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CIVIL SIDE OF UKRAINE WAR

UKRAINE IN A BATTLE: GROWING CONCERNS AND
PERSPECTIVES OF THE CIVIL SIDE OF WAR

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Introduction

The Ukraine conflict with Russia is displaying various lessons about the capacity of modern military forces in today's modern war but another important and one of the most significant lessons it offers is for the future of the civil side of the crisis. Considering some of the major political changes in Russia, the crisis is cautioning the world about the civil side of the war becoming more dangerous than anticipated. War brings more damage than just displacing civilians or killing them. When wars are aimed at residential places, they become an added burden of simply passing through another day.

Anthony H. Cordesman, an Emeritus Chair in Strategy, compares the Ukraine war to that of the kind of civil conflicts and crises which have emerged in the Iran-Iraq War, the Syrian-Yemeni civil wars and even the wars between the U.S. and its allies in Iran and Afghanistan.¹ He further claims that even if there is an end to the war by some kind of compromise, settlement or ceasefire (even though any kind of an end at the moment seems uncertain) it is likely to be a significant stimulant in shaping a long-lasting civil conflict between Russia, NATO, EU and the United States.

The intensity of the conflict in Ukraine has been much more intense than most other wars. The only commonality between all these wars is the suffering of civilians. The United Nations Human Rights Commission mentions in their report on 'Monitoring the devastating impact of the war on civilians' that Russia has used those kinds of explosive weapons in populated areas that it led to a high level of civilian casualties, as well as ruination and damage of civilian objects². Along with this, there have been unlawful killings sexual violence in the context of conflict, enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment of civilians. This paper is going to explore the civil perspective of the Russia-Ukraine war, it will look at the casualties of the war on Ukraine citizens and will shed light upon the suffering and issues faced by the civilians. Along with this, the paper

¹ H. Cordesman, Anthony. "The Longer-Term Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and the Growing Importance of the Civil Side of War." *The Longer-Term Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and the Growing Importance of the Civil Side of War* | Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 24, 2022. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/longer-term-impact-ukraine-conflict-and-growing-importance-civil-side-war>.

² "Ukraine: Monitoring the Devastating Impact of the War on Civilians." OHCHR, May 24, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/05/ukraine-monitoring-devastating-impact-war-civilians>.

will mention the opinions of foreign citizens stuck in Ukraine, including those from India and its Mission Ganga. Finally, the paper will bring an ethical perspective to the war as a whole and humanitarian aid.

The War: Russia and Ukraine in Conflict

The invasion of Ukraine in 2022, was a resume by Russia's president Vladimir Putin, to the tension between the two countries that began with the seizure of Crimea in 2014. Putin and his senior leaders have gone back to their early twentieth-century philosophical traditions for motivation and are alluring to the orthodox understanding of 'justifiable war' methods where war is perceived as necessary sometimes to avoid another evil from prevailing³. Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church recently claimed that action had to be taken against Ukraine to 'combat evil', hence the Russian government argued further that it was necessary for them to violate the sovereignty of Ukraine due to genocides that were taking place, due to an unlawful government overthrown by extremists, the peace and security of Ukraine were in threat hence Russian intervention was necessary⁴. None of these claims coincides with realities on the ground, these were mere excuses that Russians stated to justify their atrocities.

Background

The armed conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine started in early 2014 which resulted from Russia's annexation of Crimea. The protest in Ukraine (2013) against President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to refuse economic integration with the European Union (EU) was met with a violent crackdown by the state security forces⁵. In the following month, in march 2014, the Russian army took control of the Ukraine region of Crimea. The reason for this acquisition, stated by President

³ Center for Preventive Action. "Conflict in Ukraine ." Global conflict tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

⁴Gvosdev, Nikolas. "Ukraine: An Ethical Response." Ethics & International Affairs. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, March 8, 2022. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2022/ukraine-an-ethical-response/>.

