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Ukraine war: Amid shifting alliances, General Assembly passes resolution condemning Russia's aggression

UN Photo/Manuel Elías | The UN General Assembly votes on a resolution on Ukraine.

24 February 2025 | **Peace and Security**

Three years to the day since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the UN General Assembly adopted two competing resolutions on resolving the conflict on Monday, one initiated by the United States and the other by Ukraine – a sign of strategic

**differences within the transatlantic alliance over the way forward
for peace.**

The resolution tabled by the United States, which omitted mention of
Russian aggression, only passed after a majority of Member States voted
to add EU-led amendments which led to the US abstaining on it own motion
and voting against the Ukrainian text.

However, the text in the original US resolution was passed hours later in the
Security Council – the first to do so since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine
by Russia on 24 February 2022.

Until Monday's high stakes diplomatic debates, the Security Council –
which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security – has
been unable to find consensus, owing largely to Russia's veto power as a
permanent member.

The two General Assembly draft resolutions put before UN Member States
during the morning session both ostensibly called for peace and an end to
the conflict – but diverged fundamentally.

UN Photo/Manuel Elías | Deputy Foreign Minister Betsa Mariana of Ukraine addresses the Eleventh
Emergency Special Session (resumed) of the General Assembly on Ukraine.

Path to peace?

"Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine", proposed by Ukraine and co-sponsored by a host of European countries, was a three-page document that included clauses noting that "the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has persisted for three years and continues to have devastating and long-lasting consequences not only for Ukraine, but also for other regions and global stability."

It called for a commitment to "the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders" and the need to ensure accountability for crimes committed under international law, through "fair and independent investigations and prosecutions at national and international level".

The US tabled its own version alongside, titled "Path to Peace", a brief draft limited to mourning the loss of life throughout the Russian Federation-Ukraine conflict, reiterating that the principal purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security and to peacefully settle disputes and imploring a swift end to the conflict, urging a lasting peace between Ukraine and Russia.

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#BREAKING

UN General Assembly ADOPTS resolution "Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine"; calls for deescalation, early cessation of hostilities and peaceful resolution of the war against Ukraine

RESULT
In favor: 93
Against: 18
Abstain: 65

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Amendments to the text were put forward by Russia and the European Union. Russia proposed adding the words "including by addressing its root causes" to the third paragraph (on a swift end to the conflict).

The EU proposed adding some of the language in the Ukrainian resolution, referring to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation (rather than the Russian Federation-Ukraine conflict), the "territorial integrity" of Ukraine and calling for a peace in line with the UN Charter.

UN Photo/Manuel Elías | US Deputy Permanent Representative Dorothy Shea addresses the Eleventh Emergency Special Session (resumed) of the General Assembly on Ukraine.

A change in position

When it came to the vote, Ukraine's version passed by 93 votes to 18. The US voted against, alongside Russia, marking a major shift of its position on the conflict and previous votes.

The US supported a similar resolution   submitted in February 2023 which received 141 votes in favour.

A total of 65 nations abstained, including South Africa, whose representative, Ambassador Mathu Joyini, said the draft "does not go far enough in terms of inclusivity and creating a positive momentum towards a peaceful negotiation".

The US version was also adopted (93 in favour, eight against and 73 abstentions), but Member States also voted to add the European Union amendments with 60 in favour, 18 against and 81 abstentions.

The US voted against the amendments and abstained on its own resolution (the General Assembly failed to adopt the Russian amendment, with 31 in favour, 71 against and 59 abstentions).

Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister Mariana Betsa told the Assembly that the way Russian aggression is answered "will define the future of Ukraine… Europe and our common future".

Later, flanked by co-sponsors of the country's General Assembly resolution, she delivered a statement at the media stakeout just outside the Security Council Chamber. She said the General Assembly had demanded "an early end to this war of aggression and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in Ukraine, in line with the UN Charter".

The General Assembly's reaffirmation of support for international law and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity was profoundly important, she said, warning that a peace deal that "risks rewarding aggression increases the risk" and creates a dangerous precedent for the future.

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe | The Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Betsa Mariana (centre at podium), addresses the media outside the Security Council at UN Headquarters in New York.

Security Council breakthrough

Attention turned to the Security Council in the afternoon, where a vote was due to be held on the United States resolution.

As before, there were attempts to add amendments supported by several western European countries, referring to a "full-scale invasion" by Russia and Ukraine's territorial integrity, and proposals from Russia to acknowledge the "deeply rooted reasons" for the conflict and lasting peace in both Ukraine and Russia.

But, the amendments were voted down and the resolution was passed without any changes by the 15-member Council (10 in favour, none against and five abstentions).

Speaking after the vote, US Ambassador Dorothy Shea said Washington sincerely appreciated Council members' support saying that it "puts us on the path to peace".

Undermining international foundations

After a pause in proceedings, Rosemary DiCarlo, the head of UN Political Affairs, briefed the 15 Council members on the current situation in Ukraine.

She said that the Russian invasion "undermined the very foundations of the international order" and reminded delegates that, since 24 February 2022, at least 12,654 Ukrainian civilians, including 673 children, have been killed.

Referring to the Security Council resolution adopted earlier in the Council, Ms. DiCarlo insisted that peace in Ukraine must be "just, sustainable and comprehensive, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and resolutions of the General Assembly", including those adopted on Monday morning during the General Assembly emergency special session.

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