2014, since the start of the war 500 SMM had left Ukraine. With the exit of the mission's foreign diplomats, the labour contracts have been prolonged by one more year. The foreign minister of DPR called to end the operations of OSCE SMM.

The satellite images on the footage of dead civilian bodies in Bucha was revealed by the *New York Times* on 19 March. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has contradicted the footage and claimed it was "staged." On the unrecorded killing, Russia has so far blamed it on Ukraine.

On 12 April, TASS reported on the state of people in the DPR region. As per the report, due to continuous attacks from Ukraine's military, the people in the region had been sustained without water, food, heating and gas. According to the Donetsk separatists group, immediate measures to repair the damages were being carried out, apart from them that it reported on how the Ukraine

military had destroyed homes, social infrastructure and bridges in the area.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 12 April, US president Joe Biden reiterated that he stood by the characterisation of Russia's actions in Ukraine as "genocide." He said: "I called it genocide because it has become clearer and clearer that Putin is just trying to wipe out the idea of being able to be Ukrainian, and the evidence is mounting." However, he further mentioned that he would let the international courts and lawyers decide whether Russia could be called the same. Biden also mentioned that he would be releasing one million barrels of oil per day from the US strategic reserves to counter Russia's energy supplies.

On the same day, US secretary of state Antony Blinken said they could not verify the reports of Russia using chemical weapons in Ukraine. However, claims of poisoning by chemical warfare were made by the leader of the Azov volunteer regime at Mariupol. Blinken mentioned: "We had credible information that Russian forces may use a variety of riot control agents, including tear gas mixed with chemical agents, so that would cause stronger symptoms to weaken and incapacitate entrenched Ukrainian fighters and civilians as part of the aggressive campaign to take Mariupol." Blinken also expressed about the possibility of Russia using chemical weapons was a significant concern to the US.

The UK

On 12 April, the head of the UK's army chief General Sir Mark Carleton-Smith predicted a possible tactical stalemate in the Ukraine war. However, he mentioned how Russians could also be following "an operational pause" to regroup and focus on the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine. He added: "Whether that proves to be the decisive battle or not, we are currently measuring this campaign in days. We ought to expect to measure it in months, if not – in the scheme of things – in years." Nevertheless, the chief of the general staff stated that a frozen conflict or a tactical stalemate would not be

favourable for the international community and Europe.

Also, on 12 April, the UK's armed forces minister James Heappey said they were investigating if Russian forces were using chemical weapons in Ukraine. The authorities said they had received intel from Mariupol, but neither British defence intelligence nor Kyiv was able to verify the claims. Heappey exclaimed that if evidence were found of such weapons being used, then "all options are on the table" in terms of a united international response. He further stated that he had confidence in the international courts. He added: "Everything that is happening in Ukraine is being catalogued and he will be held to account."

France

On 12 April, the presidential candidate Marine Le Pen stated that she broadly supported sanctions against Russia but did not support sanctions related to oil and gas. She justified her statement by stating that she did not want the French citizens to suffer the consequences of oil and gas were sanctioned. Earlier, she had backed Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Belarus

On 12 April, Belarus's leader Alexander Lukashenko denied allegations of Russia's atrocities in Bucha. He said these were staged and were a type of psychological operation carried out by the English to create a narrative against Russia. He further justified Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying, if they had not done it, Russian territory would have received a "crushing blow."

Poland

On 12 April, the government of Poland said it had arrested a Russian citizen on suspicion of spying. The Russian businessman was a long term resident of Poland but was allegedly collecting information about the country's military capabilities and the locations and strengths of NATO troops stationed in the country.

On the same day, a report by the Polish Border guard stated that 2.681 million people had fled Ukraine and entered Poland since the war began. However, recently the

number of refugees coming in has decreased drastically. About 1.2-1.4 refugees only remain, and most of them have already left Poland as only 800,000 had registered for Polish ID numbers.

Germany

On 12 April, Germany's energy regulator said the country had enough reserves to last till summer if supplies of Russian gas were cut off. Furthermore, the regulator said that Germany had improved its gas supplies since last month.

Netherlands

On 12 April, Dutch authorities stated that they had impounded 20 yachts belonging to Russia and Belarus. Fourteen yachts were still under construction, while six were in storage or undergoing maintenance. Moreover, four had been linked to entities on the EU sanction list. Dutch customs authorities said: "Because these 20 yachts are under increased surveillance, they are not authorised to be delivered, transferred or exported."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Lebanon

On 12 April, Lebanon's government said it had agreed to distribute USD 15 million to resolve the acute shortage of bread in the country. This comes as the country's Muslims held fasts on account of the holy month. The government said it had dispersed the credit to importers to issue subsidised bread. The government further stated that they plan to open another USD 21 million credit after two or three weeks if the issues persist. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated Lebanon's wheat supplies.

World Food Programme

On 12 April, the WFP pleaded with the world to not ignore the food crisis globally. They said: "Don't make us take food from children that are hungry to give to children that are starving." The WFP stated that the war in Ukraine had caused budget cuts in some of their traditional donor countries. This fund cutting had affected the WFP's food programmes in Yemen, Chad and Niger.

On the other hand, many countries that do not depend on aid face a shortage of food grains as they depend on Russia and Ukraine for their needs. For example, Somalia gets about 60 per cent of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia, while Eritrea imports nearly 97 per cent of its wheat from Ukraine. As a result, these import-dependent countries would have to now depend on other markets for their food stocks, which would likely come at a higher cost.

World Bank

On 12 April, the World Bank announced that it would send USD 1.5 billion packages to Ukraine. They also assured that it would release aid to help countries affected by the war to deal with the surging food and energy prices. The Bank also stated that it would give Moldova a USD 100 million International Development Association payment. This comes as the World Bank released a report stating that Ukraine's economic output would be slashed by 45 per cent due to the war.

Nokia

On 12 April, Nokia announced that it would be withdrawing from the markets in Russia. This comes as the sanctions imposed by the West were causing disruptions to its businesses. CEO Pekka Lundmark said: "We just simply do not see any possibilities to continue in the country under the current circumstances." At the same time, Russia has also been lately pushing companies to start building networks using Russian equipment and had asked Nokia to set up factories in the country.

International religious leaders

On 12 April, a delegation of international faith leaders visited Ukraine to show solidarity with the people affected by the invasion. As reported by *BBC*: "The delegation will include monks, rabbis, Muslim clerics, Buddhist and Hindu religious leaders and the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan William."

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War in Ukraine: Day 47

War on the Ground:
Zelenskyy's everyday address and attacks in eastern Ukraine

Zelenskyy's address

On 11 April, Zelenskyy in his address issued a warning that Ukraine might use "chemical weapons" and said that they were treating it with "utmost seriousness." He stressed on the Russian oil embargo, as he feels that only oil-related sanctions can sufficiently bring the Russian powers down. Zelenskyy said: "It is time to make this package in such a way that we would not hear even words about weapons of mass destruction from the Russian side... An oil embargo against Russia is a must. Any new package of sanctions against Russia that does not affect oil will be received in Moscow with a smile." He further asked for aid and help from South Korea and thanked the parliament for agreeing to the sanctions imposed by the US on Russia.

Deputy prime minister's updates

Ukraine's deputy prime minister, Iryna Vereshhchuk announced that 4,354 people have been evacuated from Ukrainian cities through humanitarian corridors on Monday. 556 of them were from Mariupol, where the war has been intensely on since 24 February. She also accused Russia of holding civilians, including journalists, activists and elected officials as prisoners in their territories, both in and outside Ukraine. Russia however has kept on denying targeting civilians.

Shift in Eastern Ukraine

As the war shifts from the northern parts of the country to the eastern parts, the Russian aggression in the region also increases, in places like Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv and Mariupol.

Poisonous substance dropped in Mariupol

On 11 April, a toxic substance was dropped on Mariupol late at night. This was first reported in the form of a Telegram message by the Azov Regiment which is a part of the Ukrainian National Guard. The Azov message said Russian forces used "a poisonous substance of unknown origin." The Ukrainian MP and chair of the parliamentary committee on the integration of Ukraine into the EU said that it was "most likely" chemical weapons. The mayor of the city, Vadym Boychenko said that the death toll in Mariupol which has been under attack since 24 February has crossed 10,000 and could cross 20,000.

New set of attacks in Donetsk

The Donetsk region saw a new attack where three people were killed and eight civilians were wounded. The news of the strike was revealed by the region's governor Pavlo Kyrylenko on the Telegram messaging app. However, the head of Donetsk's rebel region Denis Pushilin warned that the operation will now be intensified further. Pushilin said: "The more we delay, the more the civilian population simply suffers, being held hostage by the situation. We have identified areas where certain steps need to be accelerated."

Shelling and discovery of mass graves in Kharkiv

On 11 April, Kharkiv faced heavy shelling by the Russian forces. This has caused several casualties which include the death of a child. However, mayor Ihor Terekhov mentioned that the Ukrainian forces were prepared for the worst and said: "There is no panic in the city."

On 11 April, the process of exhuming the bodies of Ukrainians found in mass graves in Bucha has been started. The bodies will be sent for forensic tests to prepare them for proper burial.

On 11 April, the UN Human Rights Office released a report on the number of civilian casualties in Ukraine. Including the 1,842 killed, and 2,493 injured, there have been 4,335 civilian casualties so far. The report also said that most of these casualties were due to the use of explosive weapons, including shelling from heavy artillery and missile and airstrikes.

On 11 April, Ukraine's Finance Ministry welcomed IMF's move on opening a new account for donors and international organizations to send funds to support Ukraine. At the same IMF said: "Donors will benefit from the IMF's tested infrastructure to quickly deliver authenticated payments." So far, the Ukraine government was expecting EUR four billion in foreign financing to handle its budget shortage.

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Claims, warnings and accusations

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov affirmed that Russia will not stop its war operation in Ukraine, even during the negotiation talks take place. He alleged the West for slowing down the progress of talks by accusing Russia of war crimes. He said: "After we became convinced that the Ukrainians were not planning to reciprocate, a decision was made that during the next rounds of talks, there would be no pause (in military action) so long as a final agreement is not reached."

On 11 April, the leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov said that Russia will be launching an offensive on Mariupol, Kyiv and other cities in the east. He said: "I assure you: not one step will be taken back."

Russia's Defence Ministry released a statement claiming the attack on 86 military units in Dnipro, Mykolaiv, and Kharkiv. According to major general Igor Konashenkov, two control points, two ammunition warehouses, three combustion warehouses and 49 military equipment were shelled down by the Russian troops. Apart from this it also reported on the destruction of S-300 anti-aircraft missiles and Su-25 aircraft using its cruise missiles. The S-300 missiles were given to Ukraine by Slovakia. Ukraine's military is yet to confirm the attack. According to the statement from the Russian Ministry: "High-precision sea-launched Kalibr missiles destroyed the equipment of an S-300 anti-aircraft missile division which had been delivered to the Kyiv regime by a European country."

Russia's Foreign Ministry barred 45 Polish embassies and consulate staff as a countermeasure to the recent expelling of Russian diplomats across Europe. In the recent week, Poland, Finland, and Bulgaria have been on the spin in removing Russian diplomats.

On 11 April, TASS reported that close to 17,000 people along with 2500 children had been moved out from Lugansk and Donetsk regions into Russia considering the increased military activity in the region. Russia's National Defence Management Center, the chief reported that under Russia's special military operation, till now 740,000 people had been evacuated. He added: "Over the past day alone, the Russian side received 934 such requests."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 11 April, in the meeting with India's prime minister, US president Joe Biden said that India's stance on the Ukraine war was "somewhat shaky." In the statement released by the US: "mitigating the destabilising impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine." So far, the US has not pointed out India for its neutral stance on war but has given warnings.

Canada

On 11 April, Canada announced to impose sanctions on Russia's defence sector companies. The new round of sanctions imposed restricts 33 entities in Russia's defence sector who have been supplying the forces with arms and ammunition for its war in Ukraine. A statement by the government mentioned: "Canada continues to monitor the situation, coordinate actions with its international partners and explore options for new measures."

The EU

The EU which released the fifth set of sanctions on Russia, recently added 21 Russian airlines to the list banned from flying above the EU, as it fails to meet the international safety standards. Commissioner for transport pointed out that the airlines that were operated did not have a valid certification of "airworthiness." Till now, the EU skies have banned 117 such companies.

Lithuania

On 11 April, Lithuania requested NATO to supply battalions to the Baltic countries. Till now four "multinational battalions have been installed by NATO as a counter to Crimean annexation. Since the Russian invasion, the countries in eastern Europe have been calling for more troops and military support.

Hungary

For the gas purchased from Russia, Hungary will be paying in euros to Gazprombank, which will, in turn, convert it into roubles and send it to Russia. The move comes after prime minister Victor Orban agreed to pay for the Russian gas in roubles. In the past weeks, Putin has been warning the European countries in paying back in roubles for the oil and gas bought from Russia.

The UK

On 11 April, the UK's Ministry of Defence reported that clashes between Russian and Ukraine forces in the Donetsk and Luhansk region have resulted in the destruction of Russia's several military equipment and vehicles. The UK intelligence also found the use of phosphorous munitions in the Donetsk by Russia, providing a possibility

for usage in Mariupol. The attacks and bombings have threatened the lives of many civilians.

Other countries report

Joining the list of other countries, Croatia has asked 24 Russian embassy staff along with diplomats to exit the country for invading Ukraine. In the statement, it said: "brutal aggression on Ukraine and numerous crimes committed (there)."

A volunteer group called the Sunflower Scotland has sent 110 tonnes of animal food to the shelters located in Dnipro, which have been deserted by the people. The organization raised more than EUR 30,000 and basic supplies for families in Ukraine. Countries surrounding Ukraine, the Belgorod, Voronezh, Bryansk and Krasnodar regions, which are part of Crimea have planned to boost their border security. They have asked the citizens to be prepared as they fear anti-terrorist security issues. The region is alerted to carry out checkpoints at the borders, evacuation plans, and special attention to uncommon vehicles.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

Egypt

On 11 April, the Central Agency for Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) reported that inflation in Egypt had reached 12.1 per cent in March 2022. This was almost three times of 2021 when the rate was 4.8 per cent. According to CAPMAS, the hike in inflation was a direct effect of the war in Ukraine, which had increased the prices of food, housing, and medical service industries in Egypt.

India

On 11 April, India's prime minister Narendra Modi discussed the war in Ukraine with US President Joe Biden on a video conference. The two leaders discussed the pandemic, the global economy, and the war's implications in Ukraine. Biden said the US would "continue our close consultations on the consequences of Russia's brutal war against Ukraine and mitigating its destabilising impact on global food supply and commodity markets". Biden also indirectly conveyed the

US' displeasure as Russia sought new markets for its oil exports amid sanctions from the West. Moreover, India was using the opportunity to buy around six billion barrels of oil. The meeting comes in a follow up to the US deputy national security adviser Daleep Singh's visit, where he had asked the Indian government not to rapidly increase their purchases of Russian oil.

Later, PM Modi urged Russia's President and Ukraine's President to hold direct talks. PM Modi furthermore discussed the situation with Biden and shared how India was concerned about the implications of the war and stated that New Delhi even condemned the killing at the UN general assembly. He added: "We have also emphasised the security of civilians in Ukraine and unhindered humanitarian supply and assistance to them."

North Korea

On 11 April, North Korea denounced Russia's suspension from the UN human rights council. North Korea was one of the 24 countries that had voted against the move. A government statement said: "What the US is after... is to isolate the independent countries, and forces challenging them at the international arena, so as to maintain its illegal and inhumane US-led hegemonic order." North Korea further accused the US of using international organizations as a means for the US to put political pressure on other countries.

New Zealand

On 11 April, prime minister Jacinda Ardern announced that it would be sending the country's Hercules aircraft and 50 personnel to Europe. Ardern said: "Our support is to assist the Ukraine army to repel a brutal Russian invasion because peace in the region of Europe is essential for global stability." The personnel will be deployed for two months in support of Ukraine and would additionally give the country financial support of USD 8.8 million. The defence aircraft will be used to carry equipment and supplies across Europe and to crucial distribution centres.

Yemen

On 11 April, *the Tribune* reported the implications of the war in Eastern Europe on Yemen. This comes as Ukraine was a major

supplier of grain to the country, and due to the restrictions on export, Yemen is likely to see a famine. Yemen is an import-dependent country for food items, and nearly one-third of its wheat supplies come from Ukraine.

World Bank

On 11 April, the World Bank reported that it expects Ukraine's economy to shrink by 45 per cent due to the war. The report also mentioned how the economic damage caused in Europe and Central Asia would have a worse impact than what COVID-19 did. Ukraine, a crucial supplier of wheat and sunflower oil, has not been able to export its commodities due to war and as Russian forces blockaded its ports.

The UN

On 11 April, the director of the UN's women's agency Sima Bahous called for investigations into Russia's violence against women during the war in Ukraine. Bahous said: "We are increasingly hearing of rape and sexual violence. These allegations must be independently investigated to ensure justice and accountability." She further mentioned that the combination of conscripts, mercenaries, and the recent reports of Bucha had raised all red flags. Also, at the UN security council meeting, US ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said: "When men like President Putin start wars, women and children get displaced, women and children get hurt. Women and children get raped and abused and women and children die." She exclaimed about the situation in Ukraine and the plight of women and children.

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War in Ukraine: Day 45 & 46

War on the Ground: Zelenskyy meets with Boris Johnson

Zelenskyy's address

On April 09, Zelenskyy's addresses came as UK's prime minister Boris Johnson visited Kyiv. Zelenskyy said: "This will be a hard battle, we believe in this fight and our

victory. We are ready to simultaneously fight and look for diplomatic ways to put an end to this war... When tyranny begins its aggression against everything that keeps the peace in Europe, action must be taken immediately." He further thanked Johnson for his support as the UK promised to offer additional financial and military support. This includes 120 armoured vehicles, anti-ship missiles and World Bank loans, amounting to EUR 100 million.

On 10 April, Zelenskyy said: "They have destroyed the lives of millions. They started a full-scale war and act as if we are to blame for this." He also reiterated that Ukraine is ready for the upcoming days, and thanked the "18 defenders of Ukraine", including the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Special Communications Service, police officers and police officers for their bravery and heroism. He also spoke to the German chancellor Olaf Scholz, about imposing additional sanctions on Russia and about more defence and financial support for Ukraine.

Kyiv after Russia's withdrawal

On 10 April, in the aftermath of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Kyiv, a grave with dozens of civilians was found, near a petrol pump in Buzova village. Taras Dydych, head of the Dmytrivka community that includes Buzova said: "Now we are returning to life but during the occupation we had our 'hotspots', many civilians died."

First staff rotation in Chernobyl after three weeks

On 10 April, for the first time in three weeks, a staff rotation was carried out in Chernobyl, which the Russians had taken over on 24 February. Workers recounted to the *BBC* the tough conditions they had to face in order to survive in the nuclear power plant, which is now back under Ukraine's control.

Destruction in Dnipro

On 10 April, an airport in the Dnipro was destroyed by a Russian strike. The Head of the city's military administration said that the airport itself and the infrastructure around it has been destroyed by the shelling. On 09 April, a large depot of ammunition was destroyed in the central-eastern Dnipro region of Novomoskovsk.

Eastern Ukraine: Updates from Luhansk, Mariupol and Kramatorsk

On 10 April, Maxar Technologies captured imagery that showed a large military convoy stretching for more than eight miles, in north-eastern Ukraine. A researcher from the Institute for the Study of War said that it was a Russian convoy, which was heading south from Velykyi Burluk.

On 10 April, the regional governor said that the death toll due to the missile attack on a train station in Kramatorsk had risen to 57. On 09 April, the governor of Luhansk Serhiy Haidai urged civilians in Luhansk, in the eastern part of Ukraine to flee the area as soon as possible as more and more Russian forces entered the area. This comes after more than 50 civilians trying to evacuate were killed in a Russian missile attack, in a neighbouring area. Russian troops hit a nitric acid tank near Rubizhne, which is dangerous because nitric acid is a highly corrosive agent. Gaidai said: "They (Russia) are amassing forces for an offensive and we see the number of shelling has increased." This renewal of Russian effort in the eastern and southern part of Ukraine comes after Moscow's troops withdrew from Kyiv.

Ukraine's deputy prime minister informed that 10 humanitarian corridors are likely to be set up, for the safe evacuation of the people from across the country, and especially from the Mariupol region. Civilians in the Mariupol, Enerhodar, Tokmak, Berdyansk and Melitopol regions can evacuate to Zaporizhzhia, and those in Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Popasna, Hirske and Rubizhne can evacuate to the city of Bakhmut. While several attempts have been made earlier to evacuate civilians from this region, they have all failed so far. The deputy prime minister reiterated that it can happen only if Russian troops maintain a ceasefire. Zelenskyy thanked the Austrian chancellor, Karl Nehammer for his visit to Ukraine and for his support to the country. Nehammer is open to start negotiating with Russia to facilitate a conversation with Ukraine. Zelenskyy said: "It is a very important signal for us. A signal to the whole of Europe that Austria supports Ukraine, the Ukrainian people in its resistance to the aggression of the Russian Federation."

On 09 April, Iryna Vereshchuk announced that Ukraine and Russia had conducted their third prisoner exchange. Due to the deal, 12 soldiers and 14 civilians are coming home to Ukraine. However, she did not mention the number of Russians who had been released. On 10 April, Ukraine's top prosecutor Iryna Venediktova said that the authorities had evidence to claim 5,600 alleged cases of war crimes, and had 500 suspects being monitored.

Also on the same day, according to a UNHRC report released, around 4.5 million people have fled Ukraine since the beginning of the war.

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Kyiv trying to provoke Russian troops

On 10 April, Russia's National Defence Management Center claimed that Kyiv was plotting with the West to provoke Russian forces by blaming them for a staged massacre of civilians in the Lugansk People's Republic region. Chief Mikhail Mizintsev said that reporters of foreign mass media outlets were arriving in the area to record the staged actions by the Ukrainian army. He also mentioned how the Ukrainian nationalists were mining reservoirs with Chronire at a water utility to blow them up when the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR) forces approached the city.

Anatoly Antonov on Russia's operation in Ukraine

On 10 April, Russia's ambassador to the US said that the West was inciting further bloodshed in Ukraine as it continued its supply of weapons. He said: "The special military operation in Ukraine is a result of the Kyiv regime's unwillingness to stop the genocide of Russians through the implementation of its obligations under international agreements." On the US' supply of weapons, he reiterated that its actions were dangerous and provocative as those weapons were being used against Russia. Antonov questioned the Pentagon's role in the biological laboratories in Ukraine and he further raised concerns about establishing bio-laboratories along the Russian border. He also stated that Moscow was taking necessary measures to ensure the safety of

civilians and maintain the normal operations of the nuclear facilities in Ukraine. He said the strikes made by Russian forces were high-precision weapons that only struck military targets. Antonov reiterated that Russia's goal was to "...put an end to the genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime and ensure a nuclear-free and neutral status of Ukraine."

Evidence of a US defence funded biological program

On 10 April, Russia's defence ministry spokesperson said evidence was unearthed during Russia's military operation that Kyiv tried to eliminate traces of a US Department of defence-funded military biological program in Ukraine. He added that Ukrainian laboratories' staffers testified that diseases like plague, tularaemia, cholera and other diseases were urgently eliminated before 24 February.

Prisoner exchange

On 09 April, Russia's Human Rights Commissioner Tatiana Moskalkova confirmed that Russia and Ukraine held a prisoner exchange. Moskalkova said four employees of the state atomic energy corporation Rosatom along with soldiers and civilians, were returned to Russia. On the same day, an exchange of 32 Russian truck drivers and 20 Ukrainians took place; on its sidelines, Belarusian nationals were also exchanged. Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk added that 14 civilians were returned to Ukraine as a part of the exchange.