⁵ Unknow Center for Preventive Action. "Conflict in Ukraine ." Global conflict tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

Vladimir Putin, was to protect the rights of Russian citizens and speakers in Crimea and southeast Ukraine. This action was followed by the annexation of the entire region and led to increasing ethnic divisions⁶.

According to the Global Conflict Tracker, in October 2021, the intelligence of Russian troop movements, force build-up and military possibilities was observed and gathered for months.⁷ Finally, on February 24, 2022, Russian forces invaded Ukraine, which was completely unprepared, after the current President Putin sanctioned a ‘special military operation’ against Ukraine. The reason for this move, stated by Putin was to end the suspected genocide of Russians in Ukraine and demilitarize and de-nazify the country.⁸ Satellite images were showing the deployment of the largest Russian troops to its borders in Belarus. Negotiation between the great powers to bring a resolution failed. On February 24, 2022, during the last UN Security Council meeting to convince Russia to not attack Ukraine, Putin announced the start of a full-scale land, sea, and air invasion of Ukraine and its military assets.⁹

Implications of the war

The conflict which started in 2014 and is still ongoing has already killed over 14000 people in Ukraine¹⁰. For eight years, Russian-backed separatists and the Ukrainian government have fought for the industrialised areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, where fierce battles have taken place resulting in one-third of the area being occupied by Russia. Although agreements were formed to end the war, they were never implemented leading to a trench war which destroyed economic and industrialised areas. This forces millions to relocate and turned these conflict zones into the world’s most mine-contaminated areas.¹¹

⁶ ibid

⁷ Unknow “Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer.” Crisis Group, March 28, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>.

⁸ Center for Preventive Action. “Conflict in Ukraine .” Global conflict tracker. Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Unknow “Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer.” Crisis Group, March 28, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>.

¹¹ ibid

The International Crisis Group examined the civilian casualties by the community and concluded that a few months saw heavier fighting and an increased number of deaths than others. From a geographical perspective, casualties were more concentrated in those areas that were close to key infrastructures¹². From 1-30 September, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 1222 civilian casualties in Ukraine out of which 299 were killed and 923 injured¹³. From 24 February to 2 October 2022, OHCHR recorded 15246 civilian casualties in Ukraine. Civilian casualties according to each month can be seen in the figure (1) below. Most of these casualties were due to heavy explosives that covered more area, including shelling from heavy artillery, many launch rocket systems, missiles, and air strikes.¹⁴

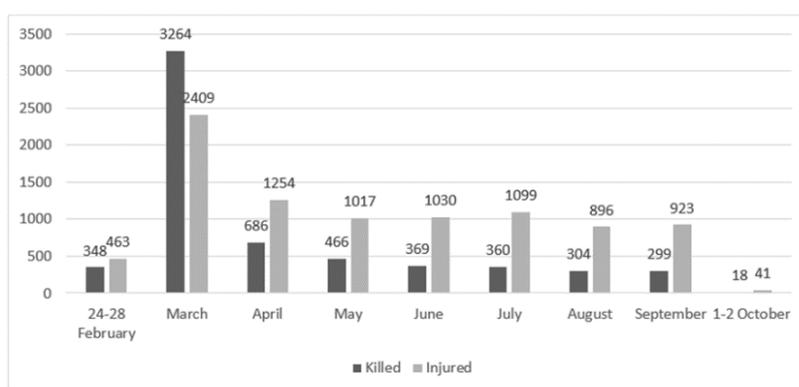


Figure 1: Civilian Casualties between 24/2/2022- 02/10/2022 (Source: United Nations Human Rights)

Since the invasion, around 12 million residents of Ukraine have fled their homes according to the United Nations. As of 4 July, according to the UN, more than 5.2 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded around Europe. Most can be seen in Russia (1412425), Poland (1194642), Moldova (82700), Romania (83321), Slovakia (79770), Hungary (25800) and Belarus (9820).

¹² Unknow “Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer.” Crisis Group, March 28, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>.

