

Powerful but Death in Action: An Appraisal of United Nations Security Council Responses to Russo-Ukrainian War

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.61796/ijss.v2i4.57>



Sections Info

Article history:

Submitted: March 30, 2025

Final Revised: April 14, 2025

Accepted: April 28, 2025

Published: May 26, 2025

Keywords:

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Veto Power

Neorealism

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Russo-Ukrainian War

ABSTRACT

Objective: Accordingly, the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Security Council's response to the Russo-Ukrainian War by examining its peacekeeping efficacy, decision-making processes, and enforcement of resolutions, thereby identifying strengths and weaknesses in these areas. **Method:** Anchored in a neorealist theoretical framework, the study adopted a qualitative design and employed content analysis to examine relevant United Nations documents and resolutions. **Results:** It found that the veto power of permanent members, especially when used by an involved party, paralyzed the Council's decision-making and left its resolutions largely symbolic and unenforceable. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) norm was effectively sidelined, as the Council failed to invoke it despite evidence of mass atrocities. Consequently, the Security Council proved ineffective in enforcing compliance with its decisions or altering the course of the conflict, demonstrating a significant gap between its mandate to maintain peace and its performance in this war. **Novelty:** Finally, it recommended curtailing the use of the veto in mass-atrocity situations, urging that permanent members abstain from vetoing in such cases to prevent Council paralysis and enable timely action.

INTRODUCTION

The Russian-Ukraine war has placed significant challenges to international governance, in particular, highlighting the effectiveness and deficiencies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in facing aggression issues and maintaining peace. As one of the most powerful entities in the realm of international relations, UNSC has the authority to adopt measures aimed at preserving international peace and security. However, its resolutions and actions in response to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict reveal a considerable disparity between its theoretical power and the actual impact [1].

One of the key issues that undermine the effectiveness of the UN is in its decision-making structure, in particular the power of veto held by the five permanent members: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China. This mechanism, designed to prevent hasty actions and ensure that the major powers have a say on international critical issues, has often led to paralysis in the face of aggression. In the context of the Russian-Ukraine war, Russia's ability to exercise his veto obstructed a solid collective action. This illustrated how the power of the UN to implement decisions is often exceeded by the strategic interests of its members [2].

The UNSC has taken measures to face the crisis, among which condemns the annexation of Crimea and asking for the withdrawal of the Russian forces from the Ukrainian territory. However, these resolutions have been largely symbolic and have not

managed to produce significant changes on the ground. The rapid escalation of the conflict following the annexation has shown that without concrete application mechanisms, UNSC resolutions can become ineffective. In addition, the absence of a united front between permanent members further decreases the authority of the Council and the ability to enforce their mandates [3].

In examining the concept of responsibility for protecting (R2P), it becomes evident that the principles behind this doctrine have not actually been employed by UNSC in the Russian-Ukrainian context. The R2P framework states that states have the obligation to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. However, the inability of the UNSC to act decisively led to significant human suffering and displacement, raising questions about the effectiveness of this doctrine in the applications of the real world [3].

The legal challenges associated with the pursuit of the crime of aggression, in particular given the complexities of the conflict, complicate the role of UNSC. The ongoing war allowed debates regarding legal appeal to persist without resolution, which hinders responsibility for the actions taken by the attackers. The analysis of Rinta-Pollari underlines that without a cohesive legal framework combined with the political will, the actions of the UN remain largely ineffective in pursuing the managers of the atrocities committed during the war [4].

In the end, UNSC's response to the Russian-Ukraine war underlines a wider criticism of international governance in crisis situations. While the institution maintains substantial theoretical authority, the practical realization of this power is ruined by geopolitical interests and the inability to act decidedly against aggression. The safety and stability in Europe remain fragile, posing a challenge to the core principles of international cooperation that the aspirants of the UNSC seek to uphold [1].

