

THE WAR BETWEEN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA AS A HISTORICAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL ASPECT

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Abstract. The war that Russia started against Ukraine in 2022 shook the whole world. However, it is worth noting that the conflict has been going on since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and supported terrorist groups in eastern Ukraine. The study of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is relevant for several reasons. Firstly, it is an acute political problem that affects the state of affairs in the region and relations between the two states. It not only threatens the stability in Europe, but also threatens to destroy the entire modern system of international law. Secondly, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has deep historical roots that need to be understood in order to find ways to resolve it. Studying the history and culture of these two nations, as well as their relationship, can help us understand the causes of the conflict and how to hold Russia accountable. Thirdly, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is an example of the relationship between two states with different political, economic, and cultural systems. The study of the conflict can help to better understand these systems and their interactions. The study of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a relevant and important task for politicians, scholars, and the public, as it can help find ways to achieve Ukraine's victory, punish Russia, establish stability in the region, and prevent future conflicts. The purpose of the article is to analyze the historical retrospective of the development of Russian-Ukrainian relations and Russia's oppression of the Ukrainian people. In addition, the author examines the current preconditions of the conflict. The article also reveals the reaction of the international community to the current conflict and all the illegal acts committed by Russia. The article also aims to suggest ways to overcome the civilizational conflict between the countries.

Keywords: war in Ukraine, civilization war, Russian aggression, health, international law

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1. Introduction

The problem of ensuring international peace and security remains one of the most important tasks for the world community in the twenty-first century, and the cornerstone and characteristic feature of any research on the theory of international relations is to establish the main causes of conflicts and find ways to resolve or avoid them. Conflicts, especially armed conflicts (wars), are an integral part of international politics. There is a debatable opinion in political science that political relations are characterized by conflicts caused by the clash of national interests (Veselova 2020). The experience of international relations shows that contradictions are caused not by one factor, but by several. The source of the aggravation of international relations is the mismatch of interests of many states, economic unions, or military-political blocs (Beschastnyi et al. 2019). The subject of controversy is territories, borders, the desire to take a dominant position in the region, confrontation of economic and political interests of developing countries, negative ethnic stereotypes, religious contradictions, etc. Successful conflict resolution requires, first of all, mutual understanding, mutual concessions and compromises of the conflicting parties. Effective conflict resolution is possible if the participants recognize the need to make compromises, concessions and mutual compensation (Tarasiuk 2018).

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army on February 24, 2022, shocked the international community. No one could believe that a military conflict was possible in the center of Europe in the 21st century. And this is in the era of human rights, international law, and the prosperity of human rights organizations and the United Nations. However, it happened. Such a war has become a precedent for the international community and has revealed many problems that have not been properly addressed since World War II. The corresponding conflict showed a tracing paper of problems and again exposed the issues that states have been struggling with for a long time.

First is the role and importance of international law. The UN was created in 1945 after World War II to prevent similar conflicts from happening again in the future. Since then, a large number of international organizations have been established in various fields, but their purpose has been roughly the same: to resolve any conflicts through negotiations. In addition, numerous acts of international law have been created that regulate the relations of participants in international relations in various fields on an equal footing (Nalyvaiko et al. 2018). For those cases when the participants cannot resolve their issues on the basis of international law, international justice bodies have been established. All this has been developed and implemented for decades by the international community with the sole purpose of preventing acts of aggression. However, the violation of international law with the annexation of

Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent attack on Ukraine in 2022 has revealed a global problem: no system of law can exist without an effective sanctions mechanism. That is why the current system of international law needs to be fundamentally revised and changed. Moreover, these changes concern everything from the functioning of international organizations to the functioning of the international legal system. For example, a striking example is the IAEA's inability to free Ukraine's nuclear energy facilities; the UN's inability to force Russia to withdraw its troops; the OSCE's inability to influence the military conflict and human rights violations, etc. This list could go on and on.

We believe that Ukraine's victory will not only be a key geopolitical and historical milestone but will also mark the beginning of a new wave of formation of the international law system, which will be based on fundamentally new principles of existence. Second is the unwillingness of countries to directly counteract aggression. Despite the enormous assistance from partner countries, there are some countries that still adhere to the policy of *appeasement of the aggressor*. And there is a small number of countries that openly show their support for Russia and even help it violate international law. This all shows that states are not ready to stand up for the observance of international law as a united front but are still trying to *calm down* Russia and avoid direct confrontations with it. One of the reasons for this, of course, is the nuclear weapons that Russia possesses. And this reveals the third problem that states have been struggling with for a long time, namely the use of nuclear weapons (Teremetskyi et al. 2021).

The reduction of nuclear weapons has always been an important topic in the international arena. Several states, including the United States and Russia, possessed significant numbers of nuclear weapons, and it was important to reduce this level of weapons to prevent the nuclear war. One of the most important documents in this context is the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which was signed in 1987 between the United States and the Soviet Union. This treaty prohibited the deployment, production, and testing of missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. The INF Treaty was considered one of the most important achievements in nuclear arms reduction (Treaty Between the United States of America and The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles 1987). However, in recent years, the actions of the United States and Russia have again caused tensions between the two countries over nuclear weapons. In 2019, the United States withdrew from the INF Treaty, claiming that Russia was violating the agreement by developing and testing new missile systems (Bugos 2019). In response, Russia also withdrew from the treaty (Kimball 2019). At the same time, other states are contributing to the reduction of nuclear weapons. For example, in 2017, 122 countries signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits the development, production, testing and possession of nuclear weapons (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2017). However, given the current situation, states are no longer ready to support more restrictions. In addition, in 2023, Russia deployed nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus, therefore violating all possible norms and standards. Thus, the legal framework for curbing nuclear proliferation has also proved ineffective.