¹³ Unknow “Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 3 October 2022.” OHCHR, October 3, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/10/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-3-october-2022#:~:text=From%2024%20February%20to%202%20October%202022%2C%20OHCHR%20recorded%2015%2C246,6%2C114%20killed%20and%209%2C132%20injured.>

¹⁴ *ibid*

Many other Ukrainian refugees have moved to other countries that have open borders with other EU states.¹⁵

The Civil Effects of the Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine has evolved into a major political and economic conflict not just between Russia and Ukraine but between the West and Russia that may far significant global impacts on global stability. Although the fighting has been mostly constrained to the eastern part of Ukraine, it is a military mission to take control of the Donbas region and global shipping, it has led to a steady increase in Russian attacks on the whole civil society and economy as it has led to Russia trying it best to convert industrial heartland of Ukraine into a political and economic hub. The final results of this civil side of the war are now extending beyond the areas shown in the map below (Figure 2), where the conflict in the cities in Ukraine was attacked in the first phase of the war. Due to this, the international energy cost has been reshaped on a global level, there has been a global food shortage and a massive increase in inflation rates on a global level.¹⁶

¹⁵ Unknown “How Many Ukrainian Refugees Are There and Where Have They Gone?” BBC News. BBC, July 4, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472>.

¹⁶ H. Cordesman, Anthony. “The Longer-Term Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and the Growing Importance of the Civil Side of War.” The Longer-Term Impact of the Ukraine Conflict and the Growing Importance of the Civil Side of War | Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 24, 2022. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/longer-term-impact-ukraine-conflict-and-growing-importance-civil-side-war>.



Figure 1: UK MoD’s Ukraine Conflict Map. (Source: USNI News)

Perspective of Ukraine Citizens

Russia has discarded any pretention of focusing on a military target and is using civil society such as businesses, stores and apartment buildings to bring down Ukraine. This would be the first time after World War II that whole cities may be destroyed. Voices of Ukrainians around Ukraine have gained the courage to speak about the discrimination despite being high on Putin’s kill list.

Oleksandr Sushko, a citizen of Ukraine, expresses in views and experiences of the war in his article, ‘Defending Civil Society in Ukraine’ where he claims that Ukraine has fought wars previously due to religious differences, clashes among ethnic groups, fights over access to land, the sea or other natural resources but this war by Putin is about none of the reasons mentioned above, it is only because of the desire to gain more power and increase the status of the Russian empire¹⁷. Ukrainian thought and patriotism can be seen in the article where the author clearly voices out his and his fellow Ukrainians' hatred towards Putin. They view Putin as being delusional about believing that Ukraine naturally belongs to him, and this hatred has come about ever since

¹⁷ SUSHKO, OLEKSANDR. “Defending Civil Society in Ukraine.” Open Society Foundations, March 8, 2022. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/defending-civil-society-in-ukraine>.

Ukraine became an independent nation after the Soviet Union¹⁸. Therefore, a patriotic thought can be seen among the citizens of Ukraine to fight the war and protect their land.

Through this phase of the war, Russia launched missiles and rockets at residential areas in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro and others. Many lives were lost, and people were injured, including, women, children and the elderly all covered in blood. Most blasts that happened were during morning hours or rush hours, which shows that the objective of Russians was to kill the maximum number of people. In many places, Russia also targeted and destroyed electricity infrastructures in an attempt to cut off the electricity supply to residents. The Russian warfare for months has been to attack densely populated urban areas¹⁹. These attacks have routinely struck civilian infrastructure such as apartment blocks, playgrounds, schools and hospitals. Therefore, these acts can be qualified as war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Greta Uehling, a lecturer in international and comparative studies from the University of Michigan, has expressed her conversations with the Ukrainian citizens currently in their country. From Uehling's article, it can be interpreted, that the civilian impacts of this war are similar to that of the Crimea war between 2015-2017²⁰. The author, after conducting over 150 interviews and participating in the daily life of the citizens in Ukraine states that one of the most troubling features of the war was how it not only displaced them but also troubled their personal relationships. Many civilians found themselves reassessing their idea of ethics while they suffered to give precedence to competing duties during the most challenging situations.