Head of Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill calls on people to rally with Russia

On 10 April, Kirill called on the people of Russia to rally with the authorities in Moscow as they continued their military intervention in Ukraine. In his prayers Kirill mentioned: "Let the Lord help us unite during this difficult time for our Fatherland, including around the authorities." Kirill is a close ally of Putin, and his calls show the Orthodox Church's support for the Kremlin.

Attacks and ammunitions

On 10 April, Russia's attack helicopters said they destroyed a convoy of Ukraine's armoured vehicles and anti-aircraft

equipment. *Reuters* noted that the ministry even published video footage of the attack. The video clearly shows how the KA-52 helicopters flew at low altitudes and launched missiles and bullets at the targets on the ground.

On 09 April, Russia said it had destroyed the ammunition depot at the Myrhorod Air Base in central-eastern Ukraine. Russia's spokesperson said a MiG-29 fighter and a Mi-8 helicopter were also destroyed in the attack. Furthermore, Russian forces destroyed an ammunition depot near the city of Novomoskovsk.

Impact of the war on Russia's science and research

On 10 April, Russia's remote Northeast Science Station on the banks of the Kolyma River in Siberia will have fewer/no international scientists visiting this year. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Germany's Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry froze its funding used to pay personnel at the station. The station was crucial for understanding climate change in the Arctic environment. Russian environmental scientist Dmitry Shchepashchenko said: "Emotionally, I can understand this suspension... This is a lose-lose solution. Global issues like climate change and biodiversity ... can hardly be solved without Russian territory [and] the expertise of Russian scientists."

Russia accuses the EU of closing borders to cargo vehicles

On 10 April, Russia claimed that the EU had closed its countries' borders, affecting the movement of cargo vehicles registered in the two countries. This comes as the EU had adopted sanctions against Russia, which also prevented vehicles and vessels from entering the bloc. Russia's customs office said that vehicles were used as international transport but had been registered in the two countries would also not be allowed to move goods on EU territory.

Russia stages war games in Kaliningrad

On 09 April, Russia mentioned that it had staged war games in the enclave of Kaliningrad. Russian Baltic Fleet Command's press service said: "Up to 1,000 military

personnel... and more than 60 military equipment units were involved in the control checks." At the same time, 20 Su-27 fighters and Su-24 front-line naval aviation bombers conducted their combat training. They simulated wartime exercises and simulated attacking low-speed air and ground targets.

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 09 April, an official from the West revealed the replacement of a Russian war commander from Ukraine operations. The reason behind the decision was due to the new general's extensive experience. According to the official, the war tactics of Russia are observed to be limited and predicted that it might lose in short in attempting to succeed in the objectives.

The EU

In the fifth set of sanctions adopted by the EU, it targets 216 individuals, freezing their assets and imposing a travel ban, which includes Putin's daughters. Along with the ban on coal imports, it has not extended to wood, vodka, and chemical products which comprise 10 per cent of imports from Russia. Apart from given, additional sanctions have been brought on jet fuel, transportation equipment, quantum computers, advanced semiconductors and trucks from both Russia and Belarus.

On 10 April, European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen pledged EUR one billion to aid Ukraine in terms of treating refugees. The aid will be divided into two parts, where 600 million will be sent to Ukraine and the UN. The remaining 400 million will go to those states receiving refugees at the front. Apart from this global government, business leaders, and banks vowed to send EUR 10.1 billion to Ukraine for dealing humanitarian crisis.

The EU after 44 days of the war, opened back its embassy in Kyiv after previously shifting it to Poland. On the same, Italy has also planned to reopen its embassy in the capital city post easter.

Germany

On the phone call with president Zelenskyy, German chancellor Olaf Scholz stated that those responsible for the killings in Bucha to be held guilty for committing war crimes. He said: "We cannot overlook that this is a crime. These are war crimes we will not accept... those who did this must be held accountable."

Finland

On 09 April, the Foreign Ministry of Finland announced the sending back of Russian paintings, status and antiques which were blocked by Finnish customs from entry. The items worth EUR 42 million were categorised as luxury goods that will be subject to economic sanctions. Hence the goods will be freed after the EU releases the regulations for artefacts.

On 10 April, Finland and Sweden's governments have come forward to apply for NATO membership before May 2022. Finland's prime minister said: "We will have very careful discussions but not take any more time than we have to."

NATO

On 10 April, in an interview with *The Sunday Telegraph*, NATO's general secretary Jens Stoltenberg disclosed the plans of installing a permanent military at the border to deter Russia. He also added that the focus will remain to ensure NATO and its allies meet the minimum target of two per cent expenditure towards Ukraine.

The UK

On 10 April, during the visit to Ukraine, UK prime minister Boris Johnson assured to send 120 armoured vehicles, along with an anti-ship missile system to help Ukraine. In the statement released by Johnson after the meeting with Zelenskyy: "It is because of President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy's resolute leadership and the invincible heroism and courage of the Ukrainian people that (Vladimir) Putin's monstrous aims are being thwarted." Apart from the military aid, the UK has also agreed to provide USD 500 million to World Bank to lend to Ukraine with a loan guarantee of USD one billion. The UK Ministry of Defence, intelligence unit revealed evidence, that Russia found to be targeting the civilians. According to the Ministry, Russia's moving away from the

North showed the mass graves and how it has used humans as shields. Apart from this it also found that Russia had been developing weapons to increase casualties and limit the freedom of the Ukrainian movement. It is also estimated that 7,000 to 15,000 Russian soldiers have died in the war. The Defence Intelligence also warned about Russia's airstrike which was likely to occur in south and east, it remarked although the Russian forces were moving towards eastern Donbas, Ukrainian forces have been maintaining a strong block in not letting Russia establish a link from Crimea.

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

World Bank

On 10 April, the World Bank released a report stating Ukraine's economy to fall by 45.1 per cent. The major reasons for the decline are the shutting of businesses, cut down in exports due to the Russian invasion, blocking of Black Sea shipping and financial sanctions. The economists have added to this by saying the GDP of eastern Europe will also fall by 30.7 per cent.

The UN

The UN raised a concern about the rising food prices which have risen due to the Ukraine war. Basic commodities such as cereal, vegetable oil, and sugar have been added as part of the UN Food Prices Index where the table shows a hike of 13 per cent which is the highest rate in the last 60 years. This has resulted in creating fear amongst politicians as it will be a challenge to deal with social unrest coming out of a crisis situation.

Japan

Japan's prime minister Fumio Kishida announced the expelling of eight Russian diplomats and the ban on importing of coal from Russia. He said: "Russia has repeatedly violated international humanitarian law by killing civilians and attacking nuclear power plants. These are unforgivable war crimes."

Football

Shakhtar Donetsk, which is Eastern Ukraine's biggest football club has announced a peace tour in Greece calling for

a friendly match against league leaders Olympiakos. The aim of the tournament is to raise money from the match and to provide for people affected by the war in Ukraine. The manager of the club said: "We want to talk about war and peace in Ukraine in these matches. The need to end this madness and return to normal life and to rebuild the country."

UNHCR

UNHCR confirmed that close to 4.5 million people have fled Ukraine since the war. Amongst the composition, 90 per cent are counted to be women and children. Along with this IOM also reported that 210,000 non-Ukrainians seem to have left Ukraine. Till now Poland has been the only country with the highest number of refugees, hosting 2,593,902.

IAEA

The director-general of the IAEA reported on the current staff rotation that took place in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. It was found from the workers that, they faced critical challenges in keeping the plant running to keep the generator on power. On the damages, IAEA said: "destroyed and the analytical instruments stolen, broken or otherwise disabled."

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War in Ukraine: Day 44

War on the Ground:

[Attack on Kramatorsk train station; Situation of Makarov, Mariupol and Bucha](#)

Zelenskyy's interview with the CBS News

On 08 April, Zelenskyy, in his interview with *CBS News*, mentioned how Ukraine was "defending the right to live." He further talked about how the right to defend was so costly as Russia was trying to infringe on Ukraine's fundamental rights and values. His interview also covered the Bucha incident, and he responded by accusing Russia of war crimes.

Kramatorsk: Attack on the train station

On 08 April, Ukraine's officials mentioned that dozens of people were killed and over 100 were injured due to a rocket attack launched by Russia. The station was being used to disperse evacuees from the Donbas

region. According to the governor, around five children were also killed in the attack. On the same day, Zelenskyy condemned the attack and said: "This is an evil that has no limits. And if it is not punished, it will never stop." Ukraine's national railway head stated that it was a deliberate attack to strike the passenger infrastructure and harm civilians. However, Russia denied it carried out the attack.

Makarov: 132 bodies of civilians found

On 08 April, the mayor of Makarov said bodies of 132 civilians were found in the town located west of Kyiv. He added: "The occupiers destroyed almost all infrastructure, bombed [homes] and apartment buildings, completely destroyed hospitals and kindergartens."

Odesa: Weekend curfew

On 08 April, the Southern port city of Odesa imposed a weekend-long curfew citing potential missile threats from Russia. The warning came after Russia shelled the train station of Kramatorsk. As a result, Odesa's regional military administration announced: "A curfew will be introduced in Odesa and the Odesa region from 9 p.m. on 09 April to 6 p.m. 11 April."

Bucha: Investigation on civilians killed

On 08 April, Ukraine's forensic investigators exhumed the mass graves in Bucha and warped the bodies of the civilians who were killed by Russian troops. The prosecutor's office in Bucha stated that out of 20 bodies exhumed, 18 had firearm and shrapnel wounds indicating atrocities by Russian forces. Bucha's mayor further accused Russian troops of extra-judicial killings while retreating from Kyiv.

Mariupol: 160,000 civilians trapped

On 08 April, the mayor of Mariupol said there were 160,000 civilians trapped in the port city with shortages of food, water and medicine. He further stated that 40,000 residents were forcefully deported to Russia. Also, on 07 April, Zelenskyy urged Greece's parliament to use its influence and organise a rescue operation in Mariupol. However, the appearance of an ultranationalist Azov battalion member who identified as an

ethnic Greek member outraged the opposition members of the parliament.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Russia expels Poland's embassy and consulate staff

On 08 April, Russia expelled 45 of Poland's embassy and consulate staff in retaliation for Warsaw's expulsion of 45 Russian diplomats. Poland had stated that Russian diplomats were working as intelligence agents. Similarly, Russia retaliated and declared Poland's staff "persona non grata".

Lavrov suggests Belarus be Ukraine's security guarantor

On 08 April, Russia's foreign minister recommended that Belarus should provide security guarantees for Ukraine in the future. Lavrov added: "At the request of the Ukrainian side, its neutral, non-bloc, non-nuclear status should be accompanied by security guarantees."

Russia destroys mercenary training centres near Odesa

On 08 April, Russia claimed to destroy foreign mercenaries' training centres as part of its military campaign in Ukraine. A defence ministry spokesperson stated that high-precision missiles of the Bastion coastal missile system were destroyed. The centres were located near the Krasnosilka village, northeast of Odesa.

Euro drops to 79 rubles

On 08 April, for the first time, the Euro declined to 79 rubles since June 2020. The dollar, too, lost 1.58 per cent to 74.55 rubles. Kremlin's spokesperson on the negotiations with Ukraine.

On 08 April, Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov mentioned that Russia was hoping to reach its objectives in Ukraine or the situation would end in talks between Russian and Ukrainian delegates in the next few days. Peskov added: "Substantive work is being carried out both on the military side, in terms of advancing the operation, and on the side of the negotiators who are in the negotiation process with their Ukrainian counterparts."

Response to the suspension from the UNHRC

On 07 April, the UN General Assembly passed the resolution to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council. Russia's representatives said that the steps were politically motivated and that they threatened to destroy the UN's entire system. However, Russia is only suspended from the current membership, ending in 2023.

Central Bank slashes its key interest rate

On 08 April, the Russian Central Bank decided to cut its key interest rate from 20 to 17 per cent. This comes after the interest rate had been hiked after Russian troops launched their offensive against Ukraine and a series of sanctions sent the ruble into a free fall. The statement released by the Central Bank stated: "Financial stability risks are still present but have ceased to increase for the time being, including owing to the adopted capital control measures." However, the banks added that they would take further measures depending on the situation to deter a destabilisation of the economy.

Russia redirects its coal shipments away from the EU

On 08 April, presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Russia is redirecting its coal supplies to other markets after the EU refused the shipments. This came as the EU released new sanctions on Russia that restricted its imports of coal from Russia and supplies of high-tech goods.

The West View:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 08 April, US president Joe Biden released a statement to appreciate the UN's move to vote out Russia from the UNHCR. He said: "This is a meaningful step by the international community further demonstrating how Putin's war has made Russia an international pariah." He condemned Russia for torturing, killing people and for violating human rights. The US Department of Treasury blacklisted two Russian businesses from the US financial system. The companies were Alrose, which accounts for 28 per cent of global diamond

mining and United Shipbuilder Corp, which deals in constructing Russia's warships. Biden accused Russia of the missile attack on the train station in Kramatorsk; he pointed out that Russia had targeted those civilians who were being evacuated safely. Apart from this, he thanked the government of Slovakia for sending a missile defence system to Ukraine and assured to supply Slovakia with the Patriot missile system.

The EU

On 08 April, the EU imposed an embargo on Russia's coal imports. The embargo will come into practice from mid of August. While the EU plans for the next set of sanctions, the sanction on coal needs to be agreed upon by all the member states of the EU, this is likely to raise concern for Germany, considering its dependency on Russia.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, visited the town of Bucha to take a look at the ruins. She said: "It is the unthinkable has happened here, we have seen the cruel face of Putin's army." In the meeting with President Zelenskyy, a questionnaire was given which will be a step for Ukraine to get the candidate status in the coming days.

Cryptocurrency

The EU, as part of the fifth package of sanctions on Russia, has levied a ban on coal, accessing EU ports and restrictions on transactions with four additional banks of Russia. It also targets crypto wallets, banks, currencies and trusts. The move comes to close down the loopholed exploited by individuals to access their cryptocurrencies.

Slovakia

Slovakia announced its decision to supply Ukraine with the S-300 surface-to-air missile system to strengthen its air defences. According to Slovakia's Prime Minister Eduard Heger: "I believe that this defence system will help save as many innocent lives as possible from the aggression of Putin's regime." In line with Biden's statement, Slovakia has received surface to air missiles from Germany and the Netherlands as part of reinforcing the borders of eastern Europe.

Germany

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz pointed out the displacement of people due to war inside Ukraine to be the “terrible consequences.” He said: “Many countries in Europe have hosted refugees, in particular, those along [Ukraine’s] borders – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania - and we are very grateful to these countries.” Till now Poland holds the largest share of refugees, close to two million and Germany hosts more than 300,000.

Montenegro

Montenegro’s deputy prime minister announced the imposing of unspecified sanctions on Russia. He tweeted: “[The Montenegrin government] has adopted restrictive measures in response to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.” Montenegro, although being a NATO member and a candidate for EU membership initially resisted sanctioning Russia concerning the effect on its tourism sector.

The UK

On 08 April, UK’s Defence Ministry reported that Russia had “fully withdrawn” from northern Ukraine and observed that Russia would need a week to redeploy its troops back in the region. The movement of arm troops is predicted to be going towards eastern Ukraine for the fight. It also expects the attacks and shelling to continue in the east and south of Ukraine. Following the trail of the US, the UK has also sanctioned Putin’s daughters along with Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov’s daughter. Over the last few weeks, the UK has seized GBP 275 billion from Putin’s chest through direct measures and sanctions. UK prime minister, Boris Johnson announced additional funding of GBP 100 million for supplying Ukraine with “high-grade military equipment.” Along with the equipment, Starstreak anti-aircraft missiles, 800 anti-tank missiles, precision munitions, helmets, night-vision goggles, and body armour have also been planned to be sent to Ukraine. On the question of the UK sending tanks to Ukraine, Johnson said: “I’m in principle willing to consider anything by way of defensive weaponry to help the Ukrainians protect themselves and their people.”

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

UNFAO

On 08 April, UNFAO reported on the highest record of price hike in grains, oil markets and food prices. It said, Ukraine and Russia being the largest exporters of basic agricultural products, the war has caused a ripple effect on exports of wheat, potash, phosphate, and fertilizers.

Australia

On 08 April, Australia transferred the first set of armoured military trucks as a gift to Ukraine. The Bushmaster vehicles will be used to transport soldiers into the war area and not for attacking purposes. Australia will further supply another 17 such trucks, till now it stands committed to providing military and humanitarian aid worth AUD 190 million to Ukraine.

India

India once again abstained from voting in the UN to expel Russia from the Human Rights Council. The statement said: “Since the inception of the Ukrainian conflict, India has stood for peace, dialogue and diplomacy. We believe that no solution can be arrived at by shedding blood and at the cost of innocent lives. If India has chosen any side, it is the side of peace, and it is for an immediate end to violence.” Despite giving a strong statement accusing Russia of the killings in the Bucha, India maintains a neutral stance in the UN.

Africa

The recent data shows that the confidence of South African businesses has slowed down due to the growing uncertainty of the market situation as the war continues. The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) released a statement saying that the recovery that was seen in the post-pandemic period has gone extinct due to the unforeseen Russian invasion. It said: “South Africa’s business confidence may struggle to maintain its current higher levels.”

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War in Ukraine: Day 43

War on the Ground: Zelenskyy's address in the Cyprus Parliament

Zelenskyy's address

On 07 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his daily address, highlighted that the damages and destruction in the Borodianka were worse than in Bucha. He said: "It's much more horrific there, there are even more victims of Russian occupiers." Apart from this, while addressing the Cyprus Parliament, he asked to revoke the passports issued to the Russians through the investment scheme. He thanked the Cyprus authorities for closing the port for Russian Yachts.

Ukraine Military claims

Ukraine's Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova reported the finding of 26 bodies in destroyed buildings of Borodianka town. He added that it has been the worst destruction compared to all towns, the causality count seems to be unpredictable. Ukraine Military warned that it expects a new set of attacks on Kyiv in the coming days if Russia takes over Donbas. Lugansk Regional Governor cautioned the residents to leave as the Russian attacks in eastern Ukraine block the exit for people.

In the NATO meeting, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba urged more weapons from the West to fight against the civilian atrocities. He said that if the weapons were provided, Ukraine would fight using its security forces against Russia to ensure Putin does not attempt to attack NATO members. In response to Ukraine's request for more weapons, NATO Chief said that the since the invasion, NATO along with member countries have been coordinating to increase their share of military support.

On 07 April, a video was released where Ukrainian forces shot a captured Russian soldier. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba affirmed that the video will be investigated. The area is expected to be a road to the capital Kyiv, where the Russian forces were observed to be receding.

On 07 April, *France24* reported that the road leading to Chuhuiv was empty post the continuous crossfires and bombardment. It also reported on the 200,000 Ukrainians who have moved to Lviv transit centers for accommodation, food, and security.

The Moscow View: Claims by Russia

Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed that Russia had incurred "significant losses," in the war. He further detailed the troops withdrawal, stating the military withdrew from areas of Kyiv and Chernihiv to reduce tensions and create a stage for peace talks. So far there has been no report from Russia on the incurred losses since 24 February.

On 07 April, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Ukraine of constant change in the demands since the start of negotiation talks in Istanbul. He said that Ukraine was not keen on resolving the fight.

Russian Ministry of Defence claims

Russian Ministry of Defence claimed of destroying fuel storage facilities in four different cities, Mykolayiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Chuhuiv. Another claim of the Russian investigators was charging four Ukrainian military officers for involving in the torture and killing of civilians in the Donbas region. According to the statement released by the investigation committee: "As of today, the investigators have data on 59 military units and their affiliation with particular armed services and their stationing. They have identified four new commanders of the Ukrainian armed forces complicit in the bombardments of civilians in 2018, 2020, and 2021."

Russia's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that if Finland and Sweden became part of NATO, Russia, through its measures, will "rebalance the situation." It was observed

that Russia's security position on the western flank will be strengthened. An official from the separatists group commented on the stance of Russia on Mariupol. He said, the fighting is taking place mainly in the area of the industrial zone of the city and remarked that it was uncertain for Russia to capture the city entirely in the near time.

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

On 07 April, US Defence Department Spokesperson John Kirby said Washington was training Ukrainian soldiers to use the Switchblade drones. He talked about how the US had the opportunity to take in Ukrainian soldiers and train them for a couple of days on using the Switchblade. In turn, they would be able to teach others in the country. These remotely controlled drones were flying bombs that are crashed into targets to explode. Kirby added: "They arrived over there earlier this week. So they'll be getting into Ukraine quickly if they aren't already there."

On the same day, US President Joe Biden mentioned that Congress had approved two measures against Russia for its atrocities in Bucha. One was on the removal of Russia as a most favoured nation for trade, and the other consisted of oil ban imports. Senate Leader Chuck Schumer said: "Putin must absolutely be held accountable for the detestable, despicable war crimes he is committing against Ukraine." He added that these measures intended to put economic pressure on Putin and the Russian oligarchs.

Also, on 07 April, a report by the Pentagon said that Ukraine would surely win the war against Russia. Pentagon Spokesperson John Kirby added: "The proof is literally in the outcomes that you're seeing every day... absolutely they can win." He further mentioned how Putin could not achieve his objectives in Ukraine, and how Russia was now moving back from Kyiv, Chernihiv and his inability to take Mariupol.

On 08 April, the US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said China could face sanctions if it supported Russia in its war.

She added that the sanctions against Russia and the oligarchs should set an example for China's President Xi Jinping. She further said: "We hope that the PRC understands that any such action would see a response from the international community, not just from the United States."

Finland

On 07 April, as a security measure, Finland announced an increase in the funds of EUR 2.2 billion for the next four years. The funds will be utilised to pay hundreds of soldiers, bolster the border security and boost its missile systems and ammunition. According to the Prime Minister, Sanna Marin: "seriously mull over our own stance and approach to military alignment."

Estonia

On 07 April, the Estonian government announced its decision to stop the imports of gas from Russia. It will be the second Baltic state to cut down the gas imports after Lithuania. Estonia's gas import from Russia is only seven per cent, which is less compared to other countries in Europe.

The UK

On 07 April, the UK said it had announced further sanctions against eight Russian oligarchs, Russian Banks such as Sberbank and Credit Bank of Moscow. The UK's Foreign Office said that this was in response to the discovery of civilian bodies after the withdrawal of Russian forces in the north of Kyiv. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "I'm afraid when you look at what's happening in Bucha, the revelations that we are seeing from what Putin has done in Ukraine doesn't look far short of genocide to me."

On the same day, UK's Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said they and the allies were taking a more concentrated Russian offensive. She added that the government and NATO had agreed to supply heavier equipment to Ukraine. At Brussels, Truss said: "Putin has changed his tactics but not his intent. He wants a hold over the whole of Ukraine." The UK also announced sending EUR 30 million to Poland to help with vital supplies.

Also, on 07 April, a former Member of Parliament raised concerns about the UK's refugee visa process. She said the application

system was too slow and was not easy to access for the refugees escaping war. In addition, she cited issues of uploading documents with lousy internet connection and the difficulties refugees face in a wartime situation.

On the same day, Stoltenberg at Brussels mentioned how the war in Ukraine could continue for years. He stressed on the need to have direct talks with Putin and for him to withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine. He further warned that if the war continued, there could be a possibility of an escalation to a more expanded war which would cause more casualties and drain resources.

Jersey

On 07 April, Jersey's International Development Minister Carolyn Labey visited Poland to assess how the island's aid was being used. Jersey has funded the distribution of 4000 trauma kits and 150 kevlar body armour vests and helmets to be used by Doctors. Donations were distributed within Poland or were sent to Kyiv. She said: "It's a humbling experience to meet ordinary Ukrainians who have displayed such extraordinary courage and resilience as well as the wonderful people assisting them.."

Italy

On 07 April, Italy announced that it would follow the EU's sanctions against Russia. Prime Minister Mario Draghi said: "If we are offered a gas embargo, we will follow the EU down this path, we want the most effective instrument to achieve peace." However, he also mentioned how Italy was not ready at the moment to deal with a gas embargo. Moreover, he contradicted himself by saying: "Today the gas embargo is not yet... on the table."