Fourthly, the issue of militarization has become an active one. Before the conflict, European countries were on a course of demilitarization. This is a process that has been going on for decades. It developed especially actively after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR. The demilitarization of modern European countries included not only a reduction in the number of military equipment and supplies, but also a change in approaches to national security (Buchyn and Hasiak 2015). Countries paid more attention to cybersecurity, diplomatic efforts, economic development and social programs than to military power. The need for demilitarization in general was increasingly discussed in the world. Countries believed that international conflicts and threats to national security could be resolved not only through military force, but also through dialogue, diplomacy, and peace negotiations. However, after Russia's aggressive attack on Ukraine, states began to increase the number of troops and open new weapons production plants. NATO also expanded. Finland is a member and so will be Sweden.

Thus, Russia's aggression has opened up the problems that European countries have been struggling with since World War II. We believe that this will mark a qualitatively new stage in the development of international relations. However, if we return directly to the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, it is worth noting that despite its impossibility from the point of view of modern international law, it is absolutely predictable in the historical context.

A historical retrospective reveals that the Russian-Ukrainian war has been going on for more than 300 years, starting with the Hetmanate with different time intervals of hostilities. By analyzing the experience of the past, we can avoid mistakes, namely tolerating Russia's chauvinistic views and peace agreements with it on unfavorable terms that lead to the resumption of future conflicts. The international community must reconsider its attitude towards the Russian Federation. As the hostilities in Ukraine continue, the proposed topic is extremely relevant due to its proximity in time. Russian aggression against Ukraine is actually the beginning of a new World War III (Butryn 2022).

In this article, the authors plan to examine the development of historical relations between Russia and Ukraine and the armed conflicts that have arisen between these states. In addition, the authors plan to consider not only the historical but also the civilizational aspects of the war and try to provide some of his own steps for the possible overcoming of the conflict and punishment of Russian war criminals.

2. Materials and methods

The authors actively used the historical method. It was its use that formed the basis of the study. The historical method is a research method used to study the history of mankind. This method is based on the collection, analysis and interpretation of historical data, which allows studying the development of various events, phenomena and processes over time. The historical method involves the study of historical sources, their critical analysis and determination of their authenticity and significance. This article is based on the analysis of historical events. In particular, the formation of the

Ukrainian-Russian conflict from the formation of the Moscow Empire to the current military conflict. In addition, this article uses the historical method to analyze the history of Russia's aggressive policy towards third countries, in particular Moldova and Georgia, as well as the Chechen war. The use of the historical method made it possible to conduct an in-depth study of the historical background of the war. In addition, the historical method was used to draw conclusions about the actions that should be taken to stop Russian aggression.

The use of the analysis method was also important for the study. This method consists in breaking down a phenomenon into parts and studying their interconnection and interaction. Analysis allows us to consider phenomena from different angles, determine their essence, identify patterns and cause-and-effect relationships. This method provides objective data and conclusions that can be used to develop solutions and strategies in various fields of activity. First of all, the analysis was used to analyze and interpret various information about the conflict: from media articles to scientific studies and documents of international organizations. This allowed us to obtain a full scope of data and get a detailed picture of what is happening. In addition, the analysis was applied to study the causes and consequences of the conflict. This provided an opportunity to understand what factors contributed to the conflict, how it developed, and what solutions could be found. In general, analysis is an important method for studying the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, as it allows to obtain objective and complete information about the situation, as well as to understand the causes and consequences of the conflict.

The comparative method makes it possible to study certain objects based on similarities and differences. This method was used to compare different sources of information, which allows for a more accurate picture of the situation and its perception by the Ukrainian and Russian sides. When using this method, the authors compared such aspects as the socio-political situation in the countries, history, cultural traditions, and other factors that influence the conflict. Thus, the application of the comparative research method allowed to establish similarities and differences between different objects of study, which can be useful for studying the Ukrainian-Russian conflict and finding ways to punish the aggressor.

The authors also actively used the formal legal method. The formal legal method is one of the methods of scientific research used to study various legal phenomena, laws, regulations and their application in practice. The main purpose of this method is to reveal the legal content of the objects of research and to establish legal facts. This is based on the analysis of the texts of legal documents, such as acts of international law. The research is carried out by determining the relationships between different legal norms and their impact on a particular situation.

In the study of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, the formal legal method can be used to analyze international law governing relations between states, including in the field of territorial integrity, the right to self-determination of nations, non-interference in internal affairs, etc. The analysis of legal acts of international organizations made it possible to find out which legal acts were violated during the conflict, which rights were violated, and also helped to conclude that it was necessary to use force against Russia.

Taking into account the fact that Russia often violates rights and civil liberties, the formal legal method helped to find out which legal norms and principles are violated and will help in deciding on the responsibility for violating such norms. In addition, this method was also used to analyze the case law related to the topic of the study.

The article also uses the systematic method. The systematic research method is one of the key methods in science and research. It consists in considering the object under study as a system, i.e., a complex set of interacting elements which have relations with each other and interdependent functions. The systemic method of research allows us to understand how the object functions, what processes are taking place in it, what are the relations between the elements of the system, and what changes can occur if one or more elements change.

