

War In Ukraine Update

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Ever since Ukraine was attacked by Russia in 2021, the Ukrainian War has been one of the largest of the past century, with rapidly increasing casualties and a huge impact on the rest of the world as well, and it still shows no signs of ending. Not only has it led to massive casualties and monetary damage to both sides, but it has also led to about 17 million refugees. War crimes have also been committed against Ukraine, such as the destruction of many apartments, schools, and hospitals.. So why did all of this start? Why has Russia decided to attack Ukraine?

The history between Russia and Ukraine's relationship is long and complicated. Ukraine used to be a part of the Soviet Union but as it collapsed, Ukraine declared independence in 1991. After gaining their independence, Ukraine has had pro-Russian and anti - Russian regimes, causing internal chaos.

The current president, Volodymyr Zelensky, leads a strictly anti-Russian government, which had already raised tensions between the two countries, but the conflict escalated quickly when he asked to join NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). NATO was founded after World War 2, with the intention of keeping the Soviet Union in check, and so naturally, Russia is against the thought of any of the former Soviet Union countries joining it. Furthermore, Ukraine has gas pipes that transport Russia's gas to the rest of Europe. If NATO, and by extension, the US, get ahold of the pipes, it would be catastrophic for Russia since an organization literally founded to keep watch over them would be not only geographically closer, but also with power over one of their major sources of export. Not only this, but Putin is said to have "imperial dreams" and wants to bring back the times when its neighboring countries were under Russia's control.

However, it is important to address that Putin's beliefs do not align perfectly with that of the Russian people. Numerous protests throughout Russia have shown that some do not agree with their current government. This may be because many Russians have friends and family in Ukraine, and they do not wish to fight their own. Adding onto the confusion is how Putin has placed restrictions against contradicting what the Government has stated about the war. Putin's government has yet to acknowledge that the conflict is an invasion, and has not mentioned civilian bombings, especially the bombing of Kyiv, Ukraine's capital city. Citizens are told that Ukrainians are in support of Russian rule and welcome the soldiers, and that there are no civilian casualties. The Russian government has also hired people to spread misinformation on social media, and some social media including Facebook and Instagram has even been blocked. By spreading propaganda and misinformation, many Russians are unaware of the brutalities the war has caused. This further aggravates the difference between what Putin's government sees and what the Russian people see.

After more than a year since the war's onset, the fight for Ukraine's sovereignty has still not ceased. NATO has confirmed that Ukraine will be joining its ranks, and after numerous sanctions and diplomatic tactics against Russia, Putin seems to be running out of the resources and funds

necessary for a war. Ukraine has regained some of their land, but areas east of the cities Kherson and Bakhmut and the Crimean peninsula are still under Russian military control.

Russia has frequently shifted their goals, but their current aim is to take land outside the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Ukraine's goal is to liberate all of its territories, including the Crimean peninsula, which has been occupied by Russia since 2014. In terms of territory, experts are unclear on who's winning.

However, in terms of morale, Ukraine appears to have a distinct advantage. Ukraine, despite the war going on for so long, has high morale, but Russia has had unclear goals from the start, making it hard for civilians to support the war effort. Doubts about the war are spreading among even Russian Nationalist communities. It is also important to point out that public opinion as of this moment is drastically in support of Ukraine. Ukrainian flags are seen everywhere around the world, and protests against Russia to end the war and against each of the protesters' governments to do more to help Ukraine are commonplace.

Military wise, experts are again unclear. They say it depends on whether the military equipment from around the world will be effective, and how resilient the Russian Army is. There haven't been drastic changes to the frontlines for a while, and the Ukrainian and Russian armies seem well-matched. In terms of negotiations, neither power appears to have a significant advantage. Given all of these uncertainties, there is a possibility that the war will drag on for much longer.

The Ukrainian War has affected the entire world. In Ukraine, it has left millions without access to food or water, and missiles have destroyed about half of Ukraine's power grid. Billions of dollars worth of damage has been done to the country. Millions of women and child refugees have fled their home country for this very reason, and many of them have been accepted by nearby countries.

Ukraine also has a huge grain market, one that feeds about 400 million in parts such as the Middle East and Africa. Many have not been able to get these grains since Ukraine has been unable to export it during the war, adding onto a preexisting hunger crisis. Furthermore, prices for gas have risen dramatically around the world because it was difficult for Ukraine and Russia to export any of it since they were busy with a war, leading to a shortage in gas, which ultimately led to an increase in the prices.

The environment has also suffered, since emissions from reconstruction of Ukrainian cities are estimated to release massive amounts of carbon emissions. Funding the war is costing Ukraine hundreds of billions of dollars, and additional military resources ranging from tanks to guns have been gifted to Ukraine by other countries.

There is also a growing concern that this war will spread to other parts of the world as well. With tensions rising between China and Taiwan and between the West and the Middle East, some experts even say that the Ukrainian War may grow into a larger, global war, especially if other countries get directly involved. Some go even further to state the possibility of another World War, something all countries want to avoid.

With decades of ideological conflict, politics, and history involved in the war, many are left unsure of the impacts it could bring.