The EU

On 07 April, the EU's Council chief Charles Michel said the bloc was preparing a proposal to release EUR 500 million to provide arms for Ukraine. The proposal was agreed upon at the ambassador level by 27 EU nations. He added that this would bring the EU's contribution to EUR 1.5 billion in military support for Ukraine. Interestingly, he even compared the EU's funding to Russia's earnings in gas payments and said:

"This may seem like a lot, but one billion euros is what we pay Putin every day for the energy he provides us."

NATO

On 07 April, NATO's chief Jens Stoltenberg said the member countries had agreed to increase their support for Ukraine. This comes after Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said more atrocities could break out if Ukraine does not get more military aid. Stoltenberg added: "We are closely coordinating and discussing these issues with Ukraine, so allies are providing and are willing to do more when it comes to military support." However, NATO has been hesitant in supplying heavy offensive equipment like tanks and fighter jets that could lead to a direct conflict with Russia.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Australia

On 07 April, Australia said it would impose further sanctions to target Moscow's financial institutions and impose travel bans on additional 67 Russians. Australia's Foreign Minister Marise Payne said: "Today, I'm announcing 67 further sanctions of Russian elites and oligarchs, those close to (Russian President Vladimir) Putin who facilitate and support his outrageous actions." She added that these were in response to the emergence of war crimes in Bucha.

G7

On 07 April, the G7 condemned Russia's atrocities in Bucha. The Foreign Ministers said that Russia's atrocities were a severe violation of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. The Ministers expressed "heartfelt solidarity with the Ukrainian people and our deepest condolences to the victims". They further pushed for Russia's suspension from the UN Human Rights Council.

The UN

On 07 April, the UN General Assembly voted to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council. The vote was received with 93 nations in favour, 24 against, and the rest

abstained within the 193 Member Assembly. The meeting further marked a resumption of a special emergency session held since the war in Ukraine broke out and with the emergence of the recent reports on Bucha.

WHO

On 07 April, the WHO said it was preparing for possible chemical assaults in Ukraine. WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge said: "Given the uncertainties of the current situation, there are no assurances that the war will not get worse." He added that the WHO considered all possibilities and prepared for situations of mass casualties and treatments to chemical assaults.

Shell

On 07 April, the oil giant Shell said it would be taking a hit of about USD five billion for withdrawing from Russia. However, the firm assured that it would not further buy oil from Russia but would keep its commitments that were signed before the war in Ukraine. The company also said it would end its partnership in the Nord Stream two pipeline.

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War in Ukraine: Day 42

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy on sanctions; From the Ukrainian Presidents' Office; Ukrainian prosecutors on Russian war crimes

Zelenskyy on sanctions against Russia

On 06 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged the West to impose further

sanctions on Russia in response to what he saw in Bucha. He said: "After what the world saw in Bucha, sanctions against Russia must be commensurate with the gravity of the occupiers' war crimes." He further mentioned that if Russian banks continue to function, it would eventually lead to the EU countries trading with Russian energy sources, which would not affect Moscow.

Zelenskyy thanks Ireland

On 06 April, Zelenskyy thanked Ireland's politicians for extending their support to Ukraine since the initial days of Russia's invasion. He added: "Thank you for the humanitarian and financial support extended to our country and thank you for your caring about Ukrainian people who found shelter on your land." He further urged the Irish politicians to push for tougher sanctions on the EU.

From the Ukrainian Presidents' Office

On 06 April, the Head of the Ukrainian President's office, Andriy Yermak, said international experts should work on sanctions that could ensure that they are sufficiently destructive. He talked about Bucha and called for a collective call from their partners in the West to ensure effective sanctions. The Deputy Head of the Office, Rostyslav Shurma, called for Russia to be placed on the blacklist of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This comes as the officials would meet international experts to get their opinion on sanctions against Russia.

Kuleba to request G7 and NATO for weapons

On 06 April, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said that he would appeal to NATO and the G7 for additional weapons on his visit to Brussels. These weapons would be used to counter Russian forces.

Ukrainian prosecutors on Russian war crimes

On 06 April, Ukrainian prosecutors said they were investigating about 4,468 alleged cases of Russian war crimes. This came after reports of the crimes by Russian forces in Bucha emerged. Ukraine's Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktov said: "Prosecutors and investigators are already examining the

area [Kyiv region] and documenting crimes, so that every perpetrator of these atrocities are brought to justice both in national and international courts.” Venediktov further mentioned that the team was collecting evidence for a Hague trial. She added: “Evidence is no longer just war crimes, but crimes against humanity.”

From Mariupol

On 06 April, the Mayor of Mariupol, Vadym Boichenko, confirmed the killing of 5000 civilians in the city. The number included children that had died since the start of Russia’s siege. In addition, Boichenko talked about the bombing of the hospital by Russian forces that killed 50 people. He added that 90 per cent of the city had been destroyed by indiscriminate shelling by the Russians.

Evacuations

On 06 April, eleven humanitarian corridors were agreed upon with Russia. However, evacuees from Mariupol would have to use their own vehicles to leave the port city as the Ukrainian government could not reach there.

On the same day, Ukraine’s Deputy Prime Minister, Iryna Vereshchuk, asked the citizens in Ukraine to leave the Donbas region if possible. She added: “It has to be done now because later people will be under fire and face the threat of death.” She further mentioned that the government could not do much because Russia controlled certain parts of the region. This comes as Severodonetsk, a town in eastern Ukraine, received sporadic shelling.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin calls Serbian President Vucic

On 06 April, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin spoke to Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on a telephonic call to congratulate him on his victory in the elections. Putin also briefed the situation in Ukraine and expressed hope that the conflict in Ukraine would end soon. A joint statement released stated: “...as Putin said - Russia’s special operation in Ukraine, while President Vucic reiterated Serbia’s position and the conclusions of the National Security Council, which Putin is well aware of.” Vucic had

earlier mentioned how Serbia would remain neutral and maintain cordial relations with Russia.

Putin speaks to Hungary’s Prime Minister

On 06 April, Putin spoke to Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orban and discussed Russian-Hungarian relations. Putin further informed Orban about the situation in Ukraine and the status of talks between Moscow and Kyiv. He also mentioned “the Kyiv regime’s gross and cynical provocation in the town of Bucha.”

Maria Zakharova comments on expulsion of Russian diplomats

On 06 April, Russia’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova called the declaration of Moscow’s diplomats as personae non-grata, a political attack. She said: “Over the last decades, the collective West has begun to use the declaration of Russian diplomats as personae non-grata, that is, imposing sanctions on them, isolating them from the opportunity to work in the region they had studied, <...> as a tool not of diplomatic work, but of information and political attack.” She further spoke about how collective solidarity was a public demonstration to create a narrative against Russia.

Zakharova on Bucha accusations

On 06 April, Spokesperson Zakharova claimed that the images of the dead bodies across the town of Bucha were staged. She further mentioned that the images were used to justify sanctions and to derail the ongoing peace talks with Kyiv. She added: “These terrible, criminal fake (images) were published in order to justify another pre-arranged sanctions package, including a large-scale expulsion of diplomats from different countries.”

Russia to maintain diplomatic ties with the West

On 06 April, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko mentioned that Russia would want to keep diplomatic channels open even after European countries expelled its diplomats. He said: “Nevertheless our position remains absolutely the same: we advocate for diplomatic channels to remain open.”

However, Grushko also warned that expelling diplomats disrupted the ambassadors' work done over the years and damaged their interests.

The West view: Responses from the US and Europe

The West View: Responses from the US and Europe

Czech Republic

06 April, the Czech Republic Defence Minister announced the supply of tanks to Ukraine. The same was also shared in a twitter which showed the loading of T-72 tanks and armoured vehicles into train carriages. With the decision being passed, Czech Republic becomes the first EU country to engage in direct supply of weapons to Ukraine. According to Defence Minister Jana Cernochova said: "I will only assure you that the Czech Republic...is helping Ukraine as much as it can and will continue to help by (supplying) military equipment, both light and heavy."

The US

On 06 April, the US announced new set of sanctions targeting the biggest financial institutions and private lenders. According to Biden, he said the US will first aim at full block on Sberbank and Alfa Bank. Second, locking down of accounts of those holding accounts in the US. He also said that an executive order will be signed banning any form of new investments in Russia. The order will be applicable to 600 companies, the new sanctions also aim to coordinate with the G7 leaders in tightening the sanctions. Third, the sanctions will target, Putin's daughters and close family members as it observes Putin's assets to be hidden in their account. It was confirmed by White House Press Secretary, Jen Psaki. On the sanctions he said: "degrade key instruments of Russian state power, impose acute and immediate economic harm on Russia."

The US military announced the increase in military of USD 100 million to support Ukraine with anti-armour Javelin missiles. This will be the sixth batch of military equipment provided by the US since the start of war. According to the US Pentagon spokesperson, John Kirby: "meet an urgent Ukrainian need for additional Javelin anti-

armor systems, which the United States has been providing to Ukraine and they have been using so effectively to defend their country."

The EU

The European Commission Chief, Ursula von der Leyen said that EU is currently working on additional sanctions on Russia for indulging in war crimes in Ukraine. It plans to ban coal, oil and gas exports.

The UK

On 06 April, the UK Ministry of Defence reported on heavy shelling and continuing airstrikes in Mariupol. In the statement released: "Most of the city's 160,000 residents have no light, communication, medicine, heat or water. Russian forces have prevented humanitarian access, likely to pressure defenders to surrender." Along with the US, UK imposed similar sanctions on Russia targeting its banks, ban on new investments, ending of coal, oil, gas, iron and steel imports.

NATO

NATO has decided to hold talks with Foreign Ministers in Brussels to discuss on how to proceed with the next stage of Ukraine war. Nato's Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg commented that Russia's aim to capture Donbas was to establish a land corridor. He also confirmed that no troops or plans of NATO has been sent to Ukraine. During his address in Brussels, he said: "We have seen no indication that President Putin has changed his ambition to control the whole of Ukraine and rewrite the international order, and we need to be prepared for that."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

India

In the UN Security Council meeting, India for the first time voiced against Russia condemning the killings in Bucha. It called for an independent investigation into the report. Till now India has abstained from voting on resolutions called in the UNSC and UNGA. US has also issued a warning to India for maintaining close relation with Russia and its resistance to levy sanction on Russia.

India's diplomatic stance over Ukraine war is due its military and energy dependency.

MNCs

On 06 April, Chanel which is known for its luxury goods announced that it will henceforth not sell its products to Russia after ending its operations. It added that the sanctions imposed by the EU prohibits the company from selling its items to even the individual who use it in Russia.

ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC confirmed that it has escorted 1,000 civilians who were held by the Russian police force from Mariupol, Zaporizhzhia and areas around. The evacuation was done using private cars and buses, ICRC's Pascal Hundt said: "It was a difficult operation, complex operation, but we really feel relieved that more than 1,000 people managed to leave from hell where they wanted to go." ICRCs repeated efforts to send aid to people in Mariupol was blocked away by the Russian troops till now.

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War in Ukraine: Day 41

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy's address in the UNSC and Bucha massacre

Zelenskyy's address

On 05 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his address at the emergency meeting of UNSC called for "open and transparent investigation" into the allegations on civilian killings in the city of Bucha. He said: "there is not a single crime they would not commit." Zelenskyy pointed out that if the UN council is unable to find a solution to Russia's crimes, he suggested dissolving Russia. After his address, he also screened a video showing the images of the dead civilians and their bodies.

In his everyday address to the people, he reported that Russian forces had killed and tortured more than 300 civilians in Bucha. He accused Russia for covering up its war crimes in the city of Bucha and many other occupied cities. Along with the accusation, Zelenskyy vowed to track down the war crime violations of Russia. He confirmed on discussing the same with the leaders of Europe, Poland, and, Austria: "All crimes of

the occupiers are documented. The necessary procedural basis is provided for bringing the guilty Russian military to justice for every crime they commit.”

Ukraine Military claims

On 05 April, the General Staff of Ukraine’s military forces claimed that close to 18,500 Russian had been killed in the war by Ukraine. It also recorded the destruction of war equipment and weapons, which includes “676 tanks, 1,858 armoured vehicles, 150 warplanes and 134 helicopters.” Russian sources are to disclose their casualty figures, but it has confirmed the deaths of only 1,351 now.

One of the residents, Alex Dayrabekov who escaped from Bucha described the situation in Bucha in an interview with *BBC*. He said: “My neighbours - and there are at least 10 of them - lost their closest relatives in their attempt to evacuate from Bucha and Irpin around a month ago...thousands of people died here... because they were deliberately killed.

On 05 April, Mykolaiv Mayor, Oleksandr Senkevych said that the southern city Mykolaiv was being bombarded using cluster munitions by Russia. He pointed that the city held “no military value” and the civilians are being targeted to create fear. He warned the women and children to leave the city to lessen the casualties.

Ukraine officials reported on the count of children wounded and killed. They also stated on the destruction caused to the buildings, schools, and Prosecutor-General’s office. It is predicted that close to 167 children were killed and 279 injured so far since the war began. The Mayor of capital city Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko urged the leaders of Europe to cut down all of the existing commercial ties with Russia. He commented furiously stating: “Every euro, every cent you receive from or send to Russia has blood; it is bloody money and the blood of this money is Ukrainian blood. The blood of Ukrainian people.”

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

On 05 April, a Russian representative to the UN Security Council, Vasily Nebenzya denied

accepting the allegations of war crimes against Russian troops in Bucha. He said: “flagrant inconsistencies in events shown by Ukrainian and Western media. The corpses in no way resemble those that could be lying on the street for three or four days.” Apart from the denial, the Ambassador pointed out that close 600,000 people were moved into Russia and denied Ukraine’s deportations. He said: “And we’re not talking about any kind of coercion or abduction, as our Western partners like to present this, but rather the voluntary decision by these people as testified by many of these videos that are accessible in social media.”

Russian Ministry of Defence claims

On 05 April, Chechen Leader Ramzan Kadyrov claimed that 267 marines and 503rd naval infantry battalion of Ukraine had surrendered to Russia in the city of Mariupol. Analysts have called it as the major development in Ukrainian forces. On 05 April, Russia’s Defence Ministry claimed that its goal henceforth will be to “liberate” the Donbas region over its initial goals to capture key cities of Ukraine. The Defence Ministry Spokesperson Igor Konashenkov claimed on shooting down of two helicopters of Ukraine which were involved in the rescue of leaders from a nationalist battalion. Adding to it he said: “This morning, April 5, around Mariupol, a new attempt by the Kyiv regime to evacuate leaders of the nationalist Azov battalion was aborted. Two Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopters, trying to reach the city from the sea, were shot down by portable anti-aircraft systems.”

On the Bucha Massacre, Russia’s UN Ambassador denied the allegations against Russia and called out on Ukraine as “staging provocation,” along with the West. So far Russia has neither accepted the allegations nor has given any evidence to support them. As per report of *BBC Reality Check* and satellite images from *New York Times* confirmed the killing of civilians, was three weeks ago when Russia was in control of Bucha.

On the expulsions of Russian diplomats, Russia called the move “short-sighted.” At the same Russia spokesperson Dmitry

Peskov said: "Narrowing down opportunities for diplomatic communication in such an unprecedentedly difficult crisis environment is a short-sighted move that will further complicate our communication, which is necessary to find a solution."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

The US

On 05 April, the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) said it had suspended information exchanges with Russia's tax authorities. This would hinder Moscow's ability to collect taxes and use them to fund its war in Ukraine. The 30-year-old tax treaty was between the IRS and Russia's Federal Tax Service, where they shared information to aid domestic tax collections and enforcement of tax laws. The US said it had stopped sharing Anu tax information on 24 February but formally announced it.

On the same day, the US blocked Russia from paying its sovereign debt using its reserves held in US banks. Russia wanted to pay its USD 600 million using its foreign reserves. However, under the sanctions and the US measures against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, they had frozen these accounts. A US Spokesperson said: "Russia must choose between draining remaining valuable dollar reserves or new revenue coming in, or default."

Calls for Russia's suspension from the UN rights council

On 04 April, the US and the UK urged the UN to suspend Russia from the Rights Council. The US and the UK called on the UN after the reports surfaced about the atrocities of Russian forces in Bucha. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said: "Russia's participation in the Human Rights Council is a farce." She added that it was time for the UN General Assembly to vote the Russians out. Thomas-Greenfield further mentioned: "My message to those 140 countries who have courageously stood together is: the images out of Bucha and devastation across Ukraine require us to now match our words with action."

The EU

On 05 April, the EU's Commission head Ursula von der Leyen said they were planning a new set of sanctions. She listed down six measures: "An import ban on coal from Russia. A full transaction ban on four key Russian banks - among them the country's second-largest, VTB. A ban on Russian ships and Russian-operated ships from accessing EU ports. Further bans on exports, targeting areas in which Russia is vulnerable, such as transportation equipment. New import bans on products including seafood, liquor, and wood. Additional targeted measures which include halting financial support for Russian public bodies."

Earlier, the EU said it would only be focusing on the current measures. However, the reports on Bucha have revived the EU's use for new sanctions against Russian forces' atrocities near Kyiv. France's European Affairs Minister Clément Beaune said: "The new sanctions will probably be adopted tomorrow."

On the same day, the EU declared 19 Russian diplomats non-gratae for not "engaging in activities contrary to their diplomatic status." The decision was based on the EU's High Representative Josep Borrell and was a follow-up to other EU member countries expelling Russian diplomats. The countries accused Russia of using its diplomats to spy. However, the EU said it was in response to the reports of Bucha.

The UK

On 05 April, the UK said it would announce the frozen USD 350 billion of Russia's "war chest." UK's Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said: "So far, our sanctions have had a crippling impact on those who feed and fund Putin's war machine. This week we will announce that we've frozen over \$350 billion of Putin's war chest." She further said the UK was planning to implement more sanctions on Russia that would push it back to the Soviet era.

On the same day, the UK urged G7 and NATO to ban Russian ships from their ports and plan to phase Moscow's oil and gas imports. Truss said: "On Thursday, I will be urging

our NATO and G7 partners to go further in sanctions by joining us in banning Russian ships from our ports, cracking down on more Russian banks, going after industries that are filling Putin's war chest like gold, and agreeing on a clear timetable to eliminate imports of Russian oil, coal and gas."

Sweden

On 05 April, Sweden said it was opening a preliminary investigation into possible war crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine. It further urged victims and witnesses to submit pieces of evidence that could be used against Russia. The Swedish Prosecution Authority said: "Based on the information available on the situation in Ukraine, there is reason to believe that serious war crimes have been committed."

The Global Fallouts:

International implications of the Ukraine war

UNSC

On 05 April, at the UNSC meeting, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, in his speech in the security council said that he "will never forget, this is not a time for protectionism." The images of the dead people in Bucha. He called for the attention of the council to tend to the consequences of the war on the world economy.

Israel

On 05 April, Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid condemned Russia for its atrocities in Bucha. He said: "The images and testimony from Ukraine are horrific. Russian forces committed war crimes against a defenceless civilian population. I strongly condemn these war crimes." Prime Minister Naftali Bennett also condemned the reports of Bucha and assured that Israel would do everything to assist Ukraine.

China

On 05 April, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke to Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and discussed the possibility of promoting peace talks. China's and Ukraine's Foreign Ministers spoke for the first time since Russia invaded Ukraine. Wang said: "China is willing to take an objective and fair position to continue

playing a constructive role in its own way." Kuleba responded by saying that Ukraine was grateful for Wang's solidarity with civilian victims.

Africa

On 05 April, US government officials warned about an acute shortage of food supplies amid the war in Ukraine. The US representative to UN agencies in Rome, Cindy McCain, said that since the war hindered the supplies from Ukraine, Europe's breadbasket and caused a shortage of food supplies in Africa. She added: "The Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that as many as 13 million more people worldwide will be pushed into food insecurity as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine." Ukraine is a major export of wheat to Africa and sends about 40 per cent of wheat and corn to the continent.

Twitter

On 05 April, Twitter introduced new measures against Russian accounts to reduce Moscow's propaganda. Twitter said: "When a government blocks or limits access to online services within their state, undercutting the public's voice and ability to access information freely, but continues to use online services for their own communications, a severe information imbalance is created." Russia had restricted Twitter in the country, and thus the platform retaliated with the new measures.

World Bank

On 05 April, the World Bank said it had downgraded its economic outlook for East and Southeast Asia. The Bank's announcement came as the ongoing war in Ukraine was pushing inflation and China's slow growth in the region. It further mentioned that the region would see a five per cent growth instead of a 5.4 per cent growth. World Bank Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Manuela Ferro said: "Just as the economies of East Asia and the Pacific were recovering from the pandemic-induced shock, the war in Ukraine is weighing on the growth momentum."

Video game Fortnite

On 05 April, video game maker Epic Games announced that it would donate USD 144

million from its game Fortnite to help the people in Ukraine. Xbox head Phil Spencer responded: "Really incredible to see how the gaming community can have an impact beyond the playing of game." The money would be given to UNICEF, WFP, and UNRA for their humanitarian assistance to the country and the refugees.

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War in Ukraine: Day 40

War on ground:

Zelenskyy's address, Dmytro Kuleba on Bucha, Destruction of Mariupol

Zelenskyy's address

On 04 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy mentioned that there was no other choice than to negotiate with Russia to end the war in Ukraine. He added that it had to be done even though it was challenging to do it after uncovering the Russian force's atrocities against civilians. Concerning Bucha, Zelenskyy said it was "unforgivable...all of us, including myself,

will perceive even the possibility of negotiations as a challenge."

Zelenskyy talked about the countries ready to provide the security guarantee to Ukraine and said: "Different countries are ready to guarantee different things." However, he stated that they had not received a list of countries that would affirmatively join them and urged the US and its allies to prepare sanctions in advance to counter the Russian federation if needed.

Zelenskyy's video address at Grammy's

On 03 April, Zelenskyy made a surprise appearance virtually at the Grammy Awards celebration. He said: "Fill the silence with your music. Fill it today, to tell our story. Support us in any way you can. Any, but not silence." He spoke about Ukraine's musicians wearing armor instead of tuxedos and called on the industry to support Ukraine in any way they could.

Ukraine urges German embargo of Russian oil

On 04 April, Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany, Andriy Melnyk, called on the government to reconsider its stance on sanctioning Russian fossil fuels. He said: "I recommend you read these reports about raped and murdered children in Bucha and Irpin before you start explaining to us again why an immediate embargo on Russian gas, oil and coal isn't feasible." His call comes after Ukraine accused Russia of crimes against civilians in Bucha.

Dmytro Kuleba on Bucha

On 04 April, Ukraine's Foreign Minister said what happened in Bucha was just the tip of the iceberg. He added: "The horrors that we've seen in Bucha are just the tip of the iceberg of all the crimes (that) have been committed by the Russian Army." He further demanded more sanctions against Russia and asked them to visit Bucha if they had any reservations about implementing the sanctions.

From the Mayor of Kyiv

On 04 April, Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitscho urged the citizens of Kyiv not to return for "at least another week." He said a curfew is still imposed in several districts as fighting

continues near Kyiv. Klitschko also said that many explosive devices were found near the capital.

Shelling in South Ukraine

On 04 April, shelling by Russian forces wounded 34 and killed eight people in two towns of Southern Ukraine. Ukraine's Prosecutor-General said: "As a result of enemy shelling, seven residents of Ochakiv were killed and another 20 were injured. In the city of Mykolaiv, one person died and 14 people were wounded, among them a child."

Destruction of Mariupol

On 04 April, the port city of Mariupol's mayor Vadym Boichenko said that it had been 90 per cent destroyed after being besieged by Russian forces. Boichenko said: "The sad news is that 90 percent of the infrastructure in the city is destroyed and 40 percent is unrecoverable."