Psychological trauma has been the main focus of traditional research on war implications for civilians. Among most displaced citizens there was a loss of relationships with friends, family or their partners and this was one of the main concerns of civilians in Ukraine. The reasons for these relationships to suffer were political because people often changed political parties based on the

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ SUSHKO, OLEKSANDR. "Defending Civil Society in Ukraine." Open Society Foundations, March 8, 2022. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/defending-civil-society-in-ukraine>.

²⁰ Uehling, Greta. "Ukraine's War Has Shattered Some Friendships and Family Ties – but 'Care Ethics' Have Strengthened Other Relationships." *The Conversation*, October 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/ukraines-war-has-shattered-some-friendships-and-family-ties-but-care-ethics-have-strengthened-other-relationships-188200>.

situation and due to the difference, relationships were lost. Uehling, mentions an example of a lady in Ukraine who lost her son when the separatist government came into power in Eastern Ukraine, due to which her relationship with her mother and sister was lost as they elected the leader of this party.²¹ Another reason, according to the author is the competing responsibility to each other, such as protecting children from conflict versus staying back to look after the elderly who refused to move to safety. The last reason for fragmenting relationships was forced displacement and psychological trauma that prevented individuals from maintaining ties.

Tamar Jacoby in his article, 'Ukrainian Refugees Tell Their Stories' interviewed over 45 adults of all ages and professions, although their experiences were different, they all felt the pain and loss they went through during the war. Many had sacrificed their jobs, few saw their home being destroyed, others lost their friends and family and almost all had left someone they loved behind in Ukraine, so everyone felt uncertain about the future. Despite all the pain what stood out most was the strength and determination of the refugees and the sacrifices they were willing to make for their hometown.

Other than the usual shelling and extensive bombing of civilian properties, Russia is also using non-traditional and inhuman military strategies which fall under war crimes. According to a Business Insider article by Joshua Ziter, the Russian soldiers were supplied with Viagra to rape Ukrainian women and 'dehumanize' them. The UN has verified over 100 cases of rape or sexual assault in Ukraine since the war²². Pramila Patten, the UN's special representative on sexual violence in war claims that, "it is a 'deliberate tactic' and part of a military strategy" used by Russia. Patten further explains "when women, little boys and men are held for days and see series of genital mutilations and when you hear women testify about Russia soldiers equipped with Viagra it becomes clear that it is a military strategy deliberately used to dehumanize the victim"²³.

²¹ *ibid*

²² Ziter, Joshua. "Russian Soldiers Are Supplied with Viagra to Rape Ukrainian Women and 'Dehumanize' Them, Claims UN Official." Business Insider, October 16, 2022.
<https://www.businessinsider.in/international/news/russian-soldiers-are-supplied-with-viagra-to-rape-ukrainian-women-and-dehumanize-them-claims-un-official/articleshow/94896626.cms>.

²³ France 24, "Rape Used in Ukraine as a Russian 'Military Strategy:' Un." France 24. France 24, October 14, 2022.
<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221014-rape-used-in-ukraine-as-a-russian-military-strategy-un>.

The impacts of this war were not only felt by the natives but also by migrants who went to Ukraine for various reasons. Students from India, for example, went to Ukraine for further studies but soon they were shaken by the horrors of the war. A group of five students who returned to India with the help of the Indian government shared their painful experience where they had to spend sleepless nights in minus temperatures with little or no food and water. Soni Choudhary, a medical student from Vinnytsia National Medical university shared that after February 16th the whole atmosphere of the town changed, and students were advised to take shelter in the bunker on the university campus. There was no food or water nor were there, beds or bathrooms, hence the students would come to the campus to use the bathroom and run back to the bunkers. They would often hear air sirens, missiles, and bombards. They did not use electricity due to fear of being attacked by missiles, it was a nightmare. Along with trauma, many students are uncertain about their future. As their universities are unable to work due to the war most students' future is at stake.²⁴