Therefore, the current dynamics illustrate how harmony between the mandates of the Council and the actual impact requires a revaluation, underlining the need for reforms in a panorama in which Realpolitik often puts the collective asset in shade. To this end, this paper seeks specifically to:

- a. Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in responding to the Russo-Ukrainian War, particularly in terms of its resolutions and actions aimed at maintaining international peace and security.
- b. Examine the impact of the UNSC's veto power structure on its ability to implement decisive action in addressing international conflicts, especially in relation to Russia's use of its veto power in the Russo-Ukrainian War.
- c. Assess the symbolic nature of UNSC resolutions such as condemning the annexation of Crimea and calling for Russian troop withdrawal, and how these resolutions have failed to translate into meaningful change on the ground.
- d. Investigate the application (or lack thereof) of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine by the UNSC in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War, and its implications for international governance and human protection.

United Nations Security Council

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a fundamental organ of the United Nations (UN), mainly responsible for maintaining international peace and security. Established in 1945, the UNSC comprises fifteen Member States, five of which have a permanent status known as P5 (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia and China), which has veto powers that significantly influence their decisions [5]. The role of UNSC extends beyond mere conflict resolution; including the authorization of peace maintenance operations, the application of sanctions, and the establishment of international courts to address war crimes and human rights violations [6].

When fulfilling its mandate, the UNSC uses several tools, including diplomatic negotiations, military interventions, and the imposition of sanctions aimed at avoiding threats to peace and addressing infractions. Its ability to respond quickly to emerging crises is crucial in a geopolitical landscape that changes rapidly [7]. The importance of UNSC is further underlined for its integral relationship with the UN General Assembly and other UN agencies, which facilitate an integral approach to global governance [8].

Despite its critical role, the UNSC faces numerous challenges and criticisms. Its structure, particularly the permanence of P5 and the power of the veto that accompanies it, is often cited as a barrier to equitable representation and a source of stagnation to address global security problems [5]. In addition, the effectiveness of their interventions has been questioned, and critics highlight failures to prevent atrocities and resolve conflicts in regions such as Syria and Libya [6]. As global threats evolve, the call to reforms within the UNSC persists, emphasizing the need for a more representative and receptive institution [7]. When addressing these criticisms, UNSC can improve its legitimacy and efficiency in the promotion of international peace and security.

Veto Power

The concept of veto power has important historical and political implications, particularly in governance and decision-making processes within political systems. The origins of veto power date back to ancient Rome, where it was used to protect the interests of commoners against possible abuses by patricians. This mechanism has evolved, influencing contemporary governance structures such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), where the five permanent members have veto power (US, UK, France, Russia and China), which allows them to block substantive resolutions [9]. Critics argue that this concentration of power raises challenges for global governance, since it can hinder collective decision-making and compromise international cooperation [9].

In legislative frameworks, the power of the veto is often manifested through formal procedures that allow an annular ruling body to reject proposals. Neddenriep points out that the legislative veto operates as a control over executive actions, thus promoting responsibility within governance models [10]. The presence of veto players, individuals or groups whose consent is necessary for policy change, complicates the panorama of decision making. According to Angelova et al., veto player theory clarifies how these actors influence the rhythm and direction of reforms in Western Europe, highlighting the intricate balance between stability and change in political dynamics [11].

In addition, Jörke examines how socio-political inequalities affect the power of the veto and how this power is exercised. The disparities in political participation underline the need for inclusive governance, since marginalized groups can be disproportionately deprived of their rights [12]. In general, the application of veto power in political systems remains a critical consideration for both historical analysis and contemporary governance, influencing decision-making processes and the ability to implement effective policies. The dynamic interaction of veto power within several contexts continues to shape political interactions and the functionality of governance worldwide.