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

Putin on ending simplified visas

On 04 April, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said Moscow has scrapped simplified visa rules for the officials and journalists whom Moscow deemed "unfriendly." As a result, countries such as Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Iceland, and Liechtenstein will no longer be able to apply for visas through the simplified procedure.

Lavrov on accusations for Bucha

On 04 April, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov talked about the situation in Bucha and mentioned that Western leaders should examine their own consciousness before accusing Putin. He stated that Moscow would hold a news conference to clarify that its soldiers did not kill civilians in Northern Ukraine. He said the images were staged by Ukraine and were being used to tarnish Russia's image.

Moscow to respond to expulsion of diplomats from France and Germany

On 04 April, Moscow said it would respond to France's decision to expel Russia's diplomats from the country. On the same day, Germany announced the expulsion of 40 Russian diplomats. Moscow assured that it would respond to their actions.

Russian ambassador in Vilnius asked to leave

On 04 April, Lithuania's Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said the Russian ambassador to Vilnius would have to leave. He said: "The Lithuanian government, in response to the ongoing aggressive actions of Russia in Ukraine, has decided to downgrade the status of the diplomatic mission."

Russia insists on UNSC meeting for Bucha

On 04 April, Russia said it would insist on holding a UN Security Council meeting over accusations against Bucha. This comes as the UK attempted to refuse to organize the meeting. Russia's representative to the UN, Dmitry Polyansky, said: "It is hard to imagine and realize, but the British presidency of the Security Council, which has just begun, is trying to deny us our right to request a separate Security Council meeting on the terrible Ukrainian provocation in Bucha."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe

Hungary

On 04 April, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban won for the fourth consecutive, and during his speech he accused President Zelenskyy and Brussels diplomats as "opponents." Although Hungary refuses to supply weapons to Ukraine, it has allowed half a million refugees into the country.

France

French President Emmanuel Macron upon the massive killings in Bucha called for more sanctions on Russia and said that Russia is responsible for committing war crimes in Ukraine. He urged to impose sanctions on the oil and coal industries of Russia and assured coordination with Germany, and the EU to further the sanctions on Russians. In his address, he failed to mention Russian gas which is imported by the EU for 40 per cent.

Poland

Recent reports state that close to 2.5 million people had moved into Poland from Ukraine since the start of the war. The average number of people crossing the down has increased from 16,800 to 22,300 per day. On 04 April, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, on the bodies found from the attacks in Bucha and Irpin, said that such

action must be named genocide. He called Russia “pure evil” and asked the EU countries to seize the assets of the Oligarchs. Apart from this, he criticised Germany for standing in the way of levying stricter sanctions on Russia due to its energy dependency.

Georgia

Georgia’s Foreign Ministry condemned the killings in Bucha. It tweeted: “We are devastated by the scenes of brutal atrocities. All those involved in these war crimes must bear responsibility!” Internally, the government faces criticism from the opposition for its support to Ukraine. Although the government has been supporting, it is yet align with Europe on imposing sanctions.

The US

On 04 April, US President Joe Biden called out President Putin as a war criminal. He accused Putin of the killings in Bucha and asked for a trial. He said: “This guy is brutal, he is a war criminal... but we have to gather all the detail so this can have a war crimes trial.” One of the US tech firms, Maxar Technologies using satellite imagery tracked the site in Bucha. It reported that the images showed evidence of excavation and mass grave.

The EU

On the civilian killings in Bucha, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that the EU was ready to investigate the war crimes in Ukraine. In her tweet: “the atrocious murder of civilians in Bucha and elsewhere in Ukraine.” The investigation team will act as a connection between Ukraine’s prosecutor general, Europol and Eurojust.

The UK

On 04 April, on the disinformation campaigns of Russia, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that the truth on killings in Ukraine cant stay hidden. Similar to Ursula, he also tweeted: “Russia’s despicable attacks against innocent civilians in Irpin and Bucha are yet more evidence that Putin and his army are committing war crimes in Ukraine.” Although Russia continue to take

claim for the killings, the Bucha massacre has raised condemnations across Europe and the US. Adding to Johnson, UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, called for tightening of sanctions on Russia for its actions in Ukraine. She stressed on taking of a tougher approach towards Russia and to strengthen Ukraine for negotiations. Liz truss is scheduled to go Poland, Brussels and meeting with G7, NATO leaders to discuss on the war.

The UK Ministry of Defence reported on increased shelling in the city of Mariupol, it pointed that Russia’s objective to capture Mariupol was to establish land corridor from Russia to Crimea. It also added that Ukrainian troops had a strong resistance and still hold key part of the city in control. Later the UK intelligence said that Russian troops and mercenaries were recouping and consolidating its offensives, military company in Donbas.

Germany

Germany’s Economic Minister Robert Habeck said that although the whole of the EU is working on alternating Russia’s oil and gas, Germany will not sanction an immediate embargo on Russia. The reduced imports from Russia stand at 25 per cent of oil and 40 per cent of gas to Germany. The minister also reaffirmed further reduction.

On 04 April, Germany expelled 40 Russian representatives from the country due to the Bucha massacre. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that Germany will continue to aid Ukraine with arms.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

Climate

On the release of the IPCC report on climate disaster, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres criticised the governments and business leaders for lying and warned that the climate crisis will be catastrophic. The implications of Ukraine's war on energy prices have forced the countries to fall back to fossil fuels and IPCC reported that increased usage on fossil fuels will make the target of achieving 1.5C impossible.

ICRC

ICRC which has been attempting to reach Mariupol for evacuation and aid has been constantly facing challenge in reaching the place due to Russian bombardment. It has been facing the same issue in Zaporizhzhia, where people seem to be trapped without basic supplies.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The central bank of the Democratic Republic of Congo issued a statement on keeping the primary interest rate at 7.5 per cent even in the situation of rising food, and fuel prices due to pandemics and Ukraine war. It has been on a row of reducing its main interest rate from 18.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent in 2021. According to the bank, it expects the economy to face more economic repercussions in the future.

Canada

Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly announced sanctions on nine Russians and nine Belarusians for helping Russia in the invasion. She said: "By enabling (Russian President) Vladimir Putin's senseless invasion of Ukraine, these close collaborators of the regime are complicit in the horrific events unfolding before our eyes."

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War in Ukraine: Day 38 & 39

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy's address and Bucha massacre

Zelenskyy's address

On 03 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his video address called out the Russian invasion as torture to the entire country and questioned whether Russia's act counted as genocide. He said: "Indeed, this is genocide. The elimination of the whole nation and the people. We are the citizens of Ukraine. We have more than 100 nationalities. This is about the destruction and extermination of all these nationalities. We are the citizens of Ukraine and we don't want to be subdued to the policy of Russian Federation." The key highlight of the address was how Ukrainians are being put down by Russian policy and are being exterminated. While the city of Bucha is devastated and Odesa hit with rockets, Zelenskyy claimed that the Ukrainian military was upping its defence in the East and South of Ukraine. He also observed that Russia had now shifted its focus from targeting Kyiv to encircling East to capture Ukraine's military in Donbas.

Ukraine Military

On 03 April, Ukraine's military prosecutors the investigation found close to 410 bodies in the towns surrounding Kyiv. According to prosecutors: "collect and preserve evidence of Russian aggression, maintain law and

order, ensure respect for the rights of servicepersons." Till now Russia has refused to claim on the killing of civilians in those towns.

Ukraine's Ministry of Defence claimed the death of two Russian soldiers who were in the hospital of the Kharkiv region. It also reported on the hospitalisation of 500 Russian troops due to severe alcohol poisoning.

Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk reported the death of the village head who was previously kidnapped Russians. Vereshchuk also claimed that more than 10 local community leader from Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, and Donetsk had been taken away by Russian troops. She urged on rescue of those and added: "We are informing the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN, all possible organizations, just like for the other civilians who have disappeared."

On 03 April, aide to Ukraine's interior minister confirmed on new air strikes with many rocket attacks by Russia over two port cities, Odesa and Mykolaiv. The attack in the southern ports is viewed as a trial to block Ukraine from accessing Black Sea and to create a corridor between Russia and Peninsula.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba urged the world leaders, G7 and the EU to take action against the Bucha massacre. He said: "Russians aim to eliminate as many Ukrainians as they can."

On 03 April, *Reuters*, reported the complete destruction of oil refinery of Ukraine located in the Kremenchuk city, centre of Ukraine. According to the reporter: "The fire at the refinery has been extinguished but the facility has been completely destroyed and can no longer function."

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Russian Ministry of Defence claims

Upon the repeated accusations of killings in the town of Bucha located near Kyiv, the Russian Ministry of Defence has rejected all the condemnations from the West. It

countered by saying "the latest provocation and the latest fake by the Kyiv regime," of Ukraine to accuse Russia. The same was also posted on Russia's Telegram channel stating the killings in Bucha as fake. In the post: "The Ukrainian Armed Forces subjected the city to artillery strikes, which also could have led to civilian deaths."

On 03 April, Russia's Defence Ministry claimed that its forces had destroyed the oil facilities in the city of Odesa along with fuel storages. The attack was done using "high-precision sea and air missiles." On the same Ukraine has not confirmed on any casualties till now, but said that the critical infrastructure was damaged.

Russia's negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky pointed out that it was too soon for a high-level meeting to resolve the conflict. In his Telegram he posted: "The Ukrainian side has become more realistic in its approach to issues related to the neutral and non-nuclear status of Ukraine but the draft agreement is not ready for submission to a summit meeting."

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

On 02 April, the US government said it would transfer Soviet-made tanks to Ukraine to boost its defence systems. On the same day, the US department of defence assured Ukraine that it would provide USD 300 million in security assistance. In addition to that, the US stated that it would also supply drones, commercial satellite imagery services and laser-guided rocket systems. On 03 April, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield mentioned that the US would donate USD 50 million in aid to help Moldova. The money was in addition to the USD 30 million that was already promised for the Ukrainian refugees coming to the country

The Vatican

On 02 April, Pope Francis, on his two-day visit to Malta, mentioned that he was considering a trip to Kyiv. He further criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin and called him a "potentate," which meant an autocratic ruler. Pope Francis said: "From the east of Europe, from the land of the

sunrise, the dark shadows of war have now spread. We had thought that invasions of other countries, savage street fighting and atomic threats were grim memories of a distant past."

The UK

On 03 April, the UK's defence intelligence report stated how Mariupol was putting up a 'staunch resistance' to Russia's indiscriminate shelling. The report further mentioned how Mariupol is a critical port city for the Russians and that they wanted to secure a land corridor from Russia to Crimea.

On the same day, the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned the discovery of bodies from towns near Kyiv after Russian forces withdrew. He said: "Russia's despicable attacks against innocent civilians in Irpin and Bucha are yet more evidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin and his army are committing war crimes in Ukraine." He also announced that the UK would step up its sanctions against Russia.

Germany

On 03 April, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Germany and the Western allies have agreed to implement further sanctions against Russia for its atrocities on the towns near Kyiv. He said: "Putin and his supporters will feel the consequences." He also mentioned that Germany would continue to help Ukraine with military equipment to fight against the Russians.

However, Berlin rejected Ukraine's plea for infantry vehicles. Germany's Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht rejected the demand, and cited NATO obligations. He said NATO obligations bound the armoured personnel carriers, this comes as Kyiv requested the transfer of 100 Marder infantry vehicles. Lambrecht also called on the EU to discuss a possible import ban on Russian gas deliveries. His comments came as a response to uncovering Russian atrocities near Kyiv.

On 02 April, Scholz, in the city of Essen, called on the Russians to end the war in Ukraine quickly. He said: "territorial claims that stem from the imperialist visions of earlier centuries." He added that those territorial claims were destroying the future

of Russia. He further mentioned how the implications of the war were affecting the global economy which was already strained by the COVID-19 pandemic.

France

On 03 April, France's President Emmanuel Macron condemned Russia's atrocities in Bucha. Around 410 civilian bodies were recovered at Bucha, out of which 280 bodies were found buried in mass graves. Macron calling out Russia, said: "On the streets, hundreds of civilians cowardly murdered...must answer for these crimes." French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian mentioned: "I have received information indicating massive abuses by Russian forces in Ukrainian towns that they have been occupying these last few weeks, in particular in the area of Bucha." Le Drian further said that France would work with Ukraine to approach the International Criminal Court (ICC) to initiate a trial against the perpetrators.

NATO

On 03 April, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg mentioned the reports of Bucha and called it "horrific." Stoltenberg added, "...and it's absolutely unacceptable that civilians are targeted and killed, and it just underlines the importance of, that this war must end. And that is President Putin's responsibility, to stop the war." He, too, called on the ICC to open an investigation against Russia as all the facts were available.

Greece

On 03 April, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias visited Odesa as a part of a humanitarian mission. He arrived at the port city and met with Odesa's Mayor, Hennadiy Trukhanov. He had brought critical supplies for the city as Russia had closed roads and besieged the city. Dendias also addressed the strong ethnic Greek community in Odesa and discussed their challenges and problems. He said: "The reopening of [Greece's] consulate will help distribute humanitarian aid and set up corridors for the Greek ethnic community to leave from any areas of Ukraine, if needed, via Odesa."

Lithuania

On 03 April, Lithuania's film director Mantas Kvedaravicius was killed in Mariupol. Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said: "We lost a creator well known in Lithuania and in the whole world who, until the very last moment, in spite of danger, worked in Russia-occupied Ukraine." Kvedaravicius was known for covering the conflict in Ukraine and Georgia. He was also known for his documentary on "Mariupolis," which was featured at the 2016 Berlin International Film Festival.

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International implications of the Ukraine war

Red Cross

On 02 April, the Red Cross prepared to reach Mariupol city as the Russian forces announced to retreat from northern Ukraine. At Mariupol, an estimated 160,000 people remain with food, water, and medicines shortages. However, they said: "arrangements and conditions made it impossible to proceed." The team was forced to turn back because of the deteriorating situation.

Human Rights Watch

On 03 April, Human Rights Watch said it had documented several cases of crimes against humanity by the Russian military focused in the areas of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Kyiv. Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch Hugh Williamson said: "The cases we documented amount to unspeakable, deliberate cruelty and violence against Ukrainian civilians." They also collected first-hand pieces of evidence by interviewing ten people.

China

On 02 April, China clarified that it was not deliberately circumventing sanctions after the EU warned it about the same. On the contrary, the director-General of European affairs at China's Foreign Ministry, Wang Lutong, argued that China was only contributing to the global economy by continuing its trade relations with Russia. Wang said: "We oppose sanctions, and the effects of these sanctions also risk spilling to the rest of the world, leading to wars of the currency, wars of trade and finance and also risk jeopardising the supply chain and

industrial chain and globalisation and even the economic order."

Pakistan

On 02 April, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Qamar Bajwa, condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the Islamabad Security Dialogue. However, he added: "despite legitimate security concerns of Russia, its aggression against a smaller country cannot be condoned." Pakistan has always maintained good relations with Ukraine since its independence.

Japan

On 03 April, a report by *The Japan Times* mentioned how the war in Ukraine was impacting 55 per cent of Japanese companies with overseas bases. The report further mentioned that "Only 34.6% of the Japanese firms surveyed said they had taken countermeasures. As for concrete steps, 54.3% of those companies cited information-gathering in a multiple-choice question, securing inventories at 32.5% and choosing suppliers at 23.5%."

Egypt

On 03 April, Egypt saw an unprecedented hike in steel prices due to the war in Ukraine. Three of the country's biggest steel manufacturers announced that they had raised the prices to 17 per cent or about LE, 3,00 per ton. A disruption in the supply chain induced the price hike as Egypt depended on Russia and Ukraine for importing scarce scrap metal, iron ore, and billet. Furthermore, the increase in the dollar price in the local market has raised production costs and imports from other countries.

India

On 03 April, *The Times of India* reported on how the war in Ukraine impacted India's IT sector. Ukraine is critical for offshore and near-shore third-party services. They also provide engineering and information technology expertise and thus have created issues for American and European businesses. In the case of India, Western Europe is a crucial region that has majority clients of Indian IT companies based out of Europe.

Global Supply Chain disruptions

On 03 April, *Forbes* reported the continuing war and its implications on global supply chains. Interos, a supply chain risk management company, stated how nearly 300,000 companies in the US and Europe had suppliers in Russia and Ukraine and now face continuing issues. The report further mentioned how the war had caused the most significant shift in supply chains. Interos founder and CEO Jennifer Bisceglie said: "Continued pressure on global supply chains will exacerbate imbalances between supply and demand, causing increased inflation and potentially stagflation."

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War in Ukraine: Day 37

War on the Ground:

Two Ukrainian generals dismissed; Russia violates Mariupol's humanitarian corridor; Ukrainian helicopters strike Belgorod?

Ukraine in talks to use Romanian port

On 01 April, Ukraine approached Romania to permit it to export farm goods from the Black Sea port of Constanta. Ukraine's Agriculture Minister Mykola Solsky said: "We and our partners are looking for alternative logistical routes to export our goods via European ports, including Constanta." Russia has blockaded all of Kyiv's ports since the war began, and Ukraine accounts for 12 per cent of the world's global wheat exports, 15 per cent of maize, and about 50 per cent of the world's sunflower oil.

Zelenskyy dismisses two Ukrainian generals

On 01 April, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the dismissal of two security officials and called them traitors. He said: "Regarding antiheroes. Now, I do not

have time to deal with all the traitors. But gradually, they will all be punished.” Naumov Andriy Olehovich and Kryvoruchko Serhiy Oleksandrovych were dismissed by Zelenskyy. However, the reasons behind the dismissal were not mentioned. He further added that those who violate the military allegiance to the people of Ukraine would “inevitably be deprived of senior military ranks.”

Zelenskyy warns of a powerful Russian strike

On 01 April, Zelenskyy warned of a possible “powerful strike” in the Donbas region as Russia claimed it would withdraw from Kyiv. He urged the people to be prepared for a possible devastating assault in the eastern region. The Pentagon also said that Moscow might be repositioning to send forces to the Donbas region.

Russia breaking promises on Mariupol humanitarian corridor

On 01 April, the governor of Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk region Pavlo Kyrylenko said Russia was breaking its promises of allowing humanitarian aid to reach the encircled city of Mariupol. He added: “Humanitarian deliveries, despite all the agreements and promises of the Russian side, are not being carried out...the humanitarian corridor ... is essentially not operational.” This comes as Ukraine had sent 45 buses to evacuate its civilians from the besieged port city.

Ukrainian helicopters strike Belgorod?

On 01 April, Russia claimed that two Ukrainian military helicopters bombed a fuel depot in the eastern city of Belgorod. The attack would be the first by Ukraine’s forces on Russian soil since the invasion. However, Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said: “I can neither confirm nor reject the claim that Ukraine was involved in this simply because I do not possess all the military information.” On the same day, Ukraine said it exchanged 86 members of its forces with Russia.

The Moscow view: Claims by Russia

Russia’s exit from the Council of Europe

On 01 April, Russia’s Foreign Ministry Human Rights Envoy Grigory Lukyantsev

said Moscow’s decision to exit the Council was not an outcome of the situation in Ukraine. He added: “It’s no secret that this decision had been in the making for a long time....The situation in the organization was nearing a crisis long before the start of the special operation.” Lukyantsev further accused the Council of practicing double standards and claimed that it had an absence of positive changes. He even criticized the agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe as it was inclined to issues against Russia and its allies. A few examples cited by TASS: “poisoning of [blogger Alexey] Navalny,’ ‘arrest and detention of Navalny,’ ‘violation of the rights of Crimean Tatars in Crimea,’ ‘violation of the rights of LGBT community,’ ‘violations human rights in Belarus.”

Peskov on Gazprom

On 01 April, Kremlin’s Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov clarified that nationalizing the subsidiaries of Gazprom and Rosneft in Germany was completely unacceptable. His comments came as speculations arose that Germany’s Economy Ministry was considering nationalizing the subsidiaries of Gazprom and Rosneft. Peskov said: “Of course, such a plan would seriously violate international law and just about all the rules and laws that you can think of. Therefore, we will monitor it closely. Of course, as far as we are concerned, even the very thought of such an option is unacceptable.”

Gas for dollars and euros?

On 01 April, Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko spoke about the benefits of exporting Russian gas for dollars and euros. She claimed that both the currencies had lost their credibility. She also talked about the sanctions imposed and said: “Amid the strongest pressures and illegitimate sanctions we still prefer to act as a responsible member of the international economic community. We have been doing nothing that might worsen conditions for our partners who are the recipients of our hydrocarbons.” Matviyenko further argued how Russia was paid for gas in dollars, euros, gold, and even in foreign exchange reserves in the past.

Foreign Ministry on OSCE SMM

On 01 April, Russia's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine could not perform its functions due to political and legal circumstances. She argued that it could not carry out its duties following the previous mandate as it covered the now independent DPR and LPR territory. She added: "Therefore, Russia has not supported its extension for the next year. It means that its continued activities have no consensus support of the participating states, and therefore, cannot be conducted de jure." Zakharova called on the OSCE SMM to commence measures to curtail its activities as its functions were de facto terminated on 07 March when its international staff was withdrawn from the regions.

Ukraine's attack on Belgorod

On 01 April, Peskov condemned Ukraine's attack on a fuel depot in the Russian city of Belgorod. He said: "Clearly, it's not what could create conditions for further talks." The Kremlin claimed the Ukrainian forces carried out two airstrikes on the petroleum depot, which caused a fire, but the attack had no casualties.

Lavrov visits India

On 01 April, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited New Delhi and hailed India for not taking a "one-sided view" on the war. He also tried to gain the country's support to discuss the circumvention of sanctions. He said: "It is absolutely clear that more and more transactions would be done through this system using national currencies, bypassing dollar, euro and other currencies."

The West view:

Responses from the US and Europe NATO

On the position of the Russian forces, NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg observed that the Russian troops were found to be regrouping in the east of the country to multiply their attacks. Russia had brought in 1200 to 2000 troops inside from Georgia. He added: "We see continued shelling of cities and we see that Russia is re-positioning some of the troops, moving some of them around, most likely to reinforce their efforts

in the Donbas region." Apart from the above, Russia also maintains control over Kyiv and other cities and NATO expects more offensive taking place in the coming days. Agreeing on the same, UK Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace warned that Russia was not withdrawing its forces, but rather repositioning.

Northern Ireland

On 01 April, Northern Ireland opened "four advice centres," in Belfast, Ballymena, Craigavon and Newry to help out the refugees fleeing from Ukraine. Till now the government has not given an exact count of refugees who has entered, but it estimates it to be many hundreds. As per Stormont officials, 40 visas have been given so far for those who have chosen to stay in Northern Ireland.

The US

On 01 April, the US Defence department approved USD 300 million as "security assistance" for Ukraine to boost its defence capacity. The fund will be an addition to the existing sanction of USD 1.6 billion. In a statement, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said: "This decision underscores the United States' unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in support of its heroic efforts to repel Russia's war of choice."

The UK

On 01 April, UK Finance Ministry announced the issue of a license for receipt and transfer of payments for non-rouble debt given by Russia's central bank. The wealth fund is expected to run from 01 April and 30 June. On 01 April, the UK Ministry of Defence reported that Ukraine's military had taken back the villages of Sloboda and Lukashivka located in the south of Chernihiv. Both Chernihiv and Kyiv have been attacked by Russia using air and missile strikes. It said: "Ukraine has also continued to make successful but limited counter attacks to the east and north east of Kyiv."

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MNCs

On 01 April, Tate & Lyle Plc UK's sweetener company announced the increase in prices of its products to tackle the market pressure rising from the Ukraine war. Being one of the largest producers of sweeteners, it is said that due to rise in the cost price of raw materials, energy, and logistics has led the firm to hike the selling price.

The London Metal Exchange declared the supply suspension of Russian metals into the UK. Along with the metals, lead and aluminium will be also be restricted from the supply. Although Russia is the largest nickel producer, it will continue to be supplied to the UK.

