

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Ukrainian and Russian Cross Border Conflict Dynamics: The Humanitarian Crisis Response Management 2014 2024

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## Abstract

This paper aimed to examine the evolving cross-border conflict dynamics in the Ukraine and Russian rivalry from 2014-2024, focusing on the humanitarian crisis response mechanism and its effectiveness in managing a decade long geopolitical conflict. The mixed method approaches were applied to aid the study. Several secondary sources on humanitarian responses were consulted which includes: Policy documents, UN humanitarian response reports, scholarly journals books and conference papers. The Humanitarian Crisis response management strategies, cross border conflict and territorial annexation as a political legal instrument theories were applied to analyze the multi-layered nature of the cross-border conflict and the humanitarian response mechanism. The findings revealed several efforts to ameliorate the humanitarian crisis response strategy since the crisis erupted in 2014. The findings also went further to reveal the lapses and shortcoming of the humanitarian efforts by government agencies and other bodies, showing that not much efforts have been done to deescalate the hostility to solve the humanitarian crisis response. The paper suggested that the way forward out of this quagmire is the application of diplomatic negotiations, military and economic assistance to Ukraine, more humanitarian aids/assistance to both countries among others. The paper concluded that more flexible frameworks that can address cross-border conflict should be invigorated while maintaining humanitarian principle and supporting geo-political stability initiatives to end the decades of crisis management and conflict between the two countries

## KEY WORDS

Cross Border conflict, Ukraine – Russia Conflict, humanitarian crisis responds, crisis management, conflict dynamics.

## INTRODUCTION

The decade long Ukraine – Russian conflict has significantly changed the mechanism and strategies of international conflicts, crisis managements and humanitarian response strategies, starting from a regional geographical altercation in 2014 to Europeans biggest humanitarian tragedy since World War II. It started from Russia annexation and occupation of Crimea and the outbreak of armed hostility in eastern Ukraine. The conflict has brought about untold cross-border dynamics

that have challenged indigenous mechanism of humanitarian inter-inventions and global efforts in mitigating the hostility. The upsurge of this crisis into a full scale war of Russian annexation and invasion in February 2022, has displaced over 13 million people nearly a third of Ukraine pre-war population with more than 8 million refugees seeking protection across international borders. This fundamentally reshapes regional security architectures and humanitarian response mechanism.

(Council for Foreign Relation, 2023).

This massive displacement has ignited the activation of the European Union's Temporary Protection for the first time in its history, demonstrating both the unprecedented magnitude of the conflict and the adaptive capacity and capabilities of the international protection frameworks. The cross-border humanitarian crisis presents a fundamental case study for examining the beginning of conflict management mechanisms across immediate phases. This is from the first crisis eruption, protracted displacement to a full scale emergency response in the conflict prone areas. The humanitarian corridors had been occupied by innovative methodology to refugee protection, including digital registrations systems, cash based assistance programmes and several layers of civil society mobilization across host countries. (ACAPS, 2023).

However, as the conflict enters its third year of intensive warfare, emerging challenges are "refugee fatigue" among host communities, infrastructure strain on receiving countries and the complex dynamics of forced displacements into Russian territory, with U.S official's documentary of the forcible movement of up to 1.6 million Ukrainian civilian. (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2024). These developments underscore the paper's relevance of analyzing how cross-border humanitarian dynamics have changed over the decade long conflict period, offering important illuminations for future conflict preparations and the development of more resilient international humanitarian response mechanism.

### **A Historical Origins of Ukrainian-Russian Conflict (2013 – 2014)**

According to Diuk (2014), the origins of the current conflict between Ukrainian-Russian could be traced to the political brouhaha that begun in Ukraine during the late 2013, which drastically altered the geopolitical landscape of Eastern Europe. The remote cause of the conflict started in November 2013 when Ukrainian president Viktor Yabukoruch, stopped the readiness for a while on signing an association agreement with the European Union that had taken some years for development. It is a point to understand that this policy of suspension and stoppage represented a dramatic reversal of Ukraine agreed foreign policy direction towards European integration which however erupted into a full-scale violence across the country.