Humanitarian Aid and Missions

Under war conditions, people find it difficult to make choices about whom to care for. Anthropologists and philosophers who study how people function during moral dilemmas say that the decisions individuals make are based on their obligation to others rather than the usual principle of right or wrong. People around the world came together to help and support the Ukraine community. Author Uehling, learnt about many individuals who made brave efforts to deliver food and first aid supplies to the front, often using their own personal money. This was nationally motivated, civilians made homemade Molotov cocktails, assembled roadblocks known as, 'hedgehogs' and destroyed road signs to disorient Russian forces. This can be viewed beyond nationalism; it is a recalibration of priorities and values of everyday life. An example of this is the Black Tulip or Cargo 200 groups who set out into the rebel-held areas to retrieve dead bodies to

²⁴ Shukla, Richa. "Rajasthan Students Returning from Ukraine Share Their Terrifying Experience: Jaipur News - Times of India." The Times of India. TOI. Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/rajasthan-students-returning-from-ukraine-share-their-terrifying-experience/articleshow/90277156.cms>.

restore the dignity of the dead without the support of the government and by forgetting the costs for their own psyche and families²⁵.

Author Oleksandr Sushko, in his article also mentions how he first left the country for safety but soon realized that it was important for him to keep the ‘Ukrainian foundation’ hence he led operations to provide necessary supplies to grantees, partners and civil society allies even when bombs were falling²⁶. Their daily routine is to give emergency hospital runs, ferry medicines to most in need and give supplies to the injured. Citizens in Ukraine are also volunteering to help their fellow beings without being recognized. For example, a few local businesses are helping to build supply chains, an army volunteer helps the elderly, the disabled, women and children who are facing challenges of relocating, funding gas, and providing food and other help that they need to survive. Hence, there is a lot of internal help taking place between the civil society which is beyond the feeling of nationalism.

Other organizations from around the world are acting to support civilians. Pramila Patten in her fight against sexual violence made it clear that this was a “battle against impunity”. She flew over to Ukraine to send a strong message to the victims, assuring them that the world stands with them and encouraging them to break the silence. This would not only provide moral support and courage to other victims but would also send a strong message to the rapists that the world is watching them, and they would not be left without paying for the consequences²⁷.

The UK introduced a family visa scheme for citizens of Ukrainians who have immediate or extended family living in the UK. After much criticism, it launched the Homes for Ukraine scheme which allowed citizens even without relatives to settle in the UK. Citizens of the UK were also given the right to nominate an individual or family to state rent-free for six months in UK and refugees who came via this scheme were allowed to work for three years, get healthcare services,

²⁵ Uehling, Greta. “Ukraine's War Has Shattered Some Friendships and Family Ties – but 'Care Ethics' Have Strengthened Other Relationships.” *The Conversation*, October 6, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/ukraines-war-has-shattered-some-friendships-and-family-ties-but-care-ethics-have-strengthened-other-relationships-188200>.

²⁶ SUSHKO, OLEKSANDR. “Defending Civil Society in Ukraine.” *Open Society Foundations*, March 8, 2022. <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/defending-civil-society-in-ukraine>.

²⁷ France 24, “Rape Used in Ukraine as a Russian 'Military Strategy:' Un.” *France 24*. France 24, October 14, 2022. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20221014-rape-used-in-ukraine-as-a-russian-military-strategy-un>.

welfare and access to schools. As of 28 June, the government had handed over 142500 Ukrainian visas²⁸.

The US government however was reluctant to help their own citizens stranded in Ukraine during the war. The US citizens were advised to monitor the government notices and local, and international media outlets carefully regarding the changes in security conditions and alerts to shelter but stated clearly that “the U.S. government will not be able to evacuate U.S. citizens from Ukraine, citizens may seek consular services, that included requests for repatriation loans, passport and visa services at U.S. embassies and consulates in neighboring countries”²⁹. In the absence of the government to help its citizens and non-governmental organization, a Florida-based private volunteer group, named Project Dynamo evacuated 23-24 U.S. citizens stranded in Ukraine. Despite the risks the team would face, they completed the mission to help their citizens.

The Government of India on the other hand launched, ‘operation Ganga’ an initiative to bring back over 20000 Indian students stranded in the conflict zone. They provided all kinds of assistance to the students and citizens of India stuck in different areas of the war zone. The Prime Minister mentioned four special envoys to different nations from where the evacuation of these students would take place. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare along with the Ministry of Aviation, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of External Affairs worked with each other to vacate the Indians from Ukraine and the government was successful in bringing back all its citizens³⁰. The central government of India compared the country’s response to help its citizens to that of the US, UK and China where it claimed that its ‘Operation Ganga’ continues and remains functional while others have been unsuccessful in helping their citizens. The Chinese postponed their evacuation plan while India continued with its operation, the US claimed that it would not evacuate its citizens and the UK also made it clear that it will not be able to support or provide for any more of its

²⁸ Unknown “How Many Ukrainian Refugees Are There and Where Have They Gone?” BBC News. BBC, July 4, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472>.

²⁹ Staff, OpIndia. “Joe Biden Administration Refuses to Evacuate US Citizens from Ukraine.” OpIndia, February 26, 2022. <https://www.opindia.com/2022/02/joe-biden-administration-refuses-to-evacuate-us-citizens-from-ukraine/>. E43

³⁰ Unknown. “Operation Ganga, a Mission to Bring Back Indian Students Stranded in Ukraine.” Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Accessed October 29, 2022. <https://amritmahotsav.nic.in/spotlight-of-the-week-detail.htm?96>.

citizens stranded in Ukraine. The German embassy in Kyiv closed down but the Indian embassy continues to function. Despite all the criticism by the opposition party India's Operation Ganga has turned out to be one of the most successful safe evacuations of its citizens³¹.

China, on the other hand, has attempted to portray its position on the crisis in terms of objectivity, neutrality, and independence. However, the last three months have revealed that China is effectively skewed towards Russia even though it claims to be in the middle. Despite its hazy and indecisive nature, China's answers have followed a consistent pattern since the outset of the war. China's emphasis on sovereignty and territorial integrity can be viewed as a veiled reference to Russia's breach of UN Charter norms. When China says it supports "common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security" and the "legitimate security concerns of all countries," it is indicated the current security threat posed by NATO's eastern expansion to Russia³². China has also stated that the West in general, and the United States in particular, are solely to blame for the aftermath. According to Beijing, the US is not only accountable for the conflict's inception but also for its global consequences. In this light, China has slammed the use of sanctions against Russia as well as the transfer of armaments to Ukraine as fueling the fire. Its Foreign Ministry stated that the sanctions had "exacerbated the food crisis and financial difficulties in poor nations, inflicting even more burdens on the people" at a time when the world is still battling to recover from the pandemic³³.

Another interesting support group which can be termed humanitarian aid and mission is psychologically influencing the Russian citizens to convince their leader to stop the war. Norwegian tech entrepreneur, Fabian Falch, with a group of volunteers built a system to evade spam filters and send millions of emails to Russian citizens, urging them to disregard the

³¹ Nanjappa, Vicky. "Ukraine: Why India's Evacuation Response Is Way Better than Other Nations." <https://www.oneindia.com>, March 1, 2022. <https://www.oneindia.com/india/ukraine-why-india-s-evacuation-response-is-way-better-than-other-nations-3377525.html>.

³² V., A. (2022, June 18). Where does China stand on the Russia-Ukraine conflict? Return to frontpage. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://frontline.thehindu.com/world-affairs/decoding-china-stance-on-russia-ukraine-conflict/article65510759.ece>

³³ Ibid

propaganda of the government and sending them accurate statistics about the war in Ukraine³⁴. Along with other behavioural scientists, Fabian is able to create messages that are clearly formulated, that are less threatening and more persuasive. The main aim of the emails is to focus on the humanitarian and economic costs of the war and also explain how to access websites that evade government censorship and provide reliable information regarding the war so that everyone including Russian citizens joins on the path towards peace³⁵.

Conclusion

Since February 24, 2022, the Russian army has been waging an aggressive war against Ukraine and transparently attacking civilians and their infrastructures. The recent change in Russian strategy of war, from targeting military bases to the destruction of the nation has serious implications for the survival of civilians. This has not only inflicted death and widespread suffering on the citizens of Ukraine but a lot of them have been displaced within their country and around 5.3 million of them have become refugees. The war has prompted a significant humanitarian response, but Russia's assault has just increased over time. Although collecting accurate morbidity and mortality data has been a challenge, the United Nations has confirmed 4569 deaths and 5619 injuries among the citizens caused by the heavy shelling, artillery, missiles and bombs³⁶.

The recent military strategy of Russia has been to attack healthcare facilities and health workers which is resulting in immediate deaths and reduced healthcare facilities. From February 24 to June 24, the World Health Organisation reported 323 attacks on healthcare facilities and the numbers are rising³⁷. The process of forced displacement, lack of clean water and food, health care facilities

³⁴ Minson, Julia. "Using Psychology to Tell Russians the Truth about Ukraine." Time. Time, April 20, 2022. <https://time.com/6168314/psychology-persuade-russians-truth-ukraine/>.

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ S., Barry, Levy, and Jennifer Leaning. "Russia's War in Ukraine - the Devastation of Health and Human Rights: Nejm." New England Journal of Medicine, October 29, 1970. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2207415>.

³⁷ World Health Organization. Surveillance system for attacks on health care (SSA): Ukraine, February 24–June 24, 2022 (<https://extranet.who.int/ssa/LeftMenu/Index.aspx.opens.in.new.tab>).

and other infrastructures has resulted in civilian morbidity and mortality. Civilians are exposed to increased risk for diarrheal diseases like cholera; respiratory disorders like measles; Covid-19 and tuberculosis due to communal living, decreased access to health care, inadequate medical care, and unhygienic living conditions. Malnutrition is another risk, especially among infants and young children that may lead to detrimental effects on not just physical development but also cognitive development which will affect morbidity later in life.

The Russian army is also causing extensive environmental damage. Explosions and fires contaminate the air with toxic gases. The destruction of significant industries also contaminates the water and soil with toxic chemicals. The Russian military is also causing extensive pollution in the Black Sea which is disrupting sea life. The different types of land mines and cluster bombs Russia is using has short- and long-term health and safety effects.

To avoid all these harmful effects of the war and save the lives of innocent civilians it is important for all countries to sign the Charter of the United Nations- ethical duty to respond- not only to protect the “right to life” for citizens of Ukraine but also to safeguard the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states only then can there be an ethical international order³⁸. Although the ethical obligation is to respond to the atrocities committed by Russia, how we do it must be thought carefully with both ethics and strategy because Russia is a great power with nuclear capabilities. Putin has already threatened to use nuclear weapons when needed and this threat must be a consideration in the ethical and strategic response.

Jonas Oehman, in his article, ‘Ukrainian civil society can play a key role in securing victory over Russia’ mentions that the Ukrainian civil society has evolved into an unmatched platform that offers direct access to fighting units and other branches of the military³⁹. This includes providing food, undergarments and other supplies to the army as well as collecting and compiling records

³⁸ Gvosdev, Nikolas. “Ukraine: An Ethical Response.” *Ethics & International Affairs*. Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, March 8, 2022. <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2022/ukraine-an-ethical-response/>.

³⁹ Oehman, Jonas. “Ukrainian Civil Society Can Play a Key Role in Securing Victory over Russia.” *Atlantic Council*, August 2, 2022. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukrainian-civil-society-can-play-a-key-role-in-securing-victory-over-russia/>.

about the immediate needs of the frontline. This bond between the civilians and the army not just increases the efficiency of doing work but also provides a moral boost and support to fight the war. Ukraine's society is a significant and positive force that has records of successful results. Therefore, this paper recommends that this asset of the civil society must be supported by international partners of Ukraine and provide financial aid, grants, training or partnership to make this process more effective and bring justice.

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