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

China

On the question of peace talks, it was observed that China's President Xi Jinping comments in the video conference of the EU summit, asking the EU to consider China as an independent state. Post the EU-China summit in Brussels, both parties agreed on the Ukraine war was a threat to the world. The head of the European Council, Charles Michel said: "We will also remain vigilant on any attempts to aid Russia financially or militarily. However, positive steps by China to help end the war would be welcomed by all Europeans and by the global community."

India

India's Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman confirmed that India will continue to purchase crude oil from Russia as per the country's needs, but at a discount due to hike in oil prices.

Mexico

On 01 April, Mexico's manufacturing sector has reported a contraction for a continuous 25th month due to rising inflation, global shortage in supplies, economic instability and most importantly Ukraine war.

According to the economics associate director at S&P Global: "PMI data showed the second-sharpest increase in input costs in the 11-year survey history, which companies often linked to raw material scarcity, the pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine."

Canada

On 01 April, Canada's intelligence observed the disinformation campaigns launched by Russian backed disinformation campaigns supporting the killings in Ukraine. It claimed that: "Russia had promoted stories that 'falsely categorize Russian protesters and citizens opposed to the invasion as supporting neo-Nazis and genocide.'" Although the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) agency did not provide any evidence on the stated campaigns, it said: "Later the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) agency did not provide any evidence on the stated campaigns."

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War in Ukraine: Day 36

War on the Ground:

Zelenskyy's address in the Australian parliament and evacuation in Mariupol Zelenskyy's address

On 31 March, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in his virtual address in the Australian parliament highlighted three key factors. One, is the threat to global security, where Russia is being allowed to invade a neighbouring country openly, without any power to stop it. Second, the risk of nuclear weapons, he urged imposing sanctions for "nuclear blackmail." Third, Russia is a motivator for other aggressive nations. He said: "But the most terrible thing,

if we don't stop Russia now if we don't hold Russia accountable, then some of the countries of the world that we're looking forward to a similar war against their neighbours will decide that such things are possible for them as well. The fate of global security is decided now." Ahead of the Australian parliament, Zelenskyy addressed the Dutch Parliament, where he urged weapons support, reconstruction aid and stopping the existing businesses with Russia.

Zelenskyy warned of Russia's attempts of amassing bigger troops in the Donbas region for a bigger attack. The Russian military also reported that: "A planned regrouping of troops is taking place in these areas, its goal is to intensify actions in priority areas and, above all, complete the operation to completely liberate Donbas." In his everyday video address, remarked the disbelief in Russia's word to de-escalate. Pointing to the negotiation talks he said, there was no progress and does not believe in "verbal constructions."

Ukraine Military advance

On 31 March, Ukraine's ground forces Deputy Chief of staff observed that the offensive capacity of Russia had gone down and the tactics appeared to be changing from direct attacks to long-range attacks. He said: "The enemy has almost exhausted its offensive potential, but the forces that remain around Kyiv are not small." Apart from this the Ukrainian Atomic Energy Ministry reported the exit of Russian troops from the Chernobyl power plant.

On 31 March, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk reported that the Ukrainian government had sent 45 buses to rescue out the citizens from Mariupol. The move comes after the Russian Defence Ministry agreed to open the humanitarian corridor from Mariupol to Zaporizhzhia.

The Moscow view:

Claims by Russia

President Putin's new decree

On 31 March, Russia's President Vladimir Putin signed a decree mandating the payment for Russian gas to be in Roubles from 01 April. He said that the sanctioning of the West began a year back and it shall be

hard to impose new sanctions. On Europe's shift to buying liquid natural gas from the US, he pointed out that it will lead to loss of jobs in Europe. Apart from this after the telephonic call with French President Emmanuel Macron, he demanded Ukraine to surrender Mariupol. The Defence Ministry called for a one-day ceasefire to allow the evacuation of people from Mariupol.

Russian Foreign Ministry claims

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced a new set of sanctions on the EU leaders, banning their entry into Russia, it also blacklisted some EU member states. According to the Ministry: "The restrictions apply to the top leadership of the European Union; including a number of European commissioners and heads of EU military structures, as well as the vast majority of members of the European Parliament who promote anti-Russian policies."

On 31 March, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin permitted "parallel imports," as part of the support for small and medium businesses. Till now the goods in Russia were sold without trademark authorisation. This was done to ease the access of goods for people despite the sanctions put by other foreign countries. Currently, the annual inflation stands at 15.66 per cent and other essential commodities are expected to rise more.

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

On 31 March, US President Joe Biden speculated that Russian President Vladimir Putin was self-isolating in Russia. He said: "He seems to be self-isolated and there's some indication that he has fired or put under house arrest some of his advisers....But I don't want to put too much stock in that at this time."

On the same day, the US said it imposed fresh sanctions on Russia that target its technology sector. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said: "We will continue to target Putin's war machine with sanctions from every angle until this senseless war of choice is over." The sanctions were imposed to target Russia in different sectors and deter "malicious cyber actors."

Italy

On 31 March, Prime Minister Mario Draghi said that he did not expect Russia to cut off its gas supplies. Draghi made these comments at a conference and mentioned that in his telephonic call with Putin, the latter assured him that the gas contracts would continue and that European firms can continue to pay in euros and dollars. However, he said: "What I understood, but I may be wrong, is that the conversion of the payment ... is an internal matter of the Russian Federation."

France and Germany declined to pay for gas in roubles

On 31 March, France and Germany rejected the demand by Russia to pay for all gas purchases being paid in roubles. Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck said: "It is important for us not to give a signal that we will be blackmailed by Putin." On the other hand, France's Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire mentioned that both nations were preparing for the possibility of Russia halting deliveries. US State Department spokesperson Ned Price also mentioned how this was a tactic by Putin due to Moscow's economic and financial situation, which has escalated due to the sanctions.

The UK

On 31 March, the UK government said it had expanded its sanctions to cover 14 more people and organizations, including the group that controlled RT, a television channel. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said that these sanctions were aimed at countering the fake news that Russian media spread regarding the invasion of Ukraine. The sanctions also targeted Col Gen Mikhail Mizintsev, the officer in charge of Russia's siege of Mariupol.

Norway

On 31 March, Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said that Russian President Vladimir Putin issued him that Russia would create a humanitarian corridor for the besieged civilians in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol. Støre's comments were an outcome of an hour-long call with Putin, where he also said he had urged him to put an end to the war in Ukraine. He further said: "We have minimal expectations of what

could be achieved, but nothing should be left untried in the situation we are now in."

NATO

On 31 March, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at Brussels said that Russian forces in Ukraine were not withdrawing but regrouping. He said: "According to our intelligence, Russian units are not withdrawing but repositioning. Russia is trying to regroup, resupply and reinforce its offensive in the Donbas region." Stoltenberg also said that the military alliance would need more convincing as while the talks were going on in Istanbul, Moscow continued its attacks in Ukraine.

The Global Fallouts: International implications of the Ukraine war

The UN

On 31 March, the UN said it delivered aid to northern Ukraine, but in the south, they could not access the regions due to the cities being encircled. The UN humanitarian coordinator Osnat Lubrani said, "...basic household items, including blankets and kettles from the UN refugee agency, will support 1,500 people. Sanitation kits will also help 6,000 people with hygiene and drinking water." She added that accessing Mariupol, Kherson and other southern Ukrainian cities was not possible due to safety concerns.

Oil Prices

On 31 March, US President Joe Biden announced the largest ever release of oil reserves to decrease gasoline prices. He said: "This record release will provide a historic amount of supply to serve as a bridge until the end of the year when domestic production ramps up." Biden further said the US would release one million barrels of oil for the next six months to control oil prices.

Red Cross

On 31 March, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said it was preparing to evacuate citizens from Mariupol. A staff member with the ICRC team, Lucile Marbeau, said: "We're here because really, we hope to be able to facilitate safe passage for civilians desperately wanting to flee Mariupol." The ICRC said it also had a team

assembled with medicines, food, water, hygiene items, and other essentials near the city of Zaporizhzhia. Russia had committed to a ceasefire on the route between Mariupol to Zaporizhzhia to evacuate citizens.

UNHRC

On 31 March, UNHCR said about 4,059,105 had fled the country since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February. UNHCR said: "We are confronted with the realities of a massive humanitarian crisis that is growing by the second." Apart from them, about 13 million people have been internally displaced or were stranded in affected areas.

India

On 31 March, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited India to strengthen their ties and to discuss aspects of the situation in Ukraine. Truss' visit comes as India had not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, Lavrov was in Delhi to discuss India bypassing sanctions and increasing its Russian oil and gas purchase.

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The collage consists of six images arranged in a 3x2 grid. The top-left image shows three men in suits walking past a row of flags. The top-middle image is a line graph titled 'Global net anthropogenic GHG emissions 1990-2019' showing emissions in Gt CO₂ eq. The top-right image is a video frame showing President Xi Jinping and President von der Leyen at a summit. The bottom-left image shows a Border Force patrol boat with several people in life jackets. The bottom-middle image is a portrait of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The bottom-right image shows a soldier in camouflage gear.

BELGIUM

On 09 April, all Kinder products from the Arlon factory have been recalled from stores due to the salmonella incident. The rise in cases of the salmonella bacteria can be seen all over western Europe and most of the patients who have been infected fall under the age of ten. The factory was shut down due to the non-disclosure of complete information for the investigation to Belgium's food safety authority, the AFSCA. The AFSCA said that the factory can become operational only after Ferrero, the owner of Kinder provides guarantees that it followed food and safety regulations and also advised people not to eat Kinder products. Dozens of salmonella cases are suspected to be a result of the consumption of chocolate and the distribution of the products seems to come from the Arlon factory in Belgium. So far, the infections

(“Kinder chocolate factory told to shut over salmonella cases,” *BBC*, 09 April 2022)

Plans to install an electronic surveillance system to monitor migrant crossings

On 19 April, the government spokesperson, Marios Pelekanos, announced that they would be installing an electronic surveillance system in the country. This would be installed along the buffer zone that divides the island nation along ethnic lines. The system would help the government monitor illegal immigration through the breakaway north. Between 2021-and 2022, migrants crossing from the Turkish-Cypriot north to the internationally-recognised Greek-Cypriot south rose by 184 per cent. Pelekanos urged the EU to help with financial and material support for the project. (Menelaos Hadjicostis, “Cyprus

110

plans surveillance system to stem migrant crossings,” Associated Press, 19 April 2022)

FRANCE

Act of vandalism suspected in nationwide internet outages

On 27 April, there were incidents of vandalism in France due to internet outages. French police are investigating the case that rattled the country's telecommunication network. The attack had impacted many regions of France including Paris, Internet cables were cut leading to network issues. The fibre cable optic network was attacked at 0100 GMT on Wednesday even affecting the landlines. This was suspected to be an act of vandalism or sabotage. The French government with the help of service providers is trying to restore the network. (Mathieu Rosemain, “French police to investigate vandalism behind internet outage,” *Reuters*, 28 April 2022)

Macron visits Cergy to empathize with left-wing voters

On 27 April, president Emmanuel Macron visited a Socialist-held working-class suburb of Paris to attract left-wing voters ahead of the June parliamentary elections. The move comes following the accusations Macron faced for being an elitist and unempathetic to the problems of the common people. Macron walked through a food market in Cergy, shaking hands, conversing with young people, and posing for photographs with them. Macron said: "I want to give a message of respect and consideration to these areas that are among the poorest in the country right from the start of my new mandate." (Michel Rose, “Macron, with eye on parliamentary vote, visits left-leaning Paris suburb,” *Reuters*, 27 April 2022)

Political rivals of Macron tend to the legislative elections to overpower him

On 25 April, president Emmanuel Macron following his re-elections will soon

confront another struggle in the upcoming legislative elections to be held on 12 and 19 June. His political opponents called on the voters to deny him a parliamentary majority. If Macron does not secure a parliamentary majority he will have to pick a prime minister from another party, which might lead to a “cohabitation.” During a cohabitation, the president retains command of the military forces and some foreign policy influence, but the government is in charge of administration and policies. Both the far-right and far-left parties plan to form an alliance separately with their close allies in the parliamentary elections to overpower Macron. (Sophie Louet and Ingrid Melander, “No respite for re-elected Macron as parliamentary elections loom,” *Reuters*, 25 April 2022)

French elections: Le Pen accused of misappropriation of funds

On 17 April, France’s prosecutors accused far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen of embezzlement claims. She and her associates have been accused of misappropriation of funds worth over EUR 600,000. The prosecutors were studying a report from the European Union’s anti-fraud office OLAF, which dates back to when she was a lawmaker in the European Parliament between 2004 and 2017. The agency further accused her of using EU funds for national political purposes, services that would benefit companies close to her party and personal expenses. (“France: Le Pen faces embezzlement claims ahead of election runoff,” *Deutsche Welle*, 17 April 2022)

Macron alerts the voters to be wary of Le Pen even though he leads

On 16 April, Emmanuel Macron is seen leading the first round of France's presidential election securing 27.6 per cent of the vote while National Rally's Marine Le Pen has 23.4 per cent. In a survey taken by Ipsos-Sopra Steria, Macron was found to have 55.5 per cent of support from the respondents however Marine Le Pen has

only 45.5 per cent. The voter turnout for the second round is expected to be 72 per cent with a margin of error between 0.7 to 2.4 per cent. While incumbent Macron holds the lead, he emphasises that "nothing is decided" in the race for the presidency. He urged the voters to vote and warned them against far-right Le Pen. Macron was seen appealing to young voters about his stance on climate change and urged them to vote for him. Due to the danger posed by Le Pen to democracy and liberalism, socialists and leftist activists are most likely to back Macron. (Darko Janjevic, ["French election: Macron leads Le Pen, but warns 'nothing is decided'," Deutsche Welle](#), 16 April 2022)

Elections: Le Pen and Macron confronted over policies on headscarves

On 15 April, Muslim headscarves were at the forefront of France's presidential campaign when women in headscarves approached both candidates, asking why their wardrobe choices should be entangled in politics. Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen was confronted by a woman wearing a headscarf at a farmers market when she was greeting her supporters. Le Pen called the headscarf a "uniform imposed over time by people who have a radical vision of Islam." On the same day, incumbent president Macron, on the matter of headscarf, debated with a woman on the channel France-Info. He tried to set himself apart from Le Pen by claiming he would not modify any laws. However, he still backed the present prohibition on headscarves in schools as part of France's secular values. (["Macron clashes with Le Pen over Islamic headscarf ban," Deutsche Welle](#), 15 April 2022)

Paris attack trials defendant apologizes to victims and their families

On 15 April, Salah A, the lone survivor of the terrorist group that carried out the November 2015 Paris attacks, apologized to the victims and their families in his trial

testimony. Salah A has been on trial with 19 other defendants since September 2021 at the historic court of justice on the Ile de la Cite in central Paris. He was accused of assisting in the planning and execution of Paris' bloodiest peacetime terrorist attack. Among the other defendants, six are being tried in absentia, and five are believed to be dead. At the end of his trial testimony, Salah said: "I know that hatred remains... I ask you today that you hate me with moderation, I ask you to forgive me." (["Main Paris attacks suspect apologizes to 'all victims,'" Deutsche Welle](#), 15 April 2022)

Elections: Presidential candidate Marine Le Pen's shift in position

On 13 April, Deutsche Welle examined the French presidential election candidate Marine Le Pen's relations with Russia prior to the invasion of Ukraine. In 2017, a few weeks before France's last presidential election, Russian president Vladimir Putin welcomed her to Kremlin. A photograph of their handshake appeared on one of Le Pen's campaign fliers, which was printed before the war and later discarded. She called for an "alliance" with Russia in her manifesto concerning European security policy. In 2017, the far-right leader secured a EUR 9 million loan from a Russian bank for her presidential election campaign. Le Pen did not condemn the annexation of Crimea as well. However, her position changed following the war in Ukraine, and she denounced Russia's invasion. (Lisa Louis, ["France: Le Pen's Russia ties could lower her chances," Deutsche Welle](#), 14 April 2022)

The French lack faith in the Greens party despite concern over climate change

09 April, the polls prior to the presidential election show that French people lack confidence in the Greens Party even though they worry about climate change. The Greens candidate Yannick Jadot seems to have failed to garner popularity among his voters. He is only 5 to 6 per cent ahead in the recent poll and received

similar results in the 2002 elections with 5.25 per cent of votes. Jadot seems to have gained the trust of the French people only in terms of addressing the environmental issues and not with regards to issues such as health, and inequality. The people are observed to be in favour of the far-left candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who also proposes environmental action against climate change. He has risen to be the third most popular in the recent polls after president Emmanuel Macron of La République en Marche (LREM) and Marine Le Pen of National Rally (NR). Many experts say that the Greens did not properly capitalise on the void left by the Socialist Party after its collapse in 2017. (Lauren Chadwick, [“France election: Voters worry over climate change. So why are the Greens polling badly?”](#), *Euronews*, 08 April 2022)

Fake news runs amok during the election

On 08 April, The French presidential election saw misinformation spreading around over the usage of Dominion voting systems. The Canadian company had already been under scrutiny during the 2019 US elections. There have been rumours going on on social media that electoral fraud was committed in the election by the usage of the Dominion Voting Systems. The people believe that the election is totally rigged. The Interior Ministry of France debunked the claims stating that France uses its own vote-counting system and denied any connection with the Canadian company. In a statement released by the ministry said "The results of the counting of the votes in each municipality are communicated in real-time ... by means of computer systems for centralising the results developed by the [ministry] computer services for several years." President Emmanuel Macron warned the people about misinformation and fake news. He also said that how they are a threat to democracy. (Matthew Holroyd, [“French election 2022: Misinformation spreads online](#)

[ahead of the first round vote,”](#) *Euronews*, 11 April 2022)

Elections : Macron to face Le Pen in a close tie

On 08 April, *BBC* reported about the influence of the war in Ukraine and its impact on the elections in France. The current issues have favoured the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen and her progress as an upcoming contestant in the presidential elections. The outcome of the French presidential election appeared to be in Macron's favour for months, as he was constantly topping polls and was anticipated to win a second term. However, just a day before the first-round voting Macron is dealing with a sudden surge in the popularity of Le Pen. Macron held a 14.5 per cent- point lead over Le Pen in March as Russia's war in Ukraine overshadowed the campaign and strengthened Macron's leadership credentials. Nevertheless, it has been reduced by more than half, with Le Pen following Macron by two points. (Lucy Williamson, [“French election: Far-right Le Pen closes in on Macron ahead of vote,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 08 April 2022)

Macron warns about Presidential candidate Le Pen’s unlawful manifesto

On 07 April, France’s President Emmanuel Macron intensified his warnings about the threat presented by his far-right rival Marine Le Pen ahead of the first-round presidential elections on 10 April. He admitted that he has not been able to ease the voters' anxieties and keep the far right at bay during his presidency. Le Pen's popularity has increased gradually, driven by her promises to reduce fuel tax to relieve the rising cost of living. Macron further continued to warn that her anti-immigration plan and a ban on the Muslim headscarf in all public spaces are xenophobic, racist, and violate the French constitution. According to polls, he might face Le Pen in a runoff after the first round, and she would

dramatically close the gap on him in a final round on 24 April. (Angelique Chrisafis, “[Macron steps up warnings over French far right before first-round vote](#),” *The Guardian*, 07 April 2022)

Possible resurgence of Yellow Vest movement before elections

On 01 April, France24 reported on the Yellow Vest uprising of 2018 and examined its potential to rise. The Yellow Vests demonstrations staged 60 consecutive weeks of protest against economic hardship, inequality, and a discredited political elite. They patrolled roundabouts throughout the country at all hours and marched to the streets of towns and cities every Saturday. The Yellow Vest uprising was sparked by an unpopular fuel tax that was nominally supposed to fund France’s transition to a green economy. But it became apparent that the proceeds would be directed to compensate for the deficit created by the government’s tax cuts for businesses. A researcher at Sciences-Po in Bordeaux, Magali Della Sudda, who has studied the uprising, stated: “There are signs the movement is picking up again, focusing once again on its original themes of purchasing power and social justice.” (Benjamin Dodman, “[Will France's Yellow Vests come back to haunt Macron on election day?](#),” *France24*, 02 April 2022)

France exceeds the deadline to abide by the council of state's ruling

On 31 March, France missed the deadline issued by the Council of State to reorient itself with the Paris Climate Agreement objectives. In July 2021, the Council of State criticized the government's failure to comply with the 2015 agreement to combat climate change. Following an assessment, it was concluded that the government was not doing enough to meet the agreement's goal of cutting global greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2030 compared to 1990. The council granted nine months to take necessary

measures on it. (“[France fails to meet court deadline to get Paris climate deal objectives back on track](#),” *Euronews*, 31 March 2022)

GERMANY

Easter protestors demonstrate for peace, amid war in Ukraine

On 16 April, thousands of people gathered in several cities for their traditional Easter marches. The demonstrators marched under the banner "Lay down your arms! — Stop the war in Ukraine!" to protest against the war and increase military spending. According to police, around 1,200 people assembled in the streets of Berlin and Bremen. Meanwhile, hundreds of protestors gathered in Hanover, Munich, Cologne, Leipzig, Stuttgart, and Duisburg, among other cities. The protests received backlash from several politicians, calling it unrealistic and a far-away dream for pacifism in the current situation. Ukraine's ambassador to Berlin, Andriy Melnyk, condemned the demonstrations saying they "had nothing to do with Easter or peace," and accused them of living in a "parallel world". (“[Germany holds Easter peace marches in shadow of Ukraine war](#),” *Deutsche Welle*, 16 April 2022)

Vereinte Patrioten members arrested by German police

On 14 April, four members of a right-wing extremist group who were scheming to overthrow the democratically elected government in Germany were arrested by investigators in West Germany. These people called themselves “Vereinte Patrioten” (United Patriots) and had plans to plant bombs on Germany’s energy infrastructure. They even planned to kidnap the health minister. The group’s main goal was to make the German democracy topple. The investigators confiscated several arms, ammunition, gold and silver ingots, and cash. The neo-nazi group has prior involvement in the COVID-denier protest scene and the “Reichsbürger” movement. (“[German police arrest far-right extremists over plans to](#)

'topple democracy',” *Deutsche Welle*, 14 April 2022)

Family minister Anne Spiegel steps down due to political pressure

On 11 April, Germany's family minister Anne Spiegel decided to step down as controversies emerged about her and her family going on a vacation right after the devastating floods of 2021. Spiegel is a member of the Greens party and was asked to step down to avert damage to the office amid political challenges. During the flood times, she held the position of state environment minister in the region of Rhineland-Palatinate. The flood killed 170 people and was Germany's most lethal flood in six decades. Her decision to step down came ahead of the region's elections that are to be held in May. ("[Germany's family minister steps down after vacation controversy](#)," *Reuters*, 11 April 2022)

Berlin's energy dependency on Moscow can be terminated by December

08 April, the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) estimated that Germany could cut its Russian energy imports by the end of 2022. DIW issued a study proposing a three-pronged approach of supply diversification, storage and pipeline efficiency, and reduced industrial and residential consumption. DIW further suggested that conserving household electricity alone could cut the need for Russian gas by 18-26 per cent, while German industries could switch to other fuels like coal and biomass. Additionally, imports from Norway alone could cover a fifth of Russia's present yearly imports. The study also refuted the idea to construct new liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals stating that long construction timeframes and diminishing natural gas demand make the import facilities unfeasible. ("[Germany could be off Russian gas by winter says economic think tank](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 08 April 2022)

Germany progresses toward NATO's defence commitments

On 08 April, *Deutsche Welle* reported on Germany's commitments to NATO's defence expenditure guidelines. In 2014, NATO members pledged to devote two per cent of their GDP to national security within ten years. Germany was progressively approaching that level but remained one of the large economies, still falling short until 2021. On 27 February, Chancellor Olaf Scholz vowed to rectify the shortfall, beginning with an additional EUR 100 billion for the armed forces. Another NATO expenditure guideline where Germany has been lagging was that its members had to devote 20 per cent of their yearly military spending to "major new equipment." However, recently, Scholz initiated plans to replace its Tornado fleet with the US-made F35 fighters and import missile systems and drones from Israel. ("[William Noah Glucroft, 'Germany checks one NATO box, leaves another open'](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 08 April 2022)