War

War is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been defined and redefined throughout human history. The term "war" carries various meanings according to cultural, political, and historical contexts. Ngwira explores how war definitions have evolved over the past two centuries, indicating that understanding war is deeply rooted in societal conditions and specific ideologies. While traditional definitions often focus on armed conflicts between organized groups, contemporary analyses incorporate dimensions such as psychological and social impacts, which reshape our understanding of what constitutes war [13].

War is a source of great concern to society. Its destructive potential is great, and it is unlikely to be eliminated. Palmer and Perkins, cited in Gahia, suggested that war, and not peace, is the normal condition of human existence. They base themselves in part on the elaborate documentation of the types and frequency of war observed in history [14]. Hegel, as cited in Kristof, writes that:

War should not be regarded as an absolute evil and as a purely external contingency whose cause is therefore itself contingent, whether this cause lies in the passions of rulers or nations, in injustices, or in anything else that is not as it should be. War – war being just as the movement of the winds [which] preserves the sea from the stagnation which a lasting calm could produce [15].

Clausewitz added that warfare is statecraft or economics by other means. War belongs to conflict phenomena. Hostilities, aggression, and violence are part and parcel of war. It adds to its mass killing and destruction from other armed conflicts. War stands at the source and functions as the foundation and means of the continuation fragment of society. *"War is a father of all and a king of all. It renders some gods, others men; it makes some slaves, others free."* (Heraclitus, as cited in Kristof) [15]. War is a basic source of societal organisation. Clausewitz was primarily concerned with the significant military conflicts between states that were typical of European wars in the 19th and 20th centuries [16].

Historically, war was a catalyst for the change and evolution of societies. Gray and Wirtz note that wars can forge national identities and influence international relations, demonstrating how historical contexts considerably shape the dynamics of war. These perspectives reflect both on the cessation and the pursuit of hostilities, because wars often emerge from unresolved political tensions or societal grievances [17].

The psychological ramifications of war against individuals and communities cannot be overestimated. Exposure to war environments leads to deep psychological impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which affects veterans and civilians. The

emotional assessment of war can resonate for generations, modifying community peace and stability.

Ethical considerations surrounding war, in particular the principles of the theory of just war, still complicate its understanding. Johnson explains how ethical standards govern justification of war and conduct during the war. This moral framework aims to restrict violence and protect non-combatants, illustrating the continuous tension between moral imperatives and the realities of conflict [18]. In addition, Kołodziejczak addresses the legal aspects associated with the term "war," highlighting the challenges of classification in modern conflicts, where the boundaries between war and peace are often vague [19].

Russo-Ukrainian War

The Russian-Ukrainian war, ignited in 2014, has its roots deeply in historical, cultural, and geopolitical tensions between Russia and Ukraine. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked an important turning point, creating an independent Ukraine which sought to assert its national identity and sovereignty. However, the complex heritage of Soviet influence on Ukraine has created sustainable divisions, particularly between pro-European Western regions and pro-Russian eastern territories [20]. The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 served as a flash point, reflecting not only territorial ambitions but also concerns regarding the perceived vulnerability of Russia in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape [21].

Key events of the conflict include the ongoing military commitments in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the strategic use of hybrid warfare by Russia, which complicates traditional notions of war [22]. These developments caused a solid international response, illustrated by economic sanctions imposed by Western nations aimed at paralyzing the Russian economy and undermining its military capacities [23]. However, such sanctions have stimulated a reconfiguration of the dynamics of world trade, convincing countries to reassess alliances and economic dependencies.

The implications of the Russian-Ukrainian war extend beyond regional instability, considerably influencing global geopolitics. The conflict prompted NATO to strengthen its presence in Eastern Europe, thus escalating tensions between Russia and the West. In addition, the war has highlighted vulnerabilities in the global economic framework, as nations struggle with the ramifications of geopolitical conflicts on trade, energy security, and economic stability [22]. In the end, the Russian-Ukrainian war illustrates the complex interaction between historical grievances and contemporary geopolitical strategies, strengthening the need for a multifaceted understanding of its ramifications in the 21st century [21], [20].