In the context of studying the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, the systemic method was applied to study the political, economic, social, and cultural interaction between Ukraine and Russia, as well as to study the causes and consequences of the conflict. This allows for a deeper understanding of the conflict.

3. Results

3.1. *The history of relations between Ukraine and Russia*

In order to understand any historical phenomena, it is necessary to understand its preconditions, because in one way or another, everything that nations are facing today is the result of long-term historical events and preconditions. It is known that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been going on for centuries, and the current war is just another manifestation of it. To understand what provoked it, how relations between the two countries have developed over time, and whether there is a possibility of resolving this conflict, it is worth looking at the historical development of relations between these states (Haltsova et al. 2021).

In the ninth century, there was a state in Eastern Europe called Kyivan Rus. In 988, Prince Vladimir the Great adopted and introduced Christianity as the state religion. Kyivan Rus became the center of Orthodox Christianity in Eastern Europe, and its culture and language became the basis for the development of Russian culture and language (Vysotskyi 2009). However, it should be noted that the concept of *Russia* emerged somewhat later. After the breakup of Kyivan Rus into separate principalities, Muscovia, one of the principalities, appeared on the territory of modern Russia. In the seventeenth century, Muscovia united with other principalities and became the Russian Empire. Therefore, we can say that Russia has its roots in Kyivan Rus, but its history developed separately from Ukraine. From the beginning of its existence, Muscovia fought constant wars with the Crimean Tatars and the lands of the Golden Horde south of Muscovia, while in the west it faced Lithuania, which had power over the lands of Ukraine (Orlovskyi et al. 2022).

In the seventeenth century, after a period of turmoil, the Moscow state regained its influence in Ukraine, which was accompanied by wars with Poland, the Cossack

uprising, and changes of government. In the seventeenth century, the Ukrainian Cossacks repelled Russia's attempts to control them. At that time, the Ukrainian Cossacks were defending their independence, and Russia was one of the countries that tried to control Ukraine through military and political dominance. In 1654, the first Treaty of Lublin was signed, placing Ukraine under Russian protection from its enemies to the west. In the following centuries, the Russian Empire expanded its territories at the expense of Ukrainian lands and suppressed national liberation movements in Ukraine. Ukraine became part of the Russian Empire, and its culture and language were oppressed and banned (Masenko 2019).

In the nineteenth century, Ukrainians actively opposed Russia's imperial policies and demanded greater autonomy. The Ukrainian people fought for their rights and independence, but this was suppressed by the empire. During the First World War, there were changes of power in Ukraine, national liberation movements emerged, but it was difficult to succeed because of the presence of an external enemy. Ukrainian cultural life and national interests were suppressed, and the Ukrainian language was prohibited (Volodina et al. 2020).

In 1917, after the Revolution, the Russian Empire collapsed, and many new states emerged on the territory of former Russia, including Ukraine. In 1918, the Peace of Brest was signed between Ukraine and the Central Powers, but in 1919, the Soviet Union took over most of Ukraine to form the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Under the Soviet Union, Ukraine was tied to Moscow, and the Ukrainian people were forced to submit to the communist regime. After the Second World War, Ukraine became an integral part of the USSR, and the Russian Federation became one of the republics of the USSR. However, from the late 1980s, Ukraine began to seek its independence, and in 1991 declared its independence from the USSR (Kravchuk 2022).

Thus, looking back on the relationship between the two countries, it is obvious that it is a long and complex one. For several hundred years, Russia has been trying to extend its influence on the territory of Ukraine through military actions, political leadership, and interference in the internal politics of the state. It can be argued that the current conflict is a continuation of Ukraine's long history of confrontation and struggle for independence (Hai-Nyzhnyk and Chupriy 2016).

Of course, from the point of view of the modern world and modern international law, no one could have allowed a military conflict in a European state, because civilized countries recognize international law and the need to resolve all conflicts peacefully and through negotiations. However, from the point of view of historical analysis, the conflict was almost inevitable. Russia's leader was not ready to lose his geopolitical influence on the country when he saw that it adhered to European values and the European vector of development. In addition, it was only a matter of time before Russia's presence in Crimea and eastern Ukraine would escalate into a full-scale military intervention in Ukraine. Russia is once again demonstrating that it does not belong to civilized countries and is ready to continue to violate international law. At the same time, Ukraine is once again demonstrating its high unity of national consciousness and identifying itself as citizens of an independent country.

3.2. Preconditions of the modern military conflict

Since its independence, Ukraine has sought to find its place in the world and has directed its policy toward rapprochement with Western Europe and NATO, thus moving closer to the Western world and away from Russia. At this time, Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, showed strong ambitions to become a world power and to restore the influence of the former Soviet Union. Russia believed that Ukraine should be under its influence, but Ukraine chose a pro-Western orientation, which Russia did not like (Orobets 2022).

Relations between Ukraine and Russia deteriorated after the 2014 Euromaidan, when the Ukrainian people revolted against corruption and authoritarianism, and after the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted.

The direct military conflict between Russia and Ukraine began in 2014 when Russian troops annexed Crimea, which belonged to Ukraine. Russia held a referendum on the peninsula, which decided to join Russia, but the results were not recognized by most countries, including Ukraine (Zalizniak 2014).

This was followed by a war in eastern Ukraine between the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian forces. Russia supported separatist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. After that, protests and unrest began in Ukraine, and in some regions of the east, particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, pro-Russian forces declared the creation of *People's Republics* that illegally declared independence. The international community does not recognize the independence of these territories. After that, the Ukrainian government announced an anti-terrorist operation in the east of the country aimed at destroying the armed groups that had erupted in Donbas, but the conflict increasingly escalated. Russia continued to support the militants with weapons and other resources, and eventually the fighting turned into a full-scale war (Datsiuk 2015). In addition, the conflict had cultural and civilizational aspects, as eastern Ukraine fought for the recognition of the Ukrainian language and culture, as well as for the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of the state (Zalizniak 2016).

Over the following years, relations between Russia and Ukraine deteriorated due to the fighting in eastern Ukraine and the relationship between the two countries. Russia tried to maintain its influence on Ukraine through economic pressure and support for pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine, on the other hand, sought to strengthen its relations with the West and move closer to the European Union and NATO. Unfortunately, this conflict was not resolved, and it had a further impact on the relations between Russia and Ukraine in the future. These events led to a deterioration of relations between Russia and Ukraine, as well as between Russia and the West, which imposed sanctions on Russia.

The reaction of the international community to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine was quite different. In particular, a large number of countries, including the European Union and the United States, imposed economic and political sanctions against Russia to punish the country for the annexation of Crimea and support for the rebels in eastern Ukraine. These sanctions included a ban on the importation of certain goods, restrictions on investment and financial transactions with Russia, and a travel ban on certain individuals from Russia. In addition, international mechanisms

were established to monitor the situation in eastern Ukraine, including an OSCE mission and joint checkpoints on the border between Russia and Ukraine. At the same time, other countries, including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and some others, have expressed their support for pro-Russian forces in eastern Ukraine and expressed resentment at the sanctions against Russia. Overall, the conflict in eastern Ukraine has become a focus of international attention and diplomacy, and international efforts continue to this day to find a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the conflict.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a large-scale armed act of aggression against Ukraine, including using Crimea, Luhansk and Donetsk as a springboard for its offensive. Thus, the unresolved conflict, which has been ongoing since 2014, has, among other things, led to Russia's permissiveness and the outbreak of a large-scale war in Ukraine.

3.3. Russia's aggressive policy towards third countries and the European policy of appeasement of the aggressor

It is worth noting that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was not the only victim of Russian aggression. Moldova, or more specifically, Transnistria, opens the list of Russia's terrorist and aggressive acts. This is a territory in the west of Ukraine, on the border with Moldova. From a historical point of view, Transnistria was part of the Moldavian USSR, which later became an independent state – Moldova. In 1990, the Transnistrian Moldavian Republic declared its independence from Moldova to which Moldova responded by sending troops to the territory. After a military conflict that lasted until 1992, Transnistria remained outside Moldova's control, but was also not recognized by the international community as an independent state (Witman 2008).

Russia has provided economic, political and military support to Transnistria since the territory declared its independence (Kava 2004). Today, Russia supports the Transnistrian regime and has a major influence on its economy and politics. Transnistria remains one of the problems in international relations between Moldova and Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the countries that were formerly part of the USSR became independent. However, Russia, which gained the largest territory of the former Soviet Union, felt a loss of influence and prestige in the international area. In 1994, Russia started a war with Chechnya. The conflict between Russia and Chechnya has been protracted and violent, involving a variety of armed hostilities and terrorist acts. The conflict began in the 1990s, when Chechnya sought to secede from Russia, and lasted until around 2009, when Russia declared the end of the *anti-terrorist operation* in Chechnya (Kotsur 2009). The first war between Russia and Chechnya broke out in 1994 when Chechen rebels declared Chechen independence. Russia sent troops to regain control of the region. The war lasted until 1996, when a peace treaty was signed that provided for Chechnya's autonomy status. However, in 1999, Russian troops returned to Chechnya, accusing Chechen rebels of terrorist acts, including the bombing of residential buildings in Moscow. The conflict in Chechnya has led to numerous human rights violations, including massive violations of the rights to life, due process, freedom of speech,

and others. During this time, Russia also used a large number of weapons and media outlets to further its goals in Chechnya. Although the Russian state has declared the war in Chechnya over, the conflict continues in the region to this day, albeit on a smaller scale. Chechnya retains its status as an autonomous region within the Russian Federation, but the question of Chechen independence remains open.

In 2008, Russia intervened in the conflict in Georgia. The conflict between Russia and Georgia arose in 2008 and was called the Five-Day War. The conflict was caused by a disagreement between Georgia and two of its regions, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which sought to secede from Georgia and join Russia. Georgia did not recognize their independence and considered them parts of its territory.

In August 2008, Georgia launched a military operation to regain control of South Ossetia. Russia responded by intervening with its own troops and started a war with Georgia. During the five days of the war, Russian troops bombed Georgian cities and villages and launched offensives on Georgian territory. Many civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, were destroyed or damaged during the conflict. As a result of the conflict, Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Georgia relinquished control over these territories. In addition, more than 100,000 Georgians were forced to flee their homes due to violence and displacement. The conflict has had serious consequences for relations between Russia and the West and has also led to a diminished role for Russia in international relations.

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, which had previously belonged to Ukraine. Russian troops occupied the peninsula and held a referendum that officially recognized Crimea as part of Russia. This action was also strongly condemned by the international community. In 2015, Russia intervened in the conflict in Ukraine, supporting pro-Russian rebels in the east of the country. A full-scale military aggression against Ukraine began in 2022. At the same time, Russia used the previously occupied territories of Crimea and the eastern part of Ukraine as springboards for its offensive. This gives us reason to believe that Russia's actions were systematic and planned. From the very beginning, it was planning to attack Ukraine, quite deliberately disregarding any principles and norms of international law. Ukraine appealed to the international community to help stop Russian aggression and restore the country's territorial integrity. Numerous resolutions were adopted by the UN, the EU and other international organizations calling on Russia to respect international law and stop interfering with Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukraine also took steps to protect its territories and citizens. The National Guard was created, the Armed Forces and other military formations were reformed. Laws and programs have also been adopted to strengthen the country's national security and defense capabilities. Thus, we can see that the policy of violent conquest, aggression and terrorist acts is widespread in Russia's practice. It has used military aggression against territories and neighboring states throughout its existence and continues to do so.

Russia's aggressive policy toward third countries, including interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors and support for pro-Russian forces, has been the subject of much debate and discussion in the international community. This has

caused many conflicts and contradictions in Russia's relations with the European Union, NATO, and other countries. Although all the above conflicts have been condemned by the international community, Russia's actions are still not sufficiently punished. We believe that a timely and tough response to Russia's criminal actions could have prevented all subsequent Russian attacks on other states. Thus, the European policy of *appeasement of the aggressor* not only failed to produce results, but on the contrary gave Russia a complete sense of impunity and further aggression against other states.

The European policy of *appeasement of the aggressor* usually means approaches aimed at reducing tensions with Russia and trying to resolve conflicts through diplomatic means. This policy involves economic sanctions and restrictions on relations with Russia until Russia stops its aggressive actions and restores the territorial integrity of neighboring countries. However, some countries believe that this policy may not lead to the desired result and may push Russia to even more aggressive actions. Therefore, there is a debate about which policy will be most effective in ensuring security and stability in the region. However, international organizations still tried to influence Russia through legal means. Since 1991, the United Nations has adopted various resolutions and taken actions to stop Russia's aggression and annexation of territories. These resolutions mainly call for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, provide reports on human rights violations in the occupied territory of Crimea, condemn Russia's actions, and call for the return of control over the occupied territory. However, many of these resolutions are not legally binding.

Let us consider some of the most important legal acts, in our opinion. In 1991, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 46/37, which called on all states to abide by their obligations under international law, including the principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity. In the context of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, this resolution is of particular importance, as Russia violates the principles of non-interference and territorial integrity of Ukraine. In this resolution, the UN General Assembly expresses its deep concern about the situation in the world related to armed conflicts and other forms of violence that are occurring in various parts of the world and causing the suffering to millions of people. The resolution calls on all countries to take measures to ensure international peace and security, develop friendly relations between states and cooperate in various fields, including economy, science and culture. Resolution No. 46/86 is one of the numerous resolutions adopted by the UN to ensure international peace and security and protect human rights. It is important in the context of reminding all countries of the need to comply with international law and principles that promote peace, stability and development of mankind (Resolution 46/86 1991).

In 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2202, which was devoted to the development of the situation in Ukraine. The resolution called for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which were concluded in September 2014 between Ukraine and representatives of the militants in Donbas. The resolution reaffirmed Ukraine's inalienable right to territorial integrity and emphasized that the Security Council recognizes the unacceptability of any actions aimed at violating the

territorial integrity of Ukraine. The resolution also called on all parties to the conflict to respect the ceasefire, ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, and begin the process of demilitarizing the conflict zone. The resolution demanded a complete de-escalation of violence in Donbas and the full withdrawal of heavy weapons. The responsibility for compliance with the resolution was placed on all parties to the conflict, including Russia (Resolution 2022 2015).

This Resolution was part of the documents adopted in the context of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. In addition, the following were adopted:

1. Resolution 68/262 (2014): Inviolability of the territorial integrity of Ukraine;
2. Resolution 71/205 (2016) and Resolution 72/190 (2017): Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol (Ukraine);
3. Resolution 74/17 (2019): The problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, and parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov;
4. Resolution 75/192 (2020): Human rights in the temporarily occupied Crimea and others.

Despite this, Russia continues to violate all legal norms and regulations addressed to it. This makes us think about the effectiveness of legal and economic methods of combating the aggressor and shift the vector towards military force and military confrontation with Russia. As the above-analyzed historical chronology shows, Russia will not stop and will continue to realize its imperial and political ambitions by destroying neighboring countries, violating human rights and international law. Therefore, it is necessary to stop the aggressor now with the help of military force and to stop its military and terrorist actions in other countries.

In addition, other international organizations have also tried to stop Russia's aggression. For example, a number of legal acts have been adopted by the Council of Europe. Here are some specific resolutions and actions that have been taken to stop Russia's aggression: Resolution 1990 (2014) Reconsideration on substantive grounds of the previously ratified credentials of the Russian delegation; Resolution 2063 (2015) Consideration of the annulment of the previously ratified credentials of the delegation of the Russian Federation; Resolution 2132 (2016). Political consequences of the Russian aggression in Ukraine; Resolution 2166 (2014) on Malaysian Jet Crash Demanding Accountability, Full Access to Site, Halt to Military Activities; Resolution 2259 (2019). The escalation of tensions around the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait and threats to European security etc.

Since 2022, Russia is no longer a member of the Council of Europe. Despite this, Russia continues to violate all legal norms and regulations addressed to it. This makes us think about the effectiveness of legal and economic methods of combating the aggressor and shift the vector towards military force and military confrontation with Russia. As the above-analyzed historical chronology shows, Russia will not stop and will continue to realize its imperial and political ambitions by destroying neighboring countries, violating human rights and international law. Therefore, it is necessary to stop the aggressor with military force and stop its military and terrorist actions in other countries right now.

3.4. International case law on Russian aggression against Ukraine

The issue of Ukraine's aggression has been repeatedly raised at the level of international judicial institutions. For example, let's look at a number of judgments issued by the International Court of Justice regarding the conflict between these countries. The first decision worth paying attention to is the 2017 judgment of the International Court of Justice in the case of *Ukraine v. Russia* on the application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Ukraine claimed that Russia finances terrorist organizations in eastern Ukraine and generally supports terrorist acts on the territory of Ukraine. Russia denied any involvement in the financing of terrorism and claimed that the accusation was politically motivated. In its judgment, the International Court of Justice stated that there was sufficient evidence to conclude that Russia was financing terrorist organizations in eastern Ukraine, in particular the *DPR* and *LPR*. The Court also recognized that Russia was aware of the financing of terrorist acts on the territory of Ukraine and their support and did not take appropriate measures to stop this financing. The International Court of Justice ordered Russia to ensure full compliance with the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and to cease any form of financing of terrorist organizations. Russia was also obliged to compensate Ukraine for all damages caused by the financing of terrorist acts on its territory. However, Russia refused to recognize the decision of the International Court of Justice and did not comply with it (*Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* 2017).

It is also worth noting that in 2019, the International Court of Justice ruled in the case of *Ukraine v. Russia* on the protection of human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea and Donbas. In its judgment, the Court recognized that there are grounds to believe that Russia has violated the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) since the occupation of Crimea in 2014.

In addition, the Court found that there are grounds to apply the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism to Russia in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, including the territory of Donbas. The Court's judgment is legally binding and has been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for further work. Ukraine has stated that it will demand compensation from Russia for human rights violations on the temporarily occupied territory. However, Russia has stated that it does not recognize the Court's decision. It refused to comply with it in the same way as the previous one. (*Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ukraine V. Russian Federation)* 2019.) We can thus see that over the years Russia has completely ignored any actions of the international community aimed at restoring peace and security, including binding court decisions. We believe that it is precisely because of the lack of punishment and permissiveness that Russia is currently waging an insidious and illegal war against Ukraine. As our analysis

above shows, if Russia is not stopped now, its military aggression, undermining of national foundations and terrorist acts will spread to the whole of Europe. That is why collective measures against Russia, primarily military, must be taken now.

In the context of the study, it is also worth paying attention to the decisions of the ECHR related to the conflict. The purpose of this body was to ensure the protection of human rights and freedoms in Europe. The ECHR considers applications from citizens, legal entities and states parties to the Convention regarding violations of their rights and freedoms. The judgment in the case of *Ukraine v. Russia (re Crimea)* of 2014 (application no. 20958/14) was adopted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and concerned Russia's violation of human rights in Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014. In its judgment, the ECtHR recognized that Russia had violated several articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, including the articles on the right to life, liberty and security of the person, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to an effective remedy, as well as the prohibition of torture and privacy. The judgment expresses the international legal position and can be used in international legal proceedings, as well as in the work of international organizations involved in the protection of human rights (*Ukraine v. Russia (re Crimea) 2014*).

In 2021, the Government of Ukraine filed a new interstate application against the Russian Federation. This is the ninth interstate application filed by Ukraine against the Russian Federation. It is registered under the number 10691/21. The application concerns the allegations of the Government of Ukraine about the ongoing activities of the Russian Federation, consisting of state-sanctioned targeted killings against perceived opponents of the Russian Federation in Russia and on the territory of other states, including other Council of Europe member states, outside of a situation of armed conflict. In addition, such killings are not properly investigated, and Russia undermines efforts to find those responsible for these killings (*New inter-State application brought by Ukraine against Russia 2021*).

It is also worth noting the case of *Sentsov and Kolchenko v. Russia* (cases 36470/14 and 218/18), which was considered by the European Court of Human Rights since 2014 and was resolved in 2021. In this case, the Russian regime was accused of human rights violations against two Ukrainian citizens: Oleg Sentsov, a Ukrainian filmmaker, and Oleksandr Kolchenko, a Crimean Tatar activist. They were detained on the occupied Crimean Peninsula in 2014, after which they were taken to Russia and charged with terrorism. Both have been sentenced to 20 years in prison, but they claim that the charges were political and fabricated. Sentsov and Kolchenko consider themselves political prisoners, and their case has been compared many times to the well-known cases of prisoners of conscience, such as Nelson Mandela and Vasyl Stus.

In April 2021, the European Court of Human Rights recognized violations of Sentsov and Kolchenko's rights, including their rights to a fair trial and non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, and ordered Russia to compensate them for material and non-pecuniary damage. This decision was an important victory for human rights activists defending the rights of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia (*Sentsov and Kolchenko v. Russia 2014*).

All this shows that the international community is aware of Russia's aggressive policy and condemns it. It demands that Russia coexist with other countries on the basis of principles recognized by international law and respect human rights and freedoms.

3.5. Ukraine's fight against Russia in the civilizational aspect

Historical retrospect has shown that confrontations between Ukraine and Russia have been going on for centuries. Therefore, from a historical perspective, the current aggression was predictable. In addition, it was triggered by Russia's gradual aggression and the international community's inadequate response. However, it is also worth considering the conflict from a civilizational perspective. From this point of view, the war can be viewed from a civilizational perspective as a conflict between two different civilizations. On the one hand, Ukraine belongs to the Western civilization, which is characterized by democracy, freedom of speech and religion, the rule of law, innovation, a developed economy and a high standard of living. Russia, on the other hand, belongs to the Eastern type of civilization, which emphasizes strong government, authoritarianism, traditionalism, religiosity, and military power.

Thus, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia can be viewed as a confrontation between two civilizational models, where each is trying to protect its values and interests. Ukraine is also trying to choose its own foreign policy direction independently and protect itself from the influence of the aggressor country.

The war between Russia and Ukraine has enormous civilizational implications, as it has become one of the most open and protracted wars in Europe in recent decades. It has had many negative consequences for the entire region. One of the main aspects of the war is the cultural divide between Russia and Ukraine. This happened because Russia attempted to revive its influential attitude toward Ukraine that it had during the Soviet period. Against this backdrop, Russia has conducted an aggressive information campaign aimed at discrediting Ukraine and its history. This led to Ukrainians actively fighting to preserve their culture and national identity. In addition, the war also led to an economic split between Russia and Ukraine. This led to a significant decline in economic growth in both countries.

The war also led to a deterioration of relations between the West and Russia. Many countries imposed sanctions on Russia because of its aggressive behavior towards Ukraine. This led to increased tensions in international relations and a split in world politics. The orientation of Ukrainians toward the West, European values and culture is not just a tribute to long-standing historical ties. It is no exaggeration to say that adherence to European standards is a matter of life for the Ukrainian people. History convincingly shows that the policy of ethnocide has been a fundamental principle of Russia, starting with the total destruction of the people of Pskov by Ivan IV and ending with Stalin's famine and Russia's *reconciliation* with Chechnya. Given the scale of the ethnocide of Ukrainians in the twentieth century, there is no doubt that the current war was unleashed with the aim of complete destruction of Ukrainians (Zalizniak 2017).

The Armed Forces of Ukraine are being modernized and the country's defense capability has been improved. And most importantly, the all-Ukrainian identity and consolidation of society are being strengthened in the face of threats to the national and personal security of Ukrainian citizens in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been established and recognized as independent of Moscow, educational programs and the growing understanding of ordinary citizens promote the active study of English and European languages by Ukrainians as a step towards a society of high living standards, while the state has limited Russian content on television and radio to reduce the influence of Russian propaganda. State institutions, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation and private organizations and citizens of Ukraine help to popularize Ukrainian cultural projects at home and internationally. A dialogue of reconciliation and collective memory is underway with Ukraine's western neighbors: Poland, Hungary, and Romania. Poland in general has provided enormous assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of the war and continues to do so. It is worth noting the successful cases of public and cultural diplomacy as an instrument of soft power, which ensure the image and growing recognition of our country abroad and contribute to national security in times of war (Kotyk 2021).

In general, based on the above, we can state that the Russian-Ukrainian war is a civilizational war. That is why the causes of the conflict are very deep and go back hundreds of years. In view of this, it is difficult to resolve the conflict as long as imperialist sentiments and propaganda against the ordinary population prevail in Russia.

4. Discussion

The issue of the confrontation between Ukraine and Russia has always been relevant, as Ukraine has long been trying to free itself from Russian oppression and influence. However, given Russia's full-scale invasion, the relevance of this conflict in the historical and civilizational context has only increased. There are a number of works devoted to the study of this topic. Among these, it is first worth highlighting the study of the Ukrainian scholar L. Zalizniak. In his work, the author reveals the Ukrainian-Russian conflict as a war of civilizations. The author analyzes the relations between the two countries in historical retrospect. He cites various historical events that show that the relevant confrontation has been going on for a long time. His work is an analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian war from the point of view of the clash of two different civilizations. According to the author, Russia and Ukraine represent two different civilizations with different values, traditions, and history. He argues that Russia, which considers itself the heir to the great Russian Empire, has an imperial mindset, while Ukraine, which became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is focused on developing a national identity and integrating into European structures. Zalizniak argues that Russia is at war not only with Ukraine, but also with the Western world, which it sees as a threat to its imperial sphere of

influence. Zalizniak also analyzes the ideology of Russian nationalism and its impact on Russia's policy toward Ukraine.

In the article, the author emphasizes the importance of preserving Ukraine's independence and sovereignty in order to maintain the unity of Europe and protect its democratic values. He calls on the international community to assist Ukraine in protecting its territorial integrity and democratic orientation in order to prevent further expansion of Russian aggression and preserve world peace and security (Zalizniak 2017).

Another important scientific study in the context of the subject of the article is the work of Ukrainian researcher Y. Kotyk. The article is devoted to the analysis of the current conflict between Ukraine and Russia in Donbas from the point of view of the civilization approach. The author examines the main stages of the conflict and its geopolitical causes. He also examines the role of cultural and civilizational factors in shaping the views and interests of both sides of the conflict. The article examines the influence of historical experience on the formation of the worldview of Russia and Ukraine, their national ideologies and views on the role of countries in the world. The author argues that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is not just about territorial disputes, but about deeper civilizational differences that have their roots in the history and culture of the countries. The author draws attention to the influence of the Russian Empire on the formation of historical memory and national identity of Russians, as well as the impact of the Ukrainian national revival on the formation of Ukrainian consciousness. The article also discusses different approaches to conflict resolution based on different civilizational models and views on the role of countries in the world (Kotyk 2021).

Even though there is a large number of scholarly articles on the issue of the civilizational aspect of the hostilities between Ukraine and Russia, we still believe that there is not enough material. Most of the works were written before 2022 and do not take into account the newly discovered circumstances. Some researchers believed that the conflict could be resolved diplomatically. However, the current situation has shown that this is impossible. The only way to stop the aggressor, who is devastating a European country and violating any rule of law, is through force. Ukrainian President V. Zelenskyi noted that *democracy must have teeth*. Thus, taking into account the study of the historical and civilizational aspect of the war between the two countries, we believe that no negotiations can put an end to the war. In this context, the author of the article is impressed by the opinion of the American security forces, which emphasize that they never negotiate with terrorists. Since Russia is a terrorist state, and this is recognized at the legislative level by the EU, NATO and its member states, no negotiations with it are possible. Moreover, since 2014, Ukraine has been trying to reach an agreement with Russia, but the latter has been violating the agreements all along. Thus, we believe that the only possible way to end the conflict is to force Russia to withdraw all its troops from the territory of Ukraine, including the territory seized since 2014.

In addition, after Russia's complete defeat, it must be demilitarized. Sanctions should be maintained, and reparations should be paid to Ukraine and its citizens. The

current political regime in Russia has no right to exist. Any imperial ambitions must be suppressed at the stage of their inception. Also, Russian citizens, who have been under the influence of propaganda for decades, must learn the whole truth about Russian aggression. Only through a complete renewal can Russia finally become a civilized state that can live in peace with the rest of the world, follow European values, and respect and adhere to international law.

5. Conclusion

As the historical analysis in this article has shown, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has deep historical origins. In fact, the confrontation between the two states began with the formation of the Moscow Empire. Throughout this time, Russia has been trying to annex Ukrainian territories, Russify them, and destroy Ukrainian identity and cultural identity. In addition, the peoples of these two countries are completely different. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine can be viewed as a civilizational conflict, as it is based on profound differences in the cultural, ethnic, historical, political and geopolitical contexts of the two countries.

On the one hand, Ukraine is influenced by European culture based on the principles of democracy, human rights, freedom and development, which is in contrast to the traditional authoritarian model of Russian politics. On the other hand, Russia seeks to reassert its influence over the former Soviet republics, including Ukraine, and to maintain its geopolitical power in the region.

This conflict is accompanied not only by military actions, but also by information warfare, disinformation and manipulation, which is typical of civilizational conflicts. One of the most tangible problems in this conflict is the disappointment in a diplomatic solution and the lack of trust between the two sides. In other words, given the above, it can be argued that the conflict between Ukraine and Russia is historical and civilizational.

Russia has pursued its aggressive policy not only against Ukraine but also against other participants in international relations, for which it has been condemned by the international community. Some countries openly supported the affected countries, while others expressed their outrage and condemnation of Russia's actions. One of the first steps taken was the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution *Territorial integrity of Ukraine*, which calls on all countries to comply with their obligations under international law, including the principles of non-interference and territorial integrity.

Sanctions were imposed on Russia by the European Union, the United States, Canada and other countries. These sanctions limit Russian companies' access to financial resources, prohibit oil companies from sharing technology with Russia, and restrict entry to Western countries for Russian officials responsible for the aggression. To date, the international community continues to condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine and impose sanctions against it until Russia is stopped.

Nevertheless, despite everything, Russia continued to openly violate international

legal norms. Therefore, based on this, we believe that it is impossible to negotiate with a terrorist country through diplomacy. However, it is possible to stop it by military force. Stopping Russia's aggressive policy towards Ukraine and other states is a complex task that requires a comprehensive approach and cooperation between different parties, including all Western partners.

First of all, the assistance should include military aid and the provision of an adequate number of weapons to Ukraine in order to stop and completely expel the aggressor's troops, including the territories occupied since 2014. As the experience of Chechnya shows, if Russia is not completely expelled, it will return in a few years with a new military attack. In addition, actions should be backed up by economic sanctions. Economic sanctions are one of the possible tools that can be used to put pressure on Russia. This could include a ban on imports of goods from Russia, a ban on imports of Russian goods to other countries, and a ban on investments in Russia. So far, about ten sanctions packages have been adopted. But they should be expanded.

At the same time, countries that help Russia circumvent sanctions and support its terrorist activities should be severely punished.

Finally, Russia and its people should face complete global isolation. Russians can also do a lot to end the war. The people have the will and the rights. Ukrainians were able to overthrow the pro-Russian government in 2014 and choose the European vector of development. In 2023, Georgians succeeded in repealing pro-Russian laws through protests. However, the Russians not only do not try to do anything but openly support the war. Thus, only forceful and decisive steps can stop the aggressor country, which has been pursuing such a policy against its neighbors for hundreds of years.

Ethical approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Authors Contributions

Authors' contributions are equal.

Availability of data and materials

Data will be available on request.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Consent for publication

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