First democratically elected German chancellor staged a Watergate scandal

On 08 April, independent researchers found researchers have found that Germany's first democratically elected chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, spied on his political rivals through the country's foreign intelligence service to maintain an upper hand for almost a decade. His collaboration with the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) chief, Reinhard Gehlen, helped him with inside information about the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Siegfried Ortloff, the SPD's executive secretary at the time, acted as Gehlen's informant, providing approximately 500 memos between 1953 and 1962, proving a tactical and strategic advantage to Adenauer. Klaus-Dietmar Henke, speaking on behalf of the research group looking into the matter said that this was eerily similar to Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal, only, unlike Nixon's efforts, this infiltration was a successful one. Henke says "...his chummy

arrangement with the BND against the SPD confirms in the most drastic way possible that he was also a brutally callous power-seeker.”(Philip Oltermann, [“Germany’s Watergate: 1950s chancellor used spy agency to infiltrate rival party,”](#) *The Guardian*, 08 April 2022)

Raids across the country for suspected neo-Nazi groups

On 06 April, Germany’s federal police raided residences and meeting places of suspected neo-Nazi groups throughout the country. The raids primarily targeted the neo-Nazi groups Atomwaffen Division (AWD), Combat 18 (C18), and Knockout 51 (K51). The State prosecutor’s office stated four suspects were arrested, including the leader of K51. AWD is a neo-Nazi terror group made up of loosely organised terror cells that began in the US. At least five homicides have been traced to members of the US organization. C18 was initially formed in the UK in the 1990s as the far-right British National Party’s street-fighting wing. They took part in neo-Nazi rallies and far-right music festivals. K51 was targeted for attempting to establish a “Nazi hood” in Eisenach, Thuringia, in eastern Germany. The group was labelled a criminal organization by Germany’s Attorney General. (Alex Berry, [“Germany conducts nationwide raids on neo-Nazi groups,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 06 April 2022)

30-year-old case of racist arson attack on a refugee home

On 04 April, a man was apprehended by German Federal Prosecutors for the arson of an asylum house 30 years ago. The prosecutors had discovered new leads after three decades, suggesting that the man had done the act with an extremist intention. This violent act of racism had caused the death of a 27-year-old man named Samuel Yeboah from Ghana and injured two others, while 18 other people escaped unharmed. The day prior to the arson, on 18 September 1991, the suspect was seen discussing with his extreme right-wing

acquaintances about the series of racist attacks on the Eastern German town of Hoyerswerda and how a similar act of violence could be done in their town of Saarlouis. ([“Germany: Far-right extremist arrested over fatal 1991 attack on refugee home,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 04 April 2022)

GREECE

24-hour labour strike held in Athens due to inflation

On 06 April, the labourers went on a strike against the increasing price and decreasing wage in front of the Parliament in Athens. The two largest labour unions consisting of 2.5 million workers, came together to strike against the growing inflation in the country. A courier worker said: “Our life now is just being in debt,” as basic living standards were unaffordable. The increase in energy and housing prices was induced by the sanctions and the war in Ukraine. As a result, Greece’s consumer inflation surged up to 7.2 per cent in February. The General Confederation of Greek Workers demanded an increase of the gross monthly minimum wage up to 13 per cent. However, the government only increased it to two per cent. The government further said it would increase the gross monthly minimum wage by 01 May. (Phoebe Fronista and Karolina Tagaris, [“Thousands protest as Greek workers strike over high prices, low wages,”](#) *Reuters*, 06 April 2022)

ITALY

Children can now include the surnames of both the parents

On 27 April, the Constitutional Court of Italy ruled that infants should be given both parents' surnames, overturning the traditional practices of naming all newborns after their fathers. The court stated that the current practice is “discriminatory and harmful” to the child's identity. The child's parents may also mutually agree to designate only one of their surnames to the child. The court called on the parliament to change the law regarding this. The landmark decision

stems from a case brought by a family with three children in Potenza, southern Basilicata province. The first two children were given the mother's surname, but the third was given the father's surname by default because he was born after his parent's marriage. The parents objected because they wanted the boy to have the same surname as his two sisters, which was the mother's surname. ("Doubling up: Italian children should get both parents' surnames, court says," *Reuters*, 27 April 2022)

Italy new rule to reduce air conditioning temperature in public buildings

On 21 April, Italy's foreign minister announced a new rule restricting the school and public buildings to maintain the temperature of air conditioners below 25 degrees Celsius. The step of energy cutting is termed as "operation thermostat." With this step, the government estimates to cut down 45 per cent of its natural gas. The decision was welcomed by the minister for public administration, stating it as a positive sign and saying it will result in reducing the energy cost of the public office buildings by 57 per cent. A representative of the Five Star Movement said: "It's correct that the public administration is setting a good example, cutting waste and raising awareness among citizens about rationalising consumption. It's a simple way to contribute and reduce dependency on gas." ("Italy puts 25C limit on air conditioning as Ukraine crisis forces energy rationing," *The Guardian*, 21 April 2022)

LITHUANIA

Counter offensives prepared against potential attacks from Russia

On 13 April, the prime minister of Lithuania, Ingrida Šimonytė stated that they were ready to counter any potential attack from Russia. Previously, the head of Lithuania's border guard, Rustamas Liubajevs, said that the Kremlin might deliberately cause a migrant crisis by

sending people through the EU's eastern border. Šimonytė raised concerns about a hybrid attack citing the previous attempts of Russia and Belarus to damage power grids and IT infrastructure through hacking, dissemination of information and influx of illegal migration. ("Lithuania ready for Russia's potential hybrid attacks – PM," *Baltic Times*, 13 April 2022)

HUNGARY

EU's rule of law rejected by the majority in Hungary

On 12 April, following the latest election in Hungary, the EU is insistent on upholding the bloc's Rule of Law in the country. Prime minister Viktor Orban won his re-election with an overwhelming victory. The EU, which is on bad terms with Orban, is determined to uphold its rule of law in Hungary. The Hungarian justice minister Judit Varga said that the EU should not concentrate on matters such as these when there is a war going on. She also said that everyone should work together and face the crisis. But the EU is adamant about practising the rule of law even if the majority of the country had elected a government that disregards it. Orban hasn't let refugees from Ukraine into his country. Hungary's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war has received a lot of criticism, especially from its ally Poland. ("EU determined to uphold rule of law following Orban's re-election in Hungary," *Euronews*, 13 April 2022)

Parliamentary elections and referendum held simultaneously

On 03 April, parliamentary elections began in Hungary. The incumbent Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, is seeking re-election to a fourth consecutive term in what is expected to be his toughest contest. His rival Péter Márki-Zay was elected by six opposition parties to represent them all and to contest against Orban. Orban has been in conflict with the European Commission for a long time. He is criticized for having steered Hungary away

from European values, radically reforming the legal system, undermining the rule of law, and implementing anti-migration policies. Along with the parliamentary elections, a referendum on legislation that restricts the teaching of homosexuality and transgender topics in schools will be also be polled. (Rahl Ssan, [“Polls open in Hungarian election as Orban seeks another term,” Euronews](#), 03 April 2022; Rita Palfi [“Hungary election: Who’s running? What are the key issues? Will Viktor Orban be waving goodbye?,” Euronews](#), 04 April 2022)

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam allocates funds to prevent youngsters from drugs and crimes

On 26 April, justice minister Dilan Yeşilgöz mentioned that the Netherlands had committed EUR 82 million annually to 15 municipalities to protect and prevent youngsters from involving in a life of crime. In addition, local authorities will be allocated funds as they work to develop specific schemes addressing these issues. Furthermore, the government aimed to provide youngsters with employment and income opportunities while severely reprimanding them if they moved to a life of crime. Yeşilgöz stated: "Only through an intensive person-centered approach can we stop the intimidating pressure of drug traffickers on our children, pupils, and young adults." ([“Gov’t invests millions in protecting young people from life of crime,” NLtimes](#), 26 April 2022)

Parliament approves to equip unarmed military drones with weapons

On 21 April, the lower house of the parliament said it supported the call from the Commander of Armed forces to arm military drones. The MQ-9 Reaper drones were intended for surveillance over land and sea and were recently acquired. The lower parliament approved the resolution in a majority as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine changed the members’ perception of its use. However, the cabinet still has to approve the proposal. ([“Parliament supports](#)

[arming unmanned military drone,” NL Times](#), 21 April 2022)

Labour shortage stumbles energy efficiency

On 17 April, ABN bank said the ongoing labour crisis is a stumbling barrier for the Netherlands' energy efficiency goals. More than a third of job openings in the renewable energy sector, such as wind and solar power, remain vacant. This includes a scarcity of installers capable of handling heat pumps and solar panels. In addition, roofing, plumbing, heating, and gas and water pipe fitting technicians are in shortage. According to the bank, the labour market shortfall has never been this severe. More than one-fifth of all positions had no personnel available. There is virtually no staff available for 36 per cent of the professions related to the energy transition. ([“Labor market tightness hindering energy transition: ABN Amro,” NL Times](#), 17 April 2022)

NORWAY

Norway’s prime minister apologises for a law that criminalized homosexuality

On 21 April Norway’s government issues an official apology for the law that criminalized homosexuality. Even though the law was scrapped in 1972, this apology that comes 50 years later was welcomed by the LGBTQ community and activists in the country. Prime minister Jonas Gahr Støre said: "Criminalising and prosecuting people for their love life, treating [medically] healthy people, depriving them of career and work opportunities are serious violations of our values." Norway incidentally was the second country to recognise civil partnerships for same-sex couples in 1993. Same-sex marriage was also given the same status as heterosexual marriages in 2009. ([“Norway issues formal apology 50 years after decriminalising homosexuality,” Euronews](#), 21 April 2022)

POLAND

Air traffic controllers dispute with the government temporarily resolved

On 28 April, air traffic controllers reached an agreement with the government in a dispute over pay and conditions at work. The air traffic controllers' notice period has been extended until 10 July under the agreement's provisions, while the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency (PANS) will begin an organizational audit and restructuring. The parties will continue to debate over salary and work conditions. Travel disruption was anticipated to begin on 01 May, the day following the end of a notice period for air traffic controllers who earlier had chosen to resign rather than accept new regulations. The new regulation was an effect of a decree passed by the government to limit the number of flights flying into Warsaw's two airports. ("Poland dodges flight chaos as controllers reach interim deal," Reuters, 28 April 2022)

SPAIN

Largest raid of Illegal stuffed animals in Europe

On 10 April, Spanish police conducted the largest taxidermy haul that Europe has seen. The Guardia Civil seized around 1000 specimens of illegal stuffed animals at an industrial warehouse in Betera, Valencia. The collection included extinct animals like scimitar oryx, endangered species like the Bengal tiger, and as well as other animals such as polar bears, lions, etc. The collection was found by Valencia police's Nature Protection Team, who were investigating because of a suspicion. The worth of the collection is estimated to be around 29 million EUR (32 million USD). (Jessica Jones, "Lions, tigers and bears - Spain seizes one of Europe's biggest taxidermy hauls," Reuters, 11 April 2022)

SERBIA

Serbian Progressive Party projected to win the second term

On 03 April, incumbent President Aleksandar Vucic of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) was projected to get re-elected for his second five-year term in the upcoming presidential elections.

Vucic served as Defence Minister, Prime Minister, and President for the last ten years. After casting his vote, Vucic said: "I believe in a significant and convincing victory, and I believe everyone will get what they deserve, according to how much they worked and, understandably, in accordance with the expectations of the citizens for the future." He further promised to keep Serbia on the path of "stability, tranquillity and peace." ("Serbia: Vucic projected to win presidential election," Deutsche Welle, 03 April 2022)

SLOVENIA

Liberal Golob leads against three-time president Jansa in a partial count

On 24 April, prime minister Janez Jansa of Slovenia is likely to lose his reelection to Robert Golob. Jansa who has been a three-time prime minister of Slovenia has found himself in a race against the newcomer Robert Golob of the Freedom Movement (GS). Robert Golob who heads the small liberal party had almost 33 per cent of the vote compared to Jansa's Slovenia Democratic Party's 25 per cent. The partial results showed that the conservative Jansa is being ousted by the liberal Golob. Observers state that neither party will receive a valid amount of votes, making a coalition government a high probability. Jansa, who is aged 63, has faced a lot of criticism over his moves to suspend funding to the national news agency and also regarding rule of law in Brussels. These criticisms and corruption scandals as well are hurting his chance at reelection. Meanwhile, Golob, who is aged 55, is a political newcomer who advocates for environmental concerns. ("Slovenia: Newcomer set to oust right-wing premier Jansa," Deutsche Welle, 26 April 2022)

SPAIN

Citizen Lab confirms the use of Pegasus by the government

On 19 April, leaders of the movement for Catalan independence accused the government of Spain of spying on them by

using the Pegasus software. A report by Citizen Lab found that the software was installed on the phones of 60 leaders between 2017 and 2020, during the low point of relations between Barcelona and Madrid. Former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont said: We have been spied on in a huge and illegal manner through software that only states can possess.” Puigdemont accused incumbent prime minister Pedro Sanchez and former Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy of spying on him and their leaders belonging to the movement. ([“Catalan independence leaders accuse Spain of mass surveillance campaign,” Deutsche Welle](#), 19 April 2022)

SWEDEN

Violence erupts over alleged burning of Quran

On 17 April, riots erupted for the fourth day in several cities that were triggered by right-winged extremist Rasmus Paludan who claimed to have burned the Quran. Paludan’s anti-immigration and anti-Islamic Stram Kurs (Hard Line) movement supporters threatened to burn copies of the Quran during the rallies. Paludan declared to hold another rally despite the police’s denial, which led to counter-demonstrators in the area against it. As the violence escalated, many vehicles were set on fire, and at least 11 individuals were arrested. Sweden’s justice minister, Morgan Johansson, urged the rioters to go home and labeled Paludan a “right-wing extremist fool, whose only goal is to drive violence and divisions.” ([“Swedish police shoot 3 during fresh riots,” Deutsche Welle](#), 17 April 2022)

SWITZERLAND

Authorities approve cannabis pilot project

On 19 April, Switzerland approved the first cannabis pilot project and allowed a few hundred people from Basel to participate. Currently, growing, importing, producing and selling cannabis is banned in the country. The federal office of public

health said that the project would help people understand “alternative regulatory forms,” that could be used as the basis for future legislation. The people consuming the substance would be regularly questioned, and their physical and mental health will be checked. However, if the cannabis from the pilot projects is sold, the people involved will be penalised and taken out of the projects. ([“Swiss authorities clear 1st cannabis sale pilot project,” Associated Press](#), 19 April 2022)

Underground bunkers to be prepared for nuclear fallout

On 03 April, Switzerland is set to prepare its nuclear fallout bunkers built during the Cold war citing tensions in Ukraine. The country has promised that every person will be provided with a sheltered area if necessary. There are over nine million places throughout 365,000 private and public shelters in the country of 8.6 million residents. The large proportion of nuclear bunkers in Switzerland is used for various purposes, including military barracks and temporary housing for asylum seekers. The Swiss authorities demanded that they be emptied and converted back to nuclear bunkers within five days. (Charlotte Lam, [“Nuclear bunkers for all: Switzerland is ready as international tensions mount,” Euronews](#), 03 April 2022)

THE UK

Inquiry by UK’s judge suggests the Virgin Islands be ruled directly by London

On 29 April, a critical inquiry led by judge Gary Hickinbottom on the governance of the UK’s overseas territory - the British Virgin Islands, recommended dissolving its government and to be directly ruled by London. Queen Elizabeth’s representative in the UK’s overseas territory, Governor John Rankin, ordered the investigation in 2021 to probe into “corruption, misuse of office, and other significant dishonesty” in the territory’s governance. Every year, politicians and ministries misuse state revenue without following the necessary

procedures. The investigation also discovered substantial dishonesty in the sale of public property and the abuse of appointment selections. The UK's foreign secretary Liz Truss stated that the report "shows clearly that substantial legislative and constitutional change is required to restore the standards of governance that the people of the British Virgin Islands are entitled to." (Brian Ellsworth and William James, "British Virgin Islands should be temporarily returned to UK rule, inquiry says," *Reuters*, 30 April 2022)

The European Causeway stranded in the Irish Sea

On 26 April, a P&O Ferries passenger ship called "The European Causeway" was stranded in the Irish Sea for two hours carrying passengers. The ship departed at 1200 hrs BST and was set to arrive at the port of Larne by 1400 hrs. However, the ship experienced a mechanical failure at 1330 hrs, resulting in a loss of power to the propellers. The authorities informed the coast guard, and a tug with three lifeboats was sent to the scene. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) said the ferry was restored to power and escorted to the dock at Larne before 1600hrs. The company stated that there were no injuries to the people on board, and a full investigation will be conducted on the port. (Joanna Partridge, "P&O Ferries ship left stranded in Irish Sea for two hours after breakdown," *The Guardian*, 26 April 2022)

Boris Johnson visits Modi amidst rising scrutiny of "party gate" scandal

On 21 April, Boris Johnson has flown to India to meet with prime minister Modi, as investigations about his "partygate scandal" intensify in the UK. Johnson and Modi who will be meeting on 22 April will be discussing the Ukraine War, and a potential two-way investment deal worth more than EUR 1 billion, with the possibility of creating 11,000 jobs in Britain. This visit comes at a time when

the police are investigating alleged instances of breaches to the lockdown rules by the prime minister and government offices. Johnson however said: "I don't want this thing to endlessly go on. But, I have absolutely nothing, frankly, to hide." ("Boris Johnson seeks trade deal with India as 'partygate' scrutiny intensifies," *Deutsche Welle*, 21 April 2022)

Five protestors from Northern Ireland were arrested under the terrorism act

On 19 April, at the Easter parade linked to dissident republicans, five men were arrested under the terrorism act in Londonderry. The parade was planned by the National Republican Commemoration Committee, which had held the parade on behalf of the anti-agreement republican party, Saoradh. Saoradh is also linked to the New Irish Republican Army. The demonstrators attacked the police with petrol bombs during their operation at the City Cemetery. Concerning the arrests, the police said: "Police monitored the event closely and, at what was considered to be an appropriate point, took action to secure evidence and make arrests." ("Londonderry: Five Terrorism Act arrests at parade," *BBC*, 19 April 2022)

70 Extinction Rebellion protestors detained

On 17 April, 70 demonstrators participating in the Extinction Rebellion protests across the UK were arrested. Six were arrested for scaling and glueing themselves to an oil tanker at Hyde Park; Olympic gold medal-winning canoeist Etienne Stott and sailor Laura Baldwin were among them. Dozens more were arrested for climbing the marble arch structure and attaching a green banner that read: "end fossil fuels now." The protestors also waved flags and set off flares that resulted in a public order direction to clear the roads. The protests on 16 April were a continuation of the 15 April protests where they had blocked

London's busy streets. ("[Extinction Rebellion: Seventy arrested at climate change protests](#)," *BBC*, 17 April 2022)

Shared Prosperity Fund is far behind the EU's funding levels

On 14 April, criticisms arose over the UK's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) designed to replace EU grants which were terminated due to Brexit. The government's Shared Prosperity Fund will only give EUR 2.6 billion over the next three years and will not meet the previous EU funding level of EUR 1.5 billion per year until 2025. Think tanks and politicians have condemned the settlement, while the Welsh government claims it would lose more than EUR one billion in funding over the next three years. According to the think tank IPPR North, compared to the average EU funding, the Shared Prosperity Fund dropped by 43 per cent. The director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, Henri Murison, said: "These funds helped young people find work, supported small businesses and backed vital medical research – cutting it will have catastrophic consequences for our economy." (Josh Halliday, "[An outrage': Tories' post-Brexit fund will not match EU grants until 2025](#)," *The Guardian*, 14 April 2022)

Prime minister Boris declined to step down over Downing party accusations

On 13 April, prime minister Boris Johnson, his wife Carrie, and chancellor Rishi Sunak were fined for violating the lockdown restrictions of 2021. Opposition parties accused Johnson and Sunak of lying to the public about their presence at the Downing Street event. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer and the first ministers of Scotland and Wales called for their resignations. Johnson apologized and said he felt "an even greater sense of obligation to deliver on the priorities of the British people." Sunak also responded by stating: "I understand that for figures in public office, the rules must be applied stringently in order to maintain public

confidence." However, they declined to step down from their posts. (Jennifer Scott, "[Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak reject calls to resign over lockdown fines](#)," *BBC*, 13 April 2022)

Institutions to develop a prototype to control the Square Kilometre Array(SKA)

On 11 April, institutes in the UK stated that they were planning to build a prototype "brain" to control the world's largest radio telescope that has antennas spread across South Africa and Australia. The software built will be first trialled in smaller subsets, and later be deployed across the network. RAL Space astronomy group leader Dr Chris Pearson mentioned the computing challenges as the SKA comprises 197 dishes and 130,000 antennas. The UK's Science & Technology Facilities Council has been a leading contributor to the SKA Organization as it had committed 15 per cent of the total cost for the years 2021 to 2030 for its construction and the initial operations. (Jonathan Amos, "[SKA: UK to build software brain for giant radio telescope](#)," *BBC*, 11 April 2022)

Member of Parliament, David Amess' killer, convicted

On 11 April, Ali Harbi Ali, a follower of the Islamic State, was found guilty of murdering the Conservative MP David Amess. Ali stabbed Amess 30 times outside a church in October 2021. He was charged with murder and preparing acts of terrorism as he claimed that he targeted the MP for his vote towards airstrikes on Syria. However, he denied the charges, pleaded not guilty and said he did not regret murdering the MP. He further mentioned: "If I thought I did anything wrong, I wouldn't have done it." The death of Amess has also led the government to question the personal security of British MPs. (Esther Webber, "[Islamic State terrorist convicted of British MP's murder](#)," *POLITICO*, 11 April 2022)

Coloured representation missing in Commonwealth Games

On 11 April, the committee for Commonwealth Games were accused of excluding the people of colour in their executive position. The committee consisting mostly of white complained about not including the people of colour in any of the decisions taken for the Commonwealth Games. For the game scheduled to take place in July in Birmingham, people voiced their concerns over their representation. They said that any petitions or letters sent to the Commonwealth Games have gone unnoticed, as no one is taking any action about the issue. The people want to showcase the vibrant nature of the city and want to reflect diversity. The committee replied that they will look into the issue. (Jessica Murray, [“Commonwealth Games cultural festival accused of sidelining people of colour,”](#) *The Guardian*, 11 April, 2022)

Protests against the use of fossil fuels wreak havoc in London

On 08 April, two activists dangled themselves from the Tower Bridge, using suspension cords, and hung a banner that said "End fossil fuels now." This led the police to close the bridge till midday and arrest four people. The police also had to take action and arrest about 100 people amongst the ones protesting at a site in Kingsbury, an oil depot in Warwickshire in the last week, for criminal damage. The police spokesperson said, "We will always respect people's right to peaceful protest, but we are committed to taking action against those who break the law and significantly impact the lives and livelihoods of others." These protests were staged by the Extinction Rebellion (XR) and the Just Stop Oil Coalition, two activist organizations trying to protest against the use of fossil fuels in London, through peaceful non-violent protests, which have already been conducted in several areas across the country. ([“Kingsbury oil depot protests lead to more than 100 arrests,”](#) *BBC*, 08 April 2022; [“Tower Bridge reopens after Extinction](#)

[Rebellion protest,”](#) *BBC*, 08 April 2022)

Disputed Cambo oil fields to be developed by Ithaca Energy

On 07 April, Ithaca Energy agreed to acquire Siccar Point Energy, the disputed Cambo oil field's major stakeholder, for USD 1.5 billion. The new company has proposed to develop Cambo and Rosebank oil fields off Shetland. CEO of Ithaca, Alan Bruce stated that developing them was a "huge opportunity to not only help secure the UK's energy future for at least another quarter of a century but also to create thousands of direct and indirect jobs in the process." However, the Scottish government said that the project should not be approved concerning obligations to follow the Paris climate agreement. ([“Cambo: Ithaca Energy pledges to develop controversial oil field,”](#) *BBC*, 08 April 2022)

New report on fracking to be drafted

On 05 April, the government ordered a new scientific report on the impact of fracking. Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng granted the British Geological Survey (BGS) three months to review any modifications to the facts around the contentious practise. Despite concerns about the security of access and increased energy prices, they asserted that fracking will provide the country with a "competitive and stable source of energy." The move comes ahead of the government's energy supply strategy, which will be released this week. Only one fracking site has ever been operational in the UK, which was shut down in 2019 following a report by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA). The OGA imposed the indefinite prohibition after discovering that estimating the technique's likelihood or size of earthquakes was impossible. ([“Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng orders scientific review of fracking impact,”](#) *BBC*, 05 April 2022)

Channel Four broadcaster to be privatised

On 04 April, the UK government decided

to privatise Channel four, a publicly-owned but commercially financed broadcaster. The broadcaster has opposed such a move, claiming that there is no proof that the privatization would be able to better fulfil its mission of providing challenging and distinctive programmes to those underserved by competitors. And expressed disappointment that the government had not acknowledged the public interest concerns that had been emphasized. The Channel further stated they would “continue to commission much-loved programmes from the independent sector across the UK that represent and celebrate every aspect of British life as well as increase its contribution to society, while maintaining ownership by the public.” ([“British government set to sell broadcaster Channel 4,” Reuters, 05 April 2022](#))

Treasury department set to regulate and recognise Stablecoins as accepted form of payment

On 04 April, the UK treasury announced to regulate a few cryptocurrencies like Stablecoins and asked the Royal Mint to create Non-Fungible Tokens. To gain users' trust in adopting digital currencies, Stablecoins will be recognized as accepted means of payment. Stablecoins value is derived from traditional currencies or assets like gold, therefore are stable and less volatile. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak Stated: "We want to see the businesses of tomorrow - and the jobs they create - here in the UK, and by regulating effectively we can give them the confidence they need to think and invest long-term." Sunak said he desired to make the UK a global hotspot for crypto asset technology by firm control of the emerging sector. (Michael Race and Daniel Thomas, [“Cryptocurrency: UK Treasury to regulate some stablecoins,” BBC, 05 April 2022](#))

Activists arrested following blockade of oil terminals

On 03 April, over 80 climate change protesters were arrested by police for blocking the oil terminals against the UK's increased oil production. Activists from the Just Stop Oil group obstructed Titan Truck Park in Grays, which held more than 100 oil tankers to serve three major oil terminals in the region. In protest, activists climbed on top of tankers at Navigator Oil Terminal in Thurrock. ExxonMobil UK, one of the country's major privately-owned underground oil pipeline distribution networks, had to shut down three of its terminals. Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Nolan said: “This is an extremely dangerous situation for the protesters to be in. We are being clear on the risks, and are continuing to engage with them to try and bring this to a conclusion.” ([“Essex Police make 83 arrests as oil terminals blocked,” BBC, 03 April 2022](#), [“Just Stop Oil: More than 200 arrested after oil terminal protests,” BBC, 02 April 2022](#))

Fines to be collected for Downing parties.

On 01 April, the UK officials started to collect fines after the Downing Street party probe. The fines were imposed on parties conducted during the lockdown restrictions on 18 June 2020 at Downing Street offices and residences. A few of the parties were attended and organized by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The incident had previously jeopardized Johnson's position, with members of his party demanding his resignation and plummeting confidence in his leadership. However, as the public attention was directed toward the war in Ukraine, many opposition leaders suppressed their calls to focus on the developments in eastern Europe. ([“UK officials begin to receive 50 pound fines following probe into Downing Street parties - Sky,” Reuters, 01 April 2022](#))

Activists halt the UK's refineries

On 01 April, climate activists group

Extinction Rebellion and Just Stop Oil blocked ten oil refineries in London, Birmingham, and Southampton in protest of climate change. A spokesperson for the group, Andrew Smith stated: "We will be more disruptive than ever, and we will be impossible to ignore." To avoid the worst scenarios of global warming destruction projected by scientists, the Extinction Rebellion is calling for an emergency intervention from governments and a massive shift from polluting industries. Another activist group present at the protest, Just Stop Oil, describes itself as a coalition of groups working together to end the exploration, exploitation, and production of fossil fuels. (Andrew Macaskill and Muvija M, "[Climate activists plan daily protests after blocking 10 UK oil terminals](#)," *Reuters*, 01 April 2022)

Life imprisonment for the Turkish rights activist Osman Kavala

On 25 April, Osman Kavala was charged with life imprisonment with no possibility of parole for espionage and planning to topple the government. He was already detained for five years before the sentence. The human rights activist was found guilty because he was involved in the 2013 Gezi protests and the 2016 coup attempt. He was already acquitted of these charges in 2020 but was again apprehended for allegedly providing financial aid to both the incidents. The western nations view this judgement on Kavala as an inhumane and unjust judiciary decision. They also speculated that it was a crackdown on Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's critics. The European nations including Germany and the US have openly condemned the sentence given by Turkey's judicial system in this case. ("[Turkey: Rights activist Osman Kavala sentenced to life in prison](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 April 2022)

UKRAINE

Major cyber-attack on power grids averted

On 12 April, deputy chair of the state service of special communications, Viktor Zoha, revealed that they narrowly escaped a major cyber attack on the country's power grids by the Russians. Hackers attempted to shut down substations at one of the country's primary energy firms, which may have resulted in blackouts for two million people. Zoha stated that the attack was planned for 08 April. Researchers suspect Sandworm, a Russian military group, of the attack. Sandworm is also accused of outages in several Ukrainian towns and cities in 2021. Although Russia denies responsibility for the cyber-attacks, the US and EU have officially accused Sandworm of both events, and cyber authorities have named several suspects. (Joe Tidy, "[Ukrainian power grid 'lucky' to withstand Russian cyber-attack](#)," *BBC*, 13 April 2022)

VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis calls for an Easter truce between Ukraine and Russia

On 10 April, Pope Francis called for an Easter truce in Ukraine and questioned the worth of raising a victory flag "on a mound of debris" in an apparent allusion to Russia. He said: "Put the weapons down! Let An Easter truce started. But not to re-arm and resume combat but a truce to reach peace through real negotiations open to some sacrifices for the good of the people." Pope Francis spoke at the end of a Palm Sunday service in St. Peter's Square for about 50,000 people. This is the first time the public has been allowed to attend the service since 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. A few individuals in the congregation wore Ukrainian flags on the tips of their olive branches, and a woman who recited one of the prayers near the altar was clothed in the blue and yellow of the flag. ("[Philip Pullelle, 'On Palm Sunday, pope calls for Easter truce in Ukraine'](#)," *Reuters*, 10 April 2022)

REGIONAL

EU's border agency chief resigns over

claims of misconduct towards refugees

On 29 April, the head of the EU's border agency Frontex, Fabrice Leggeri, resigned following reports of misconduct and complicity in illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers. Humanitarian aid groups had accused Frontex of illegally returning migrants and refugees across EU borders or turning a blind eye when national authorities carried out "pushbacks" themselves. Such allegations have centred in Greece's land and marine borders with Turkey. The EU's anti-fraud body, OLAF, spent over a year investigating the reports and is expected to reveal its findings soon. Other incidents of pushbacks have been documented by human rights NGOs in Poland, along the Belarusian border, and in Spain and Croatia. In light of Leggeri's resignation and claims of human rights violations, the European Parliament's Left group has called for a debate on Frontex and its mandate to be held next week during plenary sessions. (Alice Tidey, "Frontex chief resigns over misconduct and human rights violations probe," Euronews, 29 April 2022)

Finland and Sweden conduct a joint naval exercise

On 22 April, it was reported that the navies of Finland and Sweden have jointly conducted anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises in the Gulf of Finland. This was part of a cross border training exercise, in order to improve international interoperability and to train the personnel as well. This might be all the more relevant given how both the countries are contemplating joining NATO. Finland's Commander Toni Joutsia, who led the exercise said: "The exercise is a part of the close cooperation conducted by Finland with Sweden. Participating in international training activities is important, because it demonstrates, maintains and develops our national defence." ("Finnish Navy Trains ASW With Swedish Submarine," Naval News, 22 April, 2022)

Norway-Poland pipeline construction to be restarted

On 13 April, Norway-Poland pipeline construction was resumed to reduce the imports of Russian oil and gas. The construction of the pipeline was initially stopped as it was considered harmful to the environment. The pipeline is expected to become functional from 01 January 2023. According to the project manager: "It's also about having the gas in the Danish system, but above all to help the gas system of our good neighbours and Polish friends." After Russia, Norway is the second-largest gas supplier and this means, no more exporting of Poland's gas to western Europe. It might help Poland, but Norway's gas exports to the UK and Germany will reduce. ("Amid war in Ukraine, work resumes on Poland-Norway gas pipeline," Euronews, 16 April 2022)

Netherlands sending patriot missiles to Slovakia under NATO treaty

On 14 April, the Dutch Patriot anti-aircraft missile system was sent to Slovakia to protect the NATO treaty area and its population against possible missile strikes. The Dutch have also sent 150 soldiers to Slovakia that are to be stationed alongside German soldiers at the Sliac airbase. After Russia invaded Ukraine, these anti-aircraft systems were transported to Slovakia for precautionary measures. Slovakia also showed its support for Ukraine by sending S-300 anti-aircraft systems to defend itself from Russian forces. The Netherlands would defend Slovakia with the Patriot air defence system. ("Dutch Patriot missile systems heading to Slovakia," NL Times, 14 April 2022)

Poland and the countries in the Baltics display their support for Ukraine

On 13 April, presidents of the Baltic countries and Poland were scheduled to meet president Zelenskyy of Ukraine in a bid to show their support. The press office of the Latvian president, Egils Levits, released the statement regarding the

meeting only at the last moment. Former Latvian president Valdis Zatlers mentioned that these kinds of meetings are announced only at the last minute to avoid any interruptions and security threats to the presidents. The presidents discussed the best ways to help Ukraine against Putin and Russia. They also discussed their support to let Ukraine join NATO and how the EU should impose tougher sanctions against Russia. They showed strength in unity and stood up against Russia without any fear. ("[Baltic and Polish presidents to meet with Zelenskyy](#)," *The Baltic Times*, 14 April 2022)

L'Occitane stores remain open in Russia, amid the war in Ukraine

On 14 April, French cosmetics brand L'Occitane decided to keep its retail stores open in Russia amid the war in Ukraine. Hundreds of international brands, including L'Oreal and Estee Lauder, have already shut down their stores and stopped selling online in Russia in protest of the war. Customers have criticised L'Occitane's decision and have called for a boycott of the brand, which is marketed in over 3,085 retail shops globally and had EUR 1.5 billion in sales in 2021. However, the firm said it strongly condemned Russia's "unjustified and unprovoked" invasion, drastically reduced its business and suspended all new investment plans and exports. ("Beth Timmins, "[Beauty firm L'Occitane keeps Russian stores open](#)," *BBC*, 14 April 2022)

Allotment of homes for Ukrainian women refugees to be scrutinized

On 14 April, the UN stated that the UK should take care of the allotment of hosts to the refugees who opt for the scheme Homes for Ukraine. The UN further added that the matchups were being exploited by single men trying to get innocent and helpless Ukrainian women and children. Louise Calvey, the head of safeguarding at Refugee Action from UNHCR, said that the scheme could become tinder for sex

traffickers. In response to the UN, the UK's government said that it conducted robust security and background checks of the hosts. The matchups should be done appropriately, and women and children would feel safer if they were to stay with a family or a couple. Most women refugees fall prey to exploitative men using social media. The process of immigration is seen to be slow, and the visas are also being given at a slower rate. (Hamzah Abbas, "[Homes for Ukraine: Don't match female refugees with single men, UN says](#)," *BBC*, 14 April 2022)

The EU plans to revamp roadways and railways to improve military movements

On 08 April, the war in Ukraine highlighted the need for the EU to reverse its neglect of roads and railways. The EU met with many hindrances to transport its tanks and other military vehicles across the continent as it faced many bottlenecks and had to buttress its tracks and bridges. A former commander of the US Army in Europe said: "The further east you go, the infrastructure does not support the heavyweight of U.S., German, British and Dutch tanks, it's the bridges." The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) had earlier allocated EUR 1.7 billion to improve military mobility, which was a reduced budget from the EUR 6.5 billion that was initially proposed. The countries agreed to bring the issue of project funding up in the next round of meetings to be held in May. (Hanne Cokelaere and Joshua Posaner, "[Europe's roads and railways aren't fit for a fight with Russia](#)," *POLITICO*, 08 April 2022)

Spain's prime minister visit Rabat to begin a new phase of relations with Morocco

On 07 April, Spain's prime minister Pedro Sanchez and Morocco's King Mohammed VI agreed to improve their strained relations on migration and initiate a new phase of cooperation. The Royal Palace of Morocco said the two leaders "reiterated their willingness to usher in a new phase,

based on mutual respect, mutual trust, permanent consultation, and frank and faithful cooperation." The two countries' leaders pledged to engage in negotiations on the demarcation of Atlantic sea borders and airspace management. Furthermore, they will be reinforcing cooperation on migration, economy, and energy. Morocco also announced plans to import liquid natural gas by re-establishing an idle pipeline. ("Morocco, Spain mend ties after change in policy on Western Sahara," *Deutsche Welle*, 08 March 2022)

Malta ordered to terminate the golden passport scheme

On 06 April, the European Commission notified Malta to end its investor citizenship scheme, also known as the "Golden Passport." The Commission believes that awarding EU citizenship in exchange for pre-determined expenditures or investments, without any genuine connection to the Member State, is unacceptable under EU law. Malta has been given two months to reply to the notification; an unsatisfactory response may direct the matter to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Commission stated: "Every person that holds the nationality of an EU Member State is at the same time an EU citizen. EU citizenship automatically gives the right to free movement, access to the EU internal market, and the right to vote and be elected in European and local elections." ("EU threatens legal action over Malta's 'golden passport' scheme," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 April 2022)

The EU's Top diplomat, Josep Borell urges Europe to send more arms to Ukraine

On 06 April, Vice-president of the EU, Josep Borell, exclaimed about the wide expenditure gap between Russia and Ukraine. Borell said that the EU had paid EUR 35 billion to Russia for energy since the war began and only EUR one billion to fund Ukraine's defence. He stated: "We

have to continue arming Ukraine. We need less rounds of applause and more assistance," urging Europe to send more arms to Ukraine. Borell regretted that the EU had grown reliant on fossil fuel sources from oppressive governments on its borders and emphasized that Europe's energy independence was contingent upon renewable energy. ("EU has spent €35bn on Russian energy since the war began and just €1bn on aid to Ukraine - Borrell," *Euronews*, 06 April 2022)

ECDC recalls chocolate products citing salmonella contamination

On 06 April, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) further investigated the rise of salmonella cases in multiple countries linked to chocolate products. The outbreak is characterised by an exceptionally high number of children being hospitalised, some with severe symptoms. The first case was reported in the UK in January. As a result, product recalls have been issued in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the UK to avoid the consumption of possibly contaminated Salmonella products. The outbreak comes within days after French health officials connected Nestlé's Buitoni frozen pizza brand to severe E.coli contamination cases. ("EU officials investigate salmonella cases linked to Kinder chocolate eggs," *Euronews*, 06 April 2022)

Bosnia-Herzegovina: Dayton Accords to be re-examined

On 06 April, Deutsche Welle examined the need to reform the Dayton Accords of 1995, and the role of the EU in promoting democracy in the region, following the commemoration of the day of Sarajevo. The Dayton Accords, signed by the presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia on 21 November 1995, ended the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and outlined a General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report

suggested that the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and Office of High Representative (OHR) be transformed into working institutions with the authority to amend the Dayton Agreement. Furthermore, the country must be offered a clear path to EU membership and economic assistance to improve living conditions. The report concluded by stating that the effective weapons we may use to resist the control of powerful cliques in post-communist countries are democracy, the rule of law, prosperity, and integration into the EU. (Rüdiger Rossig, "If Dayton Accords are not reformed, the agony of Bosnia-Herzegovina will be prolonged," *Deutsche Welle*, 06 April 2022)

EU enforces rule of law on Hungary

On 05 April, the European Commission initiated the rule of law for the first time against Hungary, which might cut funds to the country. The experimental procedure, which all 27 EU leaders adopted in December 2020, could eventually deprive Budapest of more than EUR 40 billion in EU funds. In February, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) rejected Hungary and Poland's appeal against the rule of law mechanisms. The Court stated: "Compliance with those values cannot be reduced to an obligation which a candidate state must meet in order to accede to the European Union and which it may disregard after accession." (Jon Henly, "European Commission launches rule-of-law disciplinary procedure against Hungary," *The Guardian*, 05 April 2022)

Spain and Netherlands suggest outlines for the EU fiscal plans

On 04 April, Dutch Finance Minister Sigrid and Spain's Economy Minister Nadia Calviño proposed their joint statement to influence the negotiations on drafting the EU's Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) fiscal plans. Spain and the Netherlands are usually at odds over fiscal policies, suggested country-specific fiscal plans, and introduced a simple expenditure rule. They insisted the new budgetary framework to be simple, transparent, credible and

practical, and that all member states be treated equitably. They further said that the SGP should equip the EU to prepare for the next economic crisis by encouraging more investment in green and digital transitions. (Jorge Liberiro and Vasilis Glynos, "Watch: Spain and the Netherlands strike surprising alliance on EU fiscal reform," *Euronews*, 05 April 2022)

Russian yacht seized under the EU sanctions faces complexities

On 04 April, La Ciotat Shipyards of the French Riviera said it does not know whom to bill the docking fees for Superyacht Amore Vero, following its seizure by France. On 02 March, two days after the EU added the Russian oligarch and CEO of Rosneft Igor Sechin to its sanctions list, customs authorities detained the yacht as her crew prepared to sail out of dock. French authorities could not notify other parties about the Amore Vero's status because verifying the ownership of megayachts may be difficult. The questions surrounding the Amore Vero reveal the complexities the authorities face when targeting Russian assets. Maritime Lawyer Pascal Flot said that the super-rich frequently control their assets through a complex network of shell corporations in offshore tax havens. (Layli Foroudi, "In France, a seized superyacht creates headaches, not just for its owner," *Reuters*, 04 April 2022)

President Viktor Orbán's re-election might halt EU funding

On 04 April, Incumbent President Viktor Orbán, a Russian ally, secured his re-election to a fourth consecutive term. Russian President Vladimir Putin Congratulated Orbán despite Hungary's support for EU sanctions against the Kremlin. In his victory speech, Orban mentioned the "opponents" he had defeated, among them were the international media, the Brussels bureaucrats and the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has criticised him for not letting the supply of weapons pass through Hungary. Member of European Parliament, Daniel Frenud and Petri Sarvama expected the commission to trigger Rule of Law mechanisms and

stated that “We appeased Viktor Orbán ... and we, the union, appeased Vladimir Putin. And if we continue on this path.. We will find ourselves obsolete.” (Jennifer Rankin, [“Victory of Putin ally Orbán in Hungary may trigger freeze on EU funding,”](#) *The Guardian*, 04 April 2022)

Crypto-assets transfers to be closely tracked by the EU

On 31 March, the EU legislators endorsed stronger traceability requirements for Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency transfers. The proposed legislation would oblige cryptocurrency firms to gather and share data on transactions. The proposal would also target individuals holding crypto assets rather than exchanges, by requiring them to retain the records and inform the authorities whenever a transaction worth more than EUR 1,000 occurs. The parliamentary committees also want the European Banking Authority (EBA) to issue a public record of crypto-asset service providers who may be vulnerable to money laundering and other criminal activity, as well as a list of non-compliant enterprises. (Natalie Huet, [“EU lawmakers back tough traceability rules on crypto transfers in fight against money laundering,”](#) *Euronews*, 31 March 2022)

BREXIT

Post-Brexit trading has a considerable impact on imports from the EU

On 27 April, *BBC* reported about a study released by the LSE Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) on the impact of Brexit on the UK's trade with the EU. The report compares it to the EU's trade with the rest of the world. The research found that UK imports from the EU declined by 25 per cent in 2021 compared to imports from other countries. In contrast, they observed a more minor and only temporary reduction in relative UK exports to the EU, but a significant and lasting drop in the extensive margin of exports, owing to the withdrawal of low-value relationships. By analyzing the trade patterns for 1,200 items, it is found that the number of trade ties between UK exporters and EU importers has declined considerably. However, the CEP's research examines only the first year of trade under

the new Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and overlooks long-term implications. ([“New Brexit rules caused major shock to UK-EU trade - report,”](#) *BBC*, 27 April 2022)

Brexit, rising demand and the Ukraine war drive the UK's cost of living

On 30 March, *The Guardian* examined the cost of living for low and average income groups in the UK. The extra income available to the UK's lower-income households will decrease by a fifth this year, leaving EUR 850 less to spend on non-essentials. For the average income group, it is expected to reduce by over 6.5 per cent. The rise in prices is being driven by a mix of Brexit, recovery in demand as businesses reopen following pandemic lockdowns and the war in Ukraine. Chief executive of Retail Economics, Richard Lim said: “Rising inflation will see spending power under huge pressure, particularly for the least affluent households who spend a disproportionate amount of their income on non-discretionary items such as food, energy, and fuel.” (Sarah Butler, [“UK's low-income families to lose a fifth of their spare cash in 2022,”](#) *The Guardian*, 30 March 2022)

CLIMATE-CHANGE

EU climate researchers say 2021 was the “year of extremes”

On 22 April, climate researchers of the EU, in their annual report said that 2021 has been a year of extremes for Europe. Copernicus Climate Change Service wrote that the contrast was particularly higher in 2021. It was the hottest year on record, and Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany went through extreme rainfall and severe flooding. Italy recorded a record of 48.8 degrees temperature and Greece, and Turkey witnessed devastating wildfires. According to their calculations, 800,000 hectares of the Mediterranean of nature reserves were affected by fires. There was also low wind speed in parts of in Western and Central Europe, mainly in Germany, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, which hampered renewable energy generation. ([“Hottest summer, floods, fires: 2021 was a “year of](#)

extremes," *NL Times*, 22 April 2022)

Stafford town sets up Carbon Bubble to encourage citizens toward the net-zero goal

On 22 April, a huge inflatable made of bio-degradable nylon has been set up in Stafford town. This symbolises a tonne of carbon, and has been installed to commemorate Earth Day, and encourage people towards achieving the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Conservative Councillor Victoria Wilson said: "It's very difficult for people to understand what carbon actually looks like, so this is a great way to make people aware. We want them to think how they can change their daily activities to reduce carbon emissions." The bubble was transported in electric vehicles and has been filled with fossil-free Green D+ fuel made with 100% renewable energy. ("[Carbon Bubble in Stafford town centre highlights emissions](#)," BBC News, 22 April 2022)

A new study on the efficiency of commitments made in the COP26 conference

On 13 April, the BBC reported on the findings and suggestions of a new study titled "Realization of Paris Agreement pledges may limit warming just below 2 °C," published in the journal *Nature*. According to the study, if all of the commitments made by governments at the Glasgow committee meeting are followed "in full and on time," temperatures will rise by 1.9-2 degrees Celsius. However, the paper projects only a ten per cent success rate for staying under the critical threshold of two degrees celsius. By evaluating the short-term goals set by governments, the study estimates CO2 levels would rise by 13 per cent rather than drop to 45 per cent by 2030. (Matt McGrath, "[Climate change: COP26 promises will hold warming under 2C](#)," *BBC*, 13 April 2022)

Climate activists disrupt fuel supplies and caused traffic jams

On 10 April, climate activists continued their demonstrations on oil refineries and disrupted their supplies. Clean energy protesters claimed to have interrupted supply from three oil terminals in the

Midlands and southeast of England, leading to a few stations running out of fuel. In addition, extinction Rebellion protestors halted vehicles crossing Lambeth and Vauxhall bridges in central London, causing traffic jams. Hundreds of climate activists marched to Lambeth Bridge and played music, creating a festive atmosphere of protest. Cars and buses came to a halt, but protestors dispersed to let ambulances pass. The police stated that they had made 38 arrests. (Helen Pidd, "[Climate activists 'disrupt supplies from three oil terminals in England](#)," *The Guardian*, 10 April 2022)

The EU-China summit held virtually

On 01 April, the EU and China held a virtual summit concerning the war in Ukraine and China's ambiguous position over Russia's actions. While China has expressed concerns over the rising conflict in Ukraine, there are disagreements regarding the critical causes of the conflict. China backs Russia's anti-NATO narrative, whilst the EU and the West oppose it. The EU diplomats also spoke with the Premier of China's State Council, Li Keqiang. Li said that Beijing opposes the division of blocs, taking sides and further mentioned that China pushed for peace "its own way." European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, warned China not to interfere with the EU's sanctions and that any support to Russia would damage its reputation. ("[EU-China summit focuses on war in Ukraine amid tense relations](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 01 April 2022)

Disappointments arise over the UN Biodiversity talks

On 29 March, Deutsche Welle reported on the disappointments over the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The objective of CBD is to compose and adopt a global agreement to end environmental degradation and promote restoration. The treaty is envisaged to achieve for government-led biodiversity action what the Paris Agreement did for climate action. The document must be completed in time for the COP15 conference in Kunming, China. Greenpeace International, as an observer, appealed for the same political leadership that was

exhibited in the Paris Climate Agreement to provoke urgency in the discussions. Director-General of World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Marco Lambertini stated: "As we move forward, political leadership is going to be critical to resolve some of the stickiest points and to drive consensus. And so we are calling upon heads of states, prime ministers and ministers of the environment to drive that leadership." (["Calls for leadership ahead of Kunming biodiversity deal," Deutsche Welle, 29 March 2022](#))

GENDER

The life expectancy of women is lesser in deprived regions of the country

On 17 April, The Guardian reported on the stark analysis of the average life expectancy of women in the UK. According to the health foundation analysis of life expectancy data, women in England's poorest parts die earlier than in every comparable country. The study also reveals the actual extent of health disparities in England. The data demonstrates that life expectancy for women in the poorest districts is significantly below the UK's average age of 83.1, England's average age of 83.2, and the OECD average age of 83.4. Women in the richest and poorest communities had a 7.7 year age difference in life expectancy. The local council areas of Blackpool, Knowsley, Liverpool, and Middlesbrough are among the most disadvantaged and deprived in England. (Andrew Gregory, ["Women in England's poorest areas die younger than in most OECD countries," The Guardian, 17 April 2022](#))

Macron accuses Poland's prime minister of being 'a far-right anti-Semite who bans LGBT people'

On 08 April, Macron said that France was willing to be a guarantor of peace when a ceasefire is finally reached between Ukraine and Russia. It is therefore important for him to negotiate with both Putin and Ukraine's president Zelenskyy. This is in response to Poland's prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki's criticism of France's president Emmanuel Macron, for holding regular conversations with Russia's Vladimir Putin. With Macron's far-right rival Marine Le Pen

closing in on the gap in the upcoming French presidential elections, Macron accused Morawiecki of assisting Le Pen and of being a "far-right anti-Semite who bans LGBT people". This accusation comes considering how Poland is making it more difficult for Jewish people to recover lost property and making Poland a holocaust denier. A Polish foreign ministry spokesperson, Lukasz Jasina said "As a result of assertions by the French president in an interview with Le Parisien, Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau decided to summon the French ambassador." (["Macron calls Polish PM 'a far-right anti-Semite' in row over Putin talks," BBC, 08 April 2022](#); ["Poland summons French ambassador after Macron insults prime minister," Deutsche Welle, 08, April 2022](#))

Safe To Be Me conference cancelled

On 05 April, the government cancelled its LGBTQ+ conference following a mass boycott of involved organizations. The conference "Safe To Be Me" was scheduled for 29 June to promote LGBTQ+ rights internationally. The groups have stated that they would not attend the global conference unless the government includes transgenders in the ban on "Conversion Therapy." The government promised to outlaw conversion therapy for everyone, but any ban would only apply to attempts to change a person's sexuality, not gender identity. Member of Parliament Dehenna Davison expressed disappointment over the cancellation and said: "We had such a huge opportunity to prove the UK (and the Conservative Party) is a defender of freedom. As a Conservative member of the LGBT+ community, it is so wrong it has come to this." (Josh Parry and Lauren Moss, ["Safe To Be Me' LGBT conference cancelled after boycott," BBC, 05 April 2022](#))

ENERGY

Russian energy embargo to affect Germany negatively

On 27 April, the German economy was forecasted to go down into recession if the energy imports from Russia were embargoed or blocked. The government's growth rate forecast for 2022 has been reduced to 2.2 per cent from the 3.6 per

cent prediction in January due to the escalating Russia-Ukraine war. The inflation in Europe's largest economy was predicted to reach 6.1 per cent in 2022. The Russia-Ukraine war has majorly affected the rapidly increasing price of energy. After the recent halting of gas exports from Russia to Poland and Bulgaria, Germany has been cautious as it will lose a significant amount of energy supply in the country. German dependency on Russian energy decreased from 55 per cent to 35 per cent after Germany decided to support Ukraine. (["Germany would go into recession with Russian energy embargo - minister," Reuters](#), 28 April 2022)

Germany and Netherlands closer to extracting gas from Wadden Islands

On 21 April, due to rising energy crisis from Ukraine war, German and Netherlands company called the ONE-Dyas has come closer in extracting natural gas through drilling in Wadden Sea. According to the minister of economic affairs, Netherlands and Germany have a long term supply contract which does not account Groningen gas field. It is located above Wadden Islands contains sea bed which has "low-calorific gas, suitable for households." The extraction is expected to begin in two years' time and the area expands to 60 billion cubic meters. (["Germany, Netherlands closer to drilling new natural gas field in Wadden Sea," NL Times](#), 20 April 2022)

Germany and the Netherlands are closer to extracting gas from the Wadden Islands

On 21 April, due to the rising energy crisis from the Ukraine war, a German and Netherlands company called the ONE-Dyas has come closer to extracting natural gas through drilling in the Wadden Sea. According to the minister of economic affairs, Netherlands and Germany have a long term supply contract that does not account Groningen gas field. It is located above the Wadden Islands and contains a sea bed that has "low-calorific gas, suitable for households." The extraction is expected to begin in two years' time and the area expands to 60 billion cubic meters. (["Germany, Netherlands closer to drilling](#)

[new natural gas field in Wadden Sea," NL Times](#), 20 April 2022)

EU suggests working from home to reduce the region's dependency on Russian energy

On 21 April, the EU asked its citizens to temporarily work from home as the International Energy Agency (IEA) stated that it would save EUR 450 per household. This comes as the region needs time to find alternative supplies and thus is asking its citizens to adjust their lifestyles until then. The EU released a nine-point program that is titled "Playing My Part" for the people to support the bloc's efforts against Putin. Executive director of the IEA Fatih Birol said: "This guide has easy-to-follow steps that with little or no discomfort on our part can reduce the flow of money to Russia's military and help put us on a path to a cleaner and more sustainable planet." (Ben King, ["Work from home to beat Putin, says EU," BBC](#), 21 April 2022)

Berlin to reduce dependency on Russian energy by 2023

On 15 April, Germany's vice-chancellor Robert Habeck asked the public to reduce their energy consumption by 10 per cent to reduce importing energy supplies from Russia. Germany is one of the only two countries resisting the Russian oil embargo in Europe till now as it depends majorly on Russia for gas and oil. Cutting down on imports from Russia would lead to economic decline. Habeck said: "It starts with personal behaviour. If you heat your home and draw your curtains in the evening you save up to 5% of energy. If you lower the room temperature by 1C it's around 6%." (["Ukraine conflict: Save energy and annoy Putin, Germans told," BBC News](#), 16 April 2022)

Germany's response to its dependency on Russian gas

On 14 April, Germany said it was planning to lease four floating liquified natural gas terminals at EUR three billion. The finance minister had formulated the plan without the consent of the German parliament. The investment was proposed as an alternative to Russian gas. Germany has to forgo its Nord Stream 2 pipeline usage as its most

significant natural gas supplier Russia, has waged war against Ukraine. As a result, Germany hopes to be independent of Russian gas imports by mid-2024. It further plans to decrease its dependency on the Russian energy supply by lowering its consumption and using existing energy sources. At the same time, it plans to look toward countries like Algeria and Libya for natural gas pipelines and usage of existing terminals in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. (Jon Shelton, "[Germany earmarks €3 billion for floating LNG terminals](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 April 2022)

Opinion polls on wind farms and nuclear energy

On 10 April, following the release of the UK's energy security plans, *the Guardian* reported on the findings of its opinion poll on the favorability of wind farms and nuclear energy. According to the opinion poll, 79 per cent of conservative voters favoured wind farms being built in the UK, compared to 83 per cent of Labour supporters, and 88 per cent of Liberal Democrat voters. Two-thirds of voters stated they would welcome the construction of a wind farm near their homes. In comparison, only 46 per cent of all voters supported the construction of new nuclear power plants and only 32 per cent voted for gas power plants. These findings indicate that government reasoning differs from the public's understanding of the necessity to secure energy security while striving toward net-zero emissions. (Toby Helm and Robin McKie, "[Three-quarters of Britons back expansion of wind power, poll reveals](#)," *The Guardian*, 10 April 2022)

Criticisms arise over the new Energy Security Plan

On 07 April, the UK released its energy security plan, which aims for energy independence and plans to enhance nuclear, wind and hydrogen power. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the strategy was for "tackling the mistakes of the past and making sure that we are set well for the future". The government aims to build up to eight new nuclear reactors, two at Sizewell. The delivery of the new plants will be

overseen by a new body "Great British Nuclear." For onshore wind farms, the strategy pledges to form agreements with a limited number of "supportive communities" that wish to host wind turbines in exchange for lower energy prices. To expand solar capacity by up to five times by 2035, the government is considering revising laws for placing solar panels on residences and commercial buildings. However, the opposition has criticized the plan for not focusing on energy efficiency, insulation and reducing the cost of living. ("[Energy strategy: Boris Johnson defends plan amid cost of living crisis](#)," *BBC*, 08 April 2022)

MIGRATION

EU's border agency accused of illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers

On 28 April, a new investigation revealed that the EU's border and coast guard agency- Frontex, was involved in the illegal pushback of 957 asylum seekers in the Aegean Sea. The investigation was jointly led by Lighthouse Reports, Der Spiegel, SRF, Republik, and Le Monde. The agency's internal incident report database, Jora, revealed to have logged observations of asylum seeker pushbacks in the Aegean Sea between March 2020 and September 2021. Authorities classified these incidents as "prevention of departure." This is defined in the Frontex standards as an occurrence in which migrants from non-European countries are intercepted in its territorial seas and are returned to their point of origin. (Rhal Ssan, "[Investigation claims Frontex involved in Aegean sea migrant pushbacks](#)," *Euronews*, 28 April 2022)

Denmark to also set up an asylum processing centre in Rwanda

On 20 April, Denmark mentioned that it was planning to set up a reception centre for asylum seekers in Rwanda after the UK. Denmark's integration minister Mattias Tesfaye said: "Denmark has good cooperation with Rwanda, based on a broad partnership...We have been in close dialogue to further strengthen our partnership." However, human rights groups and opposition politicians have condemned the proposals as unethical.

Denmark's government said that it would have a "more dignified approach."
 ("Denmark in talks with Rwanda over processing of asylum seekers," *Euronews*, 20 April 2022)

Johnson calls Rwanda a safe place for migrants

On 14 April, UK prime minister Boris Johnson said that illegal immigrants would now go to Rwanda for refuge. This new set of immigrant policies encouraged unauthorised migrants to move to Rwanda and establish new lives for themselves. Concerning Rwanda's poor human rights records, Johnson responded that the country has changed, and it has become one of the safest places in the world. The home secretary Priti Patel visited Kigali, the Rwandan capital, to sign an "economic development partnership". Johnson further stated that the policies were needed to cut large expenditures on the hotels and save countless lives from human trafficking. He also said that the Royal Navy would patrol the Channel for the safety of the country and also to intercept any illegal immigrants. (Rajeev Syal, "Tens of thousands of asylum seekers could be sent to Rwanda, says Johnson," *The Guardian*, 15 April 2022)

UK to host its asylum seekers in Rwanda

On 13 April, the UK's home secretary Priti Patel agreed on a migration deal with Rwanda. The deal is set to send asylum seekers in the UK to Rwanda to get their applications processed and encourage them to live there. The Rwandan government is expected to receive an initial EUR 120 million as part of the deal, but critics claim the whole scheme's annual cost would be far higher. The liberal democrats critiqued the proposal citing it does nothing to stop the perilous Channel crossing or combat smuggling and trafficking. Prime minister Boris Johnson is set to announce several steps such as placing the navy in command of Channel operations and establishing a new processing centre to keep checks on anyone seeking to enter the UK. ("UK to sign deal to send asylum seekers to Rwanda for processing," *BBC*, 14 April 2022)

Illegal immigrants drowned near Canary Island

On 31 March, 25 migrants are believed to have drowned at sea near Spain's Canary Islands during an attempted sea crossing. Survivors testify that many were thrown overboard after running out of supplies. On 19 March, over 75 individuals, including several children, emigrated from Mauritania, but only 48 people arrived on the Spanish island of El Hierro. More than 40,000 migrants, primarily from Morocco, immigrated to Spain by the sea in 2021. However, at least 1,255 individuals died attempting to cross the border. ("Twenty-five migrants feared dead off Spain's Canary Islands," *Euronews*, 31 March 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

Concerns arise about the use of hate speech on Twitter following Musk's takeover

On 26 April, the UK and EU warned Twitter that it must comply with new content regulations or face penalties ranging from fines to a complete ban. The warnings arise amid fears that hate speech may increase on the network now that Elon Musk owns it. Companies must comply with the upcoming internet safety bill, which compels platforms to safeguard consumers from dangerous information. The law would obligate social media services to allow users to identify unlawful information in a simple and effective method so that it may be quickly deleted. The UK plans to adopt a more robust regulatory system for digital platforms, requiring corporations like Twitter and Facebook to safeguard users from malicious information and issue fines of up to 10 per cent of worldwide revenue for breaches. (Dan Milmo and Mark Sweney, "Twitter takeover: EU and UK warn Elon Musk must comply or face sanctions," *The Guardian*, 27 April 2022)

Trials begin of a Gambian man accused of assassination

On 25 April, federal prosecutors start trials of a Gambian national accused of crimes against humanity and involvement in the assassinations of the critics of Dictator Yahya Jammeh during the years between 2003 and 2006. He is alleged of two murders, an attempted murder, and his

involvement in the assassination squad called Junglers. The defendant was captured in March 2021 at Hanover and is being tried in the court of Celle. This case is the first time in the world that human rights violations in the Gambia during the Jammeh administration have been tried under "universal jurisdiction." Under the principle of universal jurisdiction, a state can claim criminal jurisdiction over an accused person regardless of where the crime was committed. (["Germany opens trial of Gambia death squad suspect," Deutsche Welle](#), 25 April 2022)

European commission president visits New Delhi

On 24 April, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen visited India to strengthen EU-India ties. Ursula's visit to New Delhi would renew talks on energy issues and climate neutrality. She added: "But Europe alone won't save our planet. It's a global effort, and we need to work with India. And we count on you, the young people, to keep fighting for the climate." She also would be meeting India's prime minister Narendra Modi and plans to discuss New Delhi's position in Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The visit comes as the EU and India are celebrating 60 years of relations. (Dharvi Vaid, ["EU chief Ursula von der Leyen begins India tour," Deutsche Welle](#), 25 April 2022)

World leaders plan to walk out at the G20 meeting as a protest against Russia

On 19 April, Reuters reported that western countries are planning to coordinate a walk-out or similar snubs, as a mark of protest against Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the G20 finance ministers' meeting in Washington. German, US, British and French officials have spoken about their disapproval about the attendance of the Russian delegation. This however brings up the issue of how effective G20 can be if there are such deep fault lines amongst the member nations. MF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said: "One scenario is one where we have divided blocs that are not trading much with each other, that are on different standards, and that would be a disaster for the global economy." (Andrea Shalal and David Lawder, ["Delegate protests](#)

[over Russia to upstage G20 meeting," Reuters](#), 20 April 2022)

Africa is influenced by Russia through Facebook pages

On 17 April, pro-Russian and anti-Western sentiments were spread through Facebook pages in west African countries. These misinformation campaigns spread Russian influence across unstable countries in western Africa. The Wagner group, a Russian mercenary group is suspected to be behind the actions. Facebook has already taken down inauthentic pieces of information but is struggling to contain the anti-western and pro-Russian posts. These posts are contributing to the political instability of the West African countries. The military coup in countries like Mali and Burkina Faso had garnered support from the public by using loopholes in Facebook's moderation policies presumably with the help of the Wagner group. While Facebook commented that it would improve its third-party fact-checking technology and would tackle the problem in an efficient way. (Jason Burke, ["Facebook struggles as Russia steps up presence in unstable west Africa," The Guardian](#), 17 April 2022)

Indian citizens travelling to the UK via EU airlines denied entry

On 15 April, Indian citizens who did not have transit or regular Schengen visas were denied boarding on the EU airlines such as Lufthansa, KLM, and Air France at origin airports to travel to the UK. Since the UK is no longer a member of the EU, non-EU nationals must obtain a transit Schengen visa to fly to the UK on flights operated by EU airlines. A Schengen visa is a short-term visa that permits its bearer to travel freely across the Schengen region, including 26 EU nations known as 'Schengen States'. The UK is only accessible for non-EU citizens via non-stop flights or one-stop flights through the Gulf or Switzerland without transiting or obtaining a standard Schengen visa. (["Indians without Schengen visa can't fly to UK on EU airlines," Business Standard](#), 15 April 2022)

Foreign minister Baerbock visits Niger to discuss humanitarian and military aid

On 14 April, foreign minister Annalena Baerbock visited Niamey, Niger's capital, as a part of her West Africa Tour. She urged immediate action to tackle hunger in Niger and other parts of the unstable Sahel region, citing growing food costs and the destructive impact of climate change. Baerbock asked the international community to increase their food relief efforts during a visit to the Ouallam refugee camp. Baerbock met with Niger's foreign minister Hassoumi Massoudou to assess the country's security situation and if there was a need to send more German troops to fight terrorists in the region. Massoudou urged an increase in Germany's involvement in training Niger's military training and joint missions. ("[Germany's Baerbock urges faster aid 'to avoid hunger crisis' in Niger](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 April 2022)

Germany's foreign minister meets Mali's interim president to discuss Russia's role

On 13 April, Germany advised Mali to stop working with Russian mercenaries and soldiers. Germany's foreign minister Annalena Baerbock met with Mali's interim president Assimi Goita to discuss Mali's involvement with Russian troops and mercenaries. Mali underwent political turmoil and Goita came to power after two successful coups in 2020 and 2021. Germany has been pushing to democratize Mali as the country is witnessing corruption and judicial impunity under the military regime. After France withdrew its troops from Mali, countries of the EU were pressured to face security threats. The stationing of German troops expires in May, after which the German parliament plans to renew its contract to cooperate with the people of Mali. However, Mali's ties with Russia and China are a matter of concern to Germany. ("[Germany tells Mali to halt work with Russian mercenaries](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 April 2022)

Meta and Tiktok compete for growing their user base

On 09 April, the Guardian reported on the robust growth of TikTok, a Chinese-owned video platform worrying the biggest social

media platform Facebook. TikTok is expected to catch up with YouTube by 2024, when both are said to earn USD 23.6 billion in ad income. The startup is winning the battle for the "sweet spot" of social network users, those aged 18 to 25, who are leaving Facebook, with parent company Meta attempting to halt the migration by luring them to Instagram. While Meta is a considerably more significant business, Zuckerberg has been compelled to mount a counter-offensive to strengthen and diversify his ad-based business model. Meta's strategy aims to capitalise on the Trump administration's allegation that Chinese corporations constitute a national security concern as possible conduits of personal data to Beijing. (Mark Sweney, "[The rise of TikTok: why Facebook is worried about the booming social app](#)," *The Guardian*, 09 April 2022)

EU hosts peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia

On 06 April, Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's met with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev in Brussels. Hosted by the European Council, it marks the third time the two countries leaders have met in the last six months. The leaders of the two countries-initiated peace talks following the recent clash and the escalation of violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh territory since the displacement of 250,000 people in 2020. Pashinyan's statement mentioned that a bilateral border commission would be set up by the end of this month, and the Foreign Ministers of both countries have been asked to prepare for additional peace talks. However, European Council President Charles Michel said that "it doesn't mean that everything is solved, of course." ("[Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to peace talks two years after Nagorno-Karabakh fighting](#)," *Deutsche Welle*, 07 April 2022)

Mali was accused of killing civilians in an attack against insurgents

On 05 April, Human Rights Watch (HRW) alleged that the Malian forces and Russian mercenaries executed 300 civilians in an anti-jihadist operation. Local witnesses said hundreds of men were executed in small groups during the anti-jihadist operation on

23 March in the central town of Moura. Witnesses also claim that over 100 white soldiers talking in an unfamiliar language believed to be Russians were involved in the operation. The Malian government is fighting the insurgency with the support of private military contractors from Russia's Wagner group. Mali and Russia have previously said that they are not mercenaries but rather trainers assisting local forces with weapons from Russia. West Africa Director at HRW, Carrine Dufka stated: "The Malian government is responsible for this atrocity, the worst in Mali in a decade, whether carried about by Malian forces or associated foreign soldiers." (Emmanuel Akinwotu, "[Russian mercenaries and Mali army accused of killing 300 civilians](#)," *The Guardian*, 05 April 2022)

AUKUS members sign pact to counter Russia-China hypersonic weapons

On 05 April, US President Joe Biden, UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison released a statement for further expansion on the approved Trilateral Military Agreement named AUKUS. The agreement looks for ways to develop counter-hypersonic weapons against Russia and China. These hypersonic weapons are high-speed nuclear weapons of mass destruction. AUKUS was revived due to Russia's usage of Kinzhal hypersonic missiles in Ukraine last month. At the same time, China has been testing its own hypersonic glide vehicle, a different type of supersonic weapon carrier.

UK's National Security Adviser Stephen Lovegrove said: "In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it's more important now than ever that allies work together to defend democracy, international law and freedom around the world." The General Secretary of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Kate Hudson condemned the development of the weapons, saying it would drain the wealth of the US and the UK. (Dan Sabbagh and Daniel Hurst, "[Aukus pact extended to development of hypersonic weapons](#)," *The Guardian*, 05 April 2022)

Plankton's illuminated shores of Napier, New Zealand

On 04 April, New Zealand's north island's shorelines were illuminated by bioluminescent planktons with blue-green colors after nightfall. Algal ecologist at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, Karl Safi said: "Dinoflagellates produce this light when disturbed, and will give a light flash lasting a fraction of a second – disturbing the predator trying to consume them." A photographer from Napier who captured the moment calls it "The aurora of the sea." Around the shores "biohunting" communities have emerged to alert one another when they witness the phenomenon. (Tess McClure, "[Aurora of the sea': luminous plankton light up New Zealand shores](#)" *The Guardian*, 05 April 2022)

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