Katchanovski (2015), in corroborating Diuk's postulations,

argues that the suspension was however controversial in the sense that it came after extensive negotiations and public expectations that Ukraine would deepen her relations with the EU, a departure from Russians control. The author stressed further, in consonance with the popular views, that the policy was not merely all about trade relations but reflected deeper questions about Ukraine's civilizational choice between European democratic values and Russian authoritarianism. This political upheaval reached a crescendo during the winter of 2013 – 2014 as peaceful protest started into what metamorphosed to Euro maiden or revolution of dignity. At the onset, it kickstarted in Kyiv's independence square (maiden nezaleznnosti) and the hostilities grew from students led violence against the EU deals suspension into a wider movement demanding democratic reforms, anti-corruption measures and Yanukovich's resignation.

According to Laurelle, (2015), violence captures the disagreement to a single policy decision representing a drastic reflection of the post-soviet politics of corruption and nepotism that is part of Ukrainian government. This situation became worst in February 2014 when the government security forces used deadly force against protesters, resulting to over 100 casualties which became known as "Heavenly Hundred". These events brought about Yanukovich's exile from Ukraine on February 22, 2014 following the collapse of his government just as the authority and the parliament voted to remove him from office. It is quite clear that Russia's response to these upheavals represents the beginning of active military intervention in Ukrainian affairs and the current phase of the hostilities. Within some days of Yanukovich's removal, unmarked Russian military forces appeared in Crimea rapidly seizing control of strategic locations across the peninsula in what represented a clear violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty. In corroboration to this view, Diuk (2014) opined that the Russian annexation of Crimea in march, 2014 following a horribly organized referendum condemned by the international community established for the first time, Russia's willingness to apply military force to achieve geo-political objectives in her quest for geographical expansion. As a result of this incidence, pro-Russian separatist movements sprang up immediately in eastern Ukrainians Donetsk and Luhansk regions, supported by Russians military equipment, personnel, and financial resources, resulting to an armed hostility that would continue for years. This epoch clearly established the foundational or the root causes of the grievances and territorial conflicts that started to explain

Ukraine – Russian relations till today and invariably led to Russia's complicit invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

### **Conceptual Framework of Cross Border Conflict Dynamics**

According Salehyan (2009), cross border conflict dynamics covers several approaches through which armed violence traverses and is controlled by state boundaries generating cascading effects on regional security, civilian populations and humanitarian systems. Fearon (1995), argues that armed non state actors and their proxies routinely exploit border porosity to secure sanctuary and logistics networks fundamentally distorting conflict duration and intensity. He demonstrated further that the information asymmetric and commitments problems inherent in cross-border contexts were third party guarantors which are structurally absent. This is why rationalist are of the views that this is one of the reasons why parties to the conflict fail to reach negotiated settlement even when continued warfare is mutually costly. For Salehyan, et al. (2011), the combination of external state sponsors have the intensity of increasing more veto players that had extended the conflict duration, compounding humanitarian exposure. Hoffman (2007), is of the view that these dynamics are most rapidly expressed hybrid warfare, which he defines as the simultaneous employment of conventional military capabilities, irregular tactics and information operations within a single theatre to achieve political objectives under conditions of strategic ambiguity. Renz (2016) refer to these dynamics in post-soviet context to explain how hybrid strategies blur the threshold between peace and war, thereby delaying humanitarian access and creating legal grey zones that impede accountability under international humanitarian law. Kofman (2015) argues further that hybrid conflict within a historically continues strategic traditions in which borders function not as passive political lines but as active instruments of coercion, making cross border conflict dynamics not merely a geographic description but an independent casual variable. And this shapes escalation thresholds, protection gaps, and the conditions under which durable peace becomes achievable.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The following theories were chosen to support the theme of this paper. They are as follows:

#### **1. The Cross Border Conflict Theory**

This theory according to Zartman, (2011), postulated that

armed violence does not observe the juridical limits of state sovereignty but rather attempts to form part of a wider regional conflict system. The author went further to exert, that this is carried out through dynamics that cross borders and a fundamental policy gap exists in border lands where governance and diplomacy can struggle to reach as conflict response strategies still focus on the nation state as the central unit of analysis and intervention. From a border studies lenses, Lahmann (2007) argues that borders should not be understood as static juridical lines but rather as meeting points or dynamics sites of encounter, clash and redefinition where conflicting forces generate new social outcomes. This theory demonstrate how Russia-Ukraine border has functioned continuously as a territorial claim, a civilization frontier and an active military theater.

#### **2. Territorial Annexation as a Political Legal Instrument Theory**

According to Elden and Painter (2023), the September (2022) annexation of four Ukrainian territories like Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, without full military control represents a deliberate instrumentalization of territorial law and a conflict tool. The theory, as asserted strongly by the author is of the fact that plenary governing authority, over contested space are designed to restructure any future peace negotiations as discussions over de jure Russian sovereign territory rather than occupied Ukrainian land. Zartman (2011) observed that, in cross border conflict theory, this reflects a shift from dispute across boundaries to disputes about boundaries.

#### **3. Humanitarian Crisis Response Management Strategies Theory**

According to Bernett, (2008), humanitarianism is structurally organized by political dynamics in which emergencies are produced, meaning that response strategies are never purely technical but one always rooted in geopolitical power relations that determine access, prioritization and the distribution of protection. It illuminates important ingredients that will be relevant to the Ukraine context, where the weaponisation of humanitarian corridors, the selective obstruction of aid delivery to Russian occupied sphere of influence and the politisation of refuge reception within European Union member states all demonstrate that humanitarian response management operates within, rather than above, the conflict dynamics it seeks to address.

Stoddard, (2007), demonstrated his argument through systematic evaluation of the inter agency standing committee cluster system that humanitarian reform efforts were designed to strengthen coordination, accountability and response capacity across functional sectors including shelter, health, food, security and protection. The author stressed further that these efforts overtime encounters structural obstacles that were rooted in mandate fragmentation, funding competition among agencies and the absence of unified operational command. These were acutely manifest in the Ukraine response where the combined presence of United Nations Agencies, the Red Cross and the Red Crescent movement, hundreds of international non-governmental organization, and a highly capable domesticated civil society sector created both complementary capacities and significant coordination failures. Slim (2015) argues that these operational challenges within a broader humanitarian ethics framework, stressing that the moral obligations to protect and assist civilian populations affected by armed conflict demands, not only focusing on the principle of humanity, impartiality neutrality and independence, but also the institutional courage to negotiate, access document violations and sustain presence under conditions of active hostility. Civilian infrastructure forced displacements of millions and the obstruction of humanitarian access documented throughout the Ukrainian-Russian conflict between 2014 and 2024.

### **Reasons for Choosing This Theories**

Cross-border conflict theory and the humanitarian crisis response management theory illuminates the clarity of the topic, because they provide a comprehensive analysis that addresses the entire complex emergencies, recognizing that no single state can effectively manage trans-boundary crisis alone and therefore institutionalizing cooperation mechanism, burden-sharing arrangements and coordinated command structures among diverse authors including state militaries, UN agencies, NGO's and regional bodies. This is grounded in international humanitarian law, the UN charter, and the responsibility to protect refugee law conventions. These theories strive to embolden that the responses are legally defensible, ethically sound and in consonance with globally accepted norms of human dignity, while simultaneously integrating early warning systems, evidence based decision making tools and scalable governance models that can adapt to crises ranging from small refugee flows to large scale regional conflicts. They place explicit emphasis on protecting

the most vulnerable civilian population (IDPS) refugees, both women and children, while also addressing the remote causes of crises through the integration of the development security nexus, cultural sensitivity, locally led response models and accountability mechanism that promote transparency and prevent resource mismanagement. However, these theories transform humanitarian crisis from simply occurrences to survive into opportunities for institutional learning, resilience building and long term structural improvement, making them the most robust and holistic choice for managing the increasingly complex and politically sensitive emergencies of the modern international system.

### **Crisis Management Response in the Ukraine – Russia Conflict (2016-2024)**

According to International Crisis Group (2018), the report was of the view that the humanitarian crisis in the Ukraine Donbas Regional and Crisis Management response deteriorated immensely during this period. The report observed further that over 3 million people were living in the conflict zone, with 207 million living in separatist spheres of influence and the remaining 200,00 people living close to the contact of aids. The report went further to argue that since 2016 to early 2015, the UN had funds to cover for only 45% of the humanitarian aids needed in the eastern Ukraine war zone. In 2017, as a result of this, the humanitarian situations deteriorated drastically during this period. It is the view that cross border dynamics and access to humanitarian aids became a problematic since 2016-2021 because of over access of these isolated areas by the aids workers. This view was corroborated by fisher (2019) who argued that the crisis management response from 2016-2021 had challenges in competing with geopolitical interest, lack of funding and restated humanitarian access that prevents effective supervision.

The Remote and Immediate Causes of Ukraine and Russian Cross Border Conflict

#### **Remote Cause:**

According to Eduiger (2022), several scholars while analyzing the war's deeper structural roots often short with rival theoretical explanations for Russian Foreign Policy behaviour. International relation scholars situate the war within realist theory, arguing that Russia's action stem from long standing security anxieties about western encroachment. tThough this account has faced significant internal critique from within realism itself over exactly how security concerns operates. The

author went further to argue that competing peer reviewed account emphasizes identity and nationalism rather than security calculations. This argument traces the invasion's roots to a revival of imperial nationalist ideas that deny Ukrainians separate national existence, treating Ukrainians as part of a broader "Pan-Russian" nation alongside Russians and Belarusians. Kuzio (2023) argue that this ideological narrative was reinforced by a revived soviet-era discourse casting Ukrainian nationalist as fascist requiring denazification.

### **The Immediate Causes**

According to Polanski, (2024), the 2022 full scale invasion followed years of unresolved conflict beginning with Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and intervention in the Donbas several scholars argued Russian foreign policy of invasion of Ukraine, arguing from the fact that the invasion fundamentally disrupted prior academic assumptions about what drives Kremlin decision making, forcing a reassessment of the fields existing theoretical frameworks. The author went further to observe that pre-2022 research had underestimated how domestic political and ideological factors inside Russia rather than purely external provocations shaped the timing and scale of the escalation. Edinger (2022) argued that from the realist side, proponents of the security driven explanation frame the invasion as a preventive action taken in response to a perceived shifting balance of power through critics within the same theoretical tradition dispute how directly this logic explain Russian's specific timing and objectives.

### **Cross Border Humanitarian Response Strategy in The Ukraine and Russian Conflict (2014-2015)**

According to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2024), the cross border humanitarian response to the Ukraine-Russian conflict experienced a setback since the inception of the conflict in 2014 due to security upheavals in that corridors from 2024. There have been intense use of weapons and armed drones which however makes humanitarian response a challenging task in delivering timely aids to affected people especially in communities and villages close to the front line.

By the end of 2024, humanitarian agencies and partners reported 310 incidents affecting humanitarian operations in Ukraine, making 20% increase compared to 2023, with reports of violence against humanitarian personnel's, assets and facilities rising to 20%, amounting to 108 incidents. In 2025, the International Committee of the Red-Cross has kept to its

ethics of neutral intermediary throughout the decade of this conflict and facilitating safe cross boarder passage of not more than 270 vulnerable adults from territory been controlled by one party to the conflict to the other in 2024.

Ineli-Ciger (2025) is of the view that since February 2022 there has been an intensity of the hostilities between the two countries which had led to the full scale invasion of Ukraine that transformed cross-border humanitarian response requirements that created large displacements that prompted the activation of the "European Union Temporary Protection Directive" for the first time in its history. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the EU step up on the 4th of March to activate the council directive 2001/55/EC, to protect the mass influx of displaced persons, access to legal EU presidency, work permits, educations, housing, medical care and social welfare assistance.

According to Delors center reports of 2022, the report observed that it mobilizes 17 billion Euros by reorganizing previously unused EU cohesion policy funds through the CARE and CARE + initiatives with Poland receiving the largest amount of pre-financing at 560 Million Euros, followed by Romania 450 million, Hungary 299 million and Czech Rep. 283 Million.

The International Organization for Migration (2024), observed that the displacement of people was alarming with not less than 3.57 million people remaining internally displaced as of October 2024 while more than 6 million fled abroad since the beginning of the hostilities and 12.7 million people urgently needs humanitarian assistance. The report observed further that the nature of this conflict since inception has necessitate from emergency response to long term cross border humanitarian strategies that will comprise indigenous methods and adaptive programming modalities. The (I.O.m) that was stationed in Ukraine has collaborated with 91 NGO's, 93% were indigenous had signed contracts with 15 local implementing partners as of November 2024 to deliver humanitarian aids to the people. Although in trying to push forward this humanitarian response strategy, it has drastically been met with some challenges because some aid workers had lost their lives in the frontline of duty.

### **Complete Invasion and Humanitarian Problem (2022 - 2024)**

According to United Nation High Commission for Human right (2023) the report observed that full-scale Russian invasion of

Ukraine started from February 24, 2022. The report observed that this is the most severe humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II which brought about large displacements of civilians who were in severe needs of aids. About 5.9 million Ukrainians sought international protection across Europe and beyond and 5.4 million were internally displaced within Ukraine. According to World bank report, (2024) poverty rate rose to 5.5% to 24.2% in 2022 while an estimate of 2.4 million jobs were lost during the first period of the hostility. It could be observed that the rate of rapid displacements was overwhelming prompting regional humanitarian response mechanism to respond fast to ameliorate the needs of millions who were forcibly displaced and homeless. According to international organization for migration, (2023) the report observed that the hostilities continued from 2023-2024, the humanitarian crisis persisted, about 14.6 million people representing 40% of Ukrainians populations needs humanitarian aids and protection. It is a point to note that this period witnessed a high casualty rate as postulated by UN high commission for human right report of (2023) that verified that 25,170 civilian casualties including 9,177 deaths and 15,993 were injured by June 2023 the report were short of the rapid rise in human casualties in leaps and bounds as of December 2023 which required urgent attentions to cushion this anomaly.

According to International Organization for Migration (2024) the report observed that infrastructural damages, temporary power outages, water shortages and civilian casualties contributed a lot to the problems of the humanitarian response mechanism. The report finally concluded that by October 2024, the displacement had experienced a rapid increase to 59% of internally displaced persons having been displaced for over two years and above indicating their desire to remain in their present locations in their safe zones pending the stoppage or cessation of hostilities.

### **The Impacts of the Conflicts on Both Countries**

The Ukrainian –Russian conflicts that started from 2014-2024 could be seen as one of the geopolitical crises of the 21st century, that metamorphose into humanitarian economic and social consequences for both countries with variable aspects impacts on both countries.

The Impacts of the Conflict on Ukraine

#### **i. The Humanitarian Crisis**

According to Astror et al (2022) the crisis affected nearly 19

million people which cut across international regions with lots of refugee's inflows to Europe, at least three times greater than during the 2015-2016 migration crisis. Pereira et al (2022) observed that since the full scale war began, nearly 6.9 million Ukrainians have been registered as refugees, with a further 307 million internally displaced within Ukraine. Nearly a quarter of Ukraine's pre-war population has been forced to flee their homes. More than 44,000 civilians could be said to have been wounded or killed including 2,500 children, while rockets and drones has damaged or destroy more than 205 million homes across Ukraine, representing roughly 13% of the properties destroyed. It is understandable that the humanitarian crisis has generated a lot of challenges for neighboring European countries, especially Poland, Romania and Moldova, which have absorbed majority of the displaced refugees persons as a result of martial law restrictions preventing military age men from leaving Ukraine.

#### **ii. Economic Devastation**

According to Astror et al (2022), the Western financial support became increasingly critical as this war intensify especially as Ukraine lost its ability to export half of its products through the black seaports. Essential agricultural products and metals were wasted and damaged estimated up to 62.6 billion USD in the early stages of the conflict. Pereira et al (2022) also observed that Ukraine GDP declined by more than 13% since the start of the conflict and the unemployment rate increased from 10.3% in 2021 to 18.4% by the end of 2023. The conflict has drastically damaged essential infrastructure especially roads, healthcare facilities and educational institutions. This has retarded the country's long-term development capacity. Ukraine is known for its agricultural production which were the cardinal stone of its economy. This has been severely disrupted due to landmine, contamination, destruction of farm equipments and loss of access to ports for export which has resulted to short of revenue and financial flow.

### **The Impacts of the Conflict on Russia**

#### **i. Economics Sanctions and Contraction**

According to Astror et al (2022), the sanctions that was imposed on Russia had a very grave impacts on Russia's economy and financial sector, with GDP estimated to contract by at least 7.8% in 2022. During the first week of the crisis, Russia faced capital flight, foreign exchange depreciation and deposit outflows with inflation accelerating close to 30% by the end of 2022. The author went further to opined that

despite the fact that a portion of Russian reserve assets were frozen in the EU and G7, the central bank of Russia managed to stabilize financial markets through capital controls, foreign exchange controls, regulatory easing for financial institutions and doubling of the key policy rate. The various sanctions imposed on Russia resulted to Russia's increasing economic isolation from western markets, forcing the country to reorient its trade relationship towards Asia. Particularly towards China and India. However, this reorientation has come at a large cost with Russian exports often been sold at a substantial discount.

### **Structural Economic Transformations**

According to Astror et al (2022), the conflict resulted to a drastic change in military, geopolitical, economic and financial upheavals in the Asian corridor marking the start of warfare in Europe on a scale not seen since the Balkan wars of 1990's. The Russians economy has changed with large resources diverted to militarization and defense production away from civilian resource production. This diversion has resulted to labour shortage in non-military industries and it has contributed to inflationary pressures as government spending on the military outsmart other investments. It has also resulted to brain drain from Russia with hundreds of thousands of skilled professionals particularly in technology and finance sector leaving in droves to other countries to avoid conscription to seek for greener pastures outside Russia.

### **The Impacts on Global Spheres**

These hostility has brought about food insecurity for import dependent countries with low capital income according to Popescu et al (2023). Ukraine and Russia together account for a large portion of global wheat, barley, sunflower and oil exports. The implication of this is the rising food and energy prices hike on low income populations and developing countries. This obstacle disrupted chain of supply resulting drastically to loss of jobs and financial hardship globally. The conflict has demonstrated the vulnerability of global food systems to geopolitically shocks with countries in the Middle East and North Africa particularly affected by wheat shortages.

### **The Challenges in the Ukrainian-Russian Conflict and Humanitarian Response**

According to UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2025), the security related problems is one of the most humanitarian challenges in Ukraine. This is a result of rapid rise of hostilities in the war territories, war tactics and the use

of armed drones which have caused challenges in the delivering of humanitarian aids on time to the affected populations especially in the communities and villages close to the frontline. The report went further to opine that the rise in humanitarian aids as a result of the war surpasses the capacity of any single agency, institution or organization. These have resulted to effective synergy by aid workers to deliver aids because all social amenities have been destroyed making rapid delivery of aids impossible. Pysmenna, (2025) observed that an estimated 14.6 million people in Ukraine needed humanitarian assistance but due to lack of access to water, food, electricity with the health system suffering huge disruption and damage particularly where fighting has been intensified, it created a challenge for the agencies. Although in the areas occupied by the Russian federations, the situation remained worsened by extremely limited humanitarian access.

Danylo, et al (2025) argued that this hostility has contributed immensely to mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and psychological in Ukraine citizens distress irrespective of their status or gender. He argued further that persistent hostilities disrupted existing health issues and facilities impacted heavily on the mental health of the populace resulting to traumatic psychiatric disorder of the citizens. According to the author, in every 4 Ukraine one is at risk of developing mental illness such as (PTSD) depression, among others as a result of this hostility.

Brackstone et al, (2024) argues that out of 800 refugees or displaced persons within Ukraine between April and July 2022, 70% were reported to have anxiety illness. Adults in Ukraine tested positive for depression, insomnia and PTSD symptoms due to exposures to violent events like shelling, explosions or violence assault or witnessing the sudden death of loved ones.

### **The Way Forward**

The way forward in this hostility between Russian and Ukraine armed conflict requires immediate ceasefire mechanism in respect to long term security guarantees. Although in May 2025, direct diplomatic negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv was agreed that 1000 prisoners of war were to be exchanged between them with an agreement to meet again. Russia is demanding that Kyiv should withdraw from the four regions it invaded – Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. The Ukraine president had a divergent view insisting that "not a single Russian boot can remain on sovereign Ukraine territory" including Crimea and the Donbas.

Ukraine in an attempt to seek for legally binding security guarantees, like NATO membership which was streamlined in its constitution of 2019, due to bitter memories of the non-binding 1994 Budapest memorandum that Russia violated. Although, there has been a proposal of sending ground troops as part of security guarantees to become a certified member of NATO. The most possible way forward remains negotiations for exchange of prisoners, humanitarian aids assistance to displaced people such as shelter, food and medical care among others and monitored ceasefires, which will be followed by multilayered security arrangements, EU integrations and enhanced NATO eastern Flank presence.

A ceasefire in 2025 is more likely than not but a formal peace deal is quite unlikely if Russia and Ukraine accept to turn the existing front line into border of some sorts, to bring about the cessation of hostilities that will bring lasting peace. Stake holders are of the views that any agreement must adequately honour Ukraine's sovereignty, reject illegal Russia annexations ensure justice for war crimes and provide enlarged security guarantees to prevent renewed hostilities.

### **Conclusion**

The Ukrainian and Russian conflict had been a decade of hostilities that started with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 which later gravitated into a full-scale invasion in February 2022. This conflict had metamorphous from a regional spheres of conflict into a drastic humanitarian crises Europe has seen since World War II. It is obvious that the cross boarder dynamics is tripled with Russia systemic targeting of civilian infrastructures especially energy facilities along with continue large-scale coordinated attacks that have damaged more than 60% of Ukraine energy generating facilities, resulting to monumental humanitarian consequences that stretched far beyond the immediate conflict zones. The nature of this conflict has changed from active warfare in 2014-2015 to a frozen conflict and large scale military operations which show how cross border tensions can escalate when diplomatic framework collapsed.

The humanitarian responds within these periods has involved nearly 630 organizations, providing aids to 7.7 million people in 2024 alone. In spite of these they are lots of specific challenges unattended to. It's obvious to note that an estimate of 1.5 million civilians in Russian occupied areas remain unreachable while adequate findings remains a problem threatening the sustainability of humanitarian operations. The number of aid workers killed has nearly tripled in 2024 to be

compared to previous years. The dangerous operating environment and the violation of international humanitarian law pose also limitations and challenge to this conflicts. This crises management experience from 2014-2024 exposes both the resilience of the humanitarian system and its limitations when exposed to prolonged long-scale conflict where one party systematically restricts access and targets civilian infrastructure and where essential sectors like agriculture has been destroyed and large area contaminated with landmines that could take up to 750 years to clear. The legacy of this conflict will require sustained international engagement and innovative approaches to crisis response, recovery and peace building far beyond any eventual cessation of hostilities.

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