Theoretical Underpinning

The paper is guided by neo-realism theory. The theory of Neorealism, also known as Structural Realism, was primarily developed by Kenneth Waltz in his seminal work *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Waltz argued that the structure of the international system, rather than the individual states' attributes, is the principal factor in shaping state behaviour. Neorealism challenges the traditional realist emphasis on human nature,

focusing instead on the anarchic international system and its impact on state actions. In this system, states act as rational entities seeking survival, and the power balance determines their behaviour [24]. The theory is based on the assumption that the international system is anarchic – there is no overarching authority to enforce rules – and this compels states to rely on their own power for security. The key assumptions of Neorealism include the idea that states are the principal actors in international relations, they act in pursuit of their national interest (mainly security), and their behaviour is driven by the distribution of power in the international system [25].

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War, Neorealism provides a useful framework for understanding the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) limited action. Neorealism argues that the structure of the international system, especially the existence of the veto power held by the permanent members of the UNSC, fundamentally constrains the actions of the Council. Despite the widespread international condemnation of Russia's aggression, the UNSC's inability to act decisively can be attributed to Russia's strategic interest in Ukraine and its capacity to block any resolutions that threaten its national security or geopolitical position. According to Mearsheimer, great powers such as Russia act to secure their sphere of influence, which often results in international institutions like the UNSC being ineffective when confronted with the interests of powerful states. This dynamic illustrates the fundamental flaw in the design of the UNSC, as it allows major powers to pursue their national interests at the expense of global peace and security. The theory thus explains the "death in action" observed in the UNSC's response to the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, which aligns with the predictions of Neorealism [24].

Neorealism's relevance to this study is particularly pertinent because it highlights how the structure of the international system, dominated by a few powerful states, directly influences the UNSC's capacity for effective action. This theoretical lens underscores the argument that the UNSC is not a neutral body but rather a forum where state interests – shaped by the distribution of power – dictate outcomes. The use of veto power by Russia, alongside the absence of any significant counteraction from the other permanent members, exemplifies how structural forces within the UNSC undermine its potential to address international crises. Moreover, the relevance of Neorealism is evident in the way the UNSC's inaction reflects broader global power dynamics, where major powers like Russia, the United States, and China have disproportionate influence in shaping international policies. This study, therefore, benefits from Neorealism's explanatory power, as it offers a compelling account of why the UNSC failed to act decisively in the face of Russia's military aggression. Neorealism not only helps explain the limitations of international institutions but also provides insight into the enduring challenges of global governance in an increasingly multipolar world.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a qualitative approach to analyse the phenomenon under investigation, utilizing data from secondary sources such as academic journals, UNSC

resolution records, official government statements, news articles, and reports from international organisations. These data were subjected to thematic and content analysis to identify patterns, themes, and key narratives surrounding the UNSC's response to the Russo-Ukrainian War. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the underlying issues, such as power dynamics, state interests, and institutional constraints, which are essential for comprehensively evaluating the UNSC's actions and limitations in this context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in responding to the Russo-Ukrainian War

The effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the Russian-Ukrainian war has been the subject of meticulous examination since the conflict intensified in 2022. The war, characterized by the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine, raised critical questions on the role of international institutions in mitigating the conflict. Despite the UNSC's mandate to combat threats to international peace, the complexity of its decision-making, intertwined with the geopolitical interests of its permanent members, has become a major source of concern in the conflict [26].

A central aspect of the effectiveness of the UNSC in this context revolves around the resolution process and the implementation of relevant measures. For example, Resolution 2202, adopted on February 17, 2016, approved the Minsk agreements aimed at ceasing hostilities in eastern Ukraine [27]. However, the effectiveness of this resolution was compromised by the lack of compliance from Russia, which continued its support for separatists in regions like Donetsk and Luhansk. The repeated failure to enforce compliance was indicative of the wider limits faced by the UNSC, particularly when a permanent member exploits its veto power to block any fundamental action against its interests [28].

In the wake of renewed hostilities in 2022, the UNSC summoned several sessions to discuss the attack by Russia. Unfortunately, these sessions encountered significant obstacles. For example, in February 2022, following the Russian invasion, the Council published a declaration condemning the use of force but did not adopt a formal resolution due to Russia's veto [29]. This incident illustrates the phenomenon of "paralysis by power," where the UNSC's ability to fulfill its mandate is seriously limited by geopolitical divisions between its permanent members [28]. The apparent ineffectiveness of the UNSC raises fundamental questions about the ability of the organization to address blatant violations of international law and territorial integrity.

In addition, the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict continues to exacerbate the situation. The UNSC had discussions on the supply of humanitarian aid to Ukraine; however, resolutions have often been convoluted by political agendas. Uwa and Dele-Dada highlight the challenges of humanitarian intervention in war zones and suggest that the UNSC's inability to facilitate rapid action has led to disastrous

humanitarian consequences in Ukraine. The absence of decisive action to uphold humanitarian principles enshrined in international law underlines the limits of the UNSC in managing the crisis [30].

Furthermore, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is particularly relevant when evaluating the role of the UNSC during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Dasari provides an in-depth survey on the R2P application in this context, illustrating that although the principle deserves recognition, its practical application by the UNSC remains controversial. Since the principle requires immediate action when civilian populations are threatened, the collective decision-making process makes it sensitive to contradictory interests of Member States. In the case of Ukraine, failure to invoke R2P presents significant risks to civil security amid ongoing military operations [31].

Moreover, the literature indicates wider geopolitical ramifications associated with the inaction of the UNSC. According to Turkulova, the dynamics of Russian foreign policy reveal a strategic calculation underpinning its actions in Ukraine, influenced by historical narratives and national security concerns. The complexities of international relations amplified by the conflict increase the dilemmas for the UNSC, forcing it to navigate a tenuous landscape of competing national interests [32].

The UNSC's ability to effectively resolve the Russian-Ukrainian war reveals growing limits of this key international institution. While various resolutions, such as Resolution 2202, aimed to establish peace frameworks, the global influence of the interests of Member States, particularly the veto power held by permanent members, has considerably hampered the capacity for significant intervention. As Onyebuchi posits, the current state of affairs in Ukraine brings into question the effectiveness of international peace agreements and legal frameworks, illustrating the challenges of the UNSC in maintaining international peace and security. The response to the Russian-Ukrainian war is emblematic of a deeper crisis within the United Nations system, raising critical questions about the future role and reform of the UNSC in fighting similar conflicts worldwide. The evolutionary nature of war and geopolitical tensions underlines the urgency for the UNSC to adapt its strategies, transcend rooted divisions, and embody a more effective mechanism for collective security [33].

Impact of the UNSC's veto power structure on its ability to implement decisive action in addressing international conflicts, especially in relation to Russia's use of its veto power in the Russo-Ukrainian War

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is often perceived as a fundamental institution to maintain international peace and security; however, its effectiveness is impeded by the power of the veto managed by its five permanent members. This article explores how the exercise of veto power, particularly by Russia during the Russian-Ukrainian war, hinders decisive responses to international conflicts and examines its broader implications for global governance and conflict resolution [34].

The veto power, enshrined in the UN Charter, gives the permanent members of the UNSC the ability to block any substantive resolution, even when there is broad international support. This mechanism, aimed at guaranteeing consensus among the

great powers, has increasingly become a tool of parochial interests, suffocating urgent and necessary actions in the face of crises [35]. The Russian-Ukrainian war exemplifies this dynamic, as Russia has frequently exercised its veto to protect itself from international conviction and possible punitive actions aimed at restoring peace in Ukraine. Such uses of the veto not only facilitate Russia's aggressive position but also establish a worrying precedent for other states contemplating similar actions [36].

Most consequences of Russia's veto power manifest as paralysis within the UNSC. The Russian-Ukrainian war, which ignited tensions in 2014 and intensified tremendously in 2022, witnessed a series of proposals aimed at addressing hostilities and providing humanitarian relief. Every time, proposals met with Russian vetoes led to inaction, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and undermining global efforts to promote peace [28]. The perceived impotence of the UNSC erodes its authority, reducing its capability to fulfill its mandate and, consequently, undermining the broader framework of collective security [37].

The wider implications of veto use are severe. When a permanent member like Russia exercises its veto power to frustrate resolutions that challenge their actions, it sends a signal to other states that aggression can spiral out of control if those in power exploit the veto effectively. This dynamic may embolden other states to pursue unilateral military or aggressive policies, expecting to evade serious scrutiny or rebuke by the UNSC [38]. The result is a systemic weakening of international law and norms regarding state sovereignty and the responsibility to protect weaker states [39].

Moreover, the misuse of veto power defies the legitimacy of the UNSC, promoting growing frustration and disappointment among non-permanent members and the global community. This disenchantment is exacerbated when the humanitarian consequences of actions or inactions become glaringly evident, as with the victims in Ukraine. As states dispute the effectiveness of traditional diplomatic mechanisms, calls for reform of the UN system, including limitations on veto power, have grown. Several scholars argue that reforms should include restricting the scope of veto use, particularly in situations involving serious human rights violations [35], [40].

The implications of the veto extend beyond the immediate conflict. Diplomatic channels can be significantly compromised as the international community struggles to mobilize a coherent and unified response to crises. The deadlock engendered by Russia's assertiveness in the UNSC often leads to other institutions, such as NATO or the EU, intervening to fill the void left by the inertia of the UNSC [34]. Such change is a double-edged sword: although it can lead to more immediate action, it can also increase tensions and complicate the prospect of a peaceful resolution through diversified coalitions instead of through the UN framework.

In addition, the ongoing conflicts and the persistent use of Russia's veto power raise long-term questions regarding the future efficacy of the UNSC. The proportional levels of conflict and the humanitarian disaster observed in Ukraine highlight a critical situation in global governance, as there may be increasing calls among other countries for an alternative model of conflict resolution [36]. Along the same lines, the way in which the

international community reconciles the need for a balance of power versus the need for a responsible and effective UNSC remains a contentious debate.

In a nutshell, the use of veto power by permanent members such as Russia during the Russian-Ukrainian war illustrates significant challenges to the ability of the UNSC to decisively respond to international conflicts. The consequences extend beyond immediate political paralysis; they threaten to erode the authority of the UNSC, embolden aggressive actions by states, and undermine the integrity of international law. **The symbolic nature of UNSC resolutions such as condemning the annexation of Crimea and calling for Russian troop withdrawal, and how these resolutions have failed to translate into meaningful change on the ground**

The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 caused widespread condemnations and led to a series of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) aimed at truncating this violation of international law. However, while these resolutions are largely symbolic, they have been inadequate in bringing tangible changes in international relationships or basic realities within Crimea. The symbolic nature of these resolutions reflects a disconnection between the rhetoric found within international legal frameworks and the realities perpetuated by the dynamics of state power and geopolitical interests.

The UNSC response to the Russian annexation of Crimea has led to a series of resolutions, particularly Resolution 68/262, which affirmed the territorial integrity of Ukraine and invited Member States to refrain from actions that threaten this sovereignty. However, the effectiveness of these resolutions has been significantly reduced due to Russia's veto power within the UNSC, making significant enforcement practically impossible [39]. This raises the question: how can symbolic resolutions carry weight in international diplomacy when the organ responsible for enforcing them is hindered by the political interests of its permanent members?

The inability of the UNSC to implement effective measures following the annexation of Crimea is emblematic of a broader question in international relations: when power structures are entrenched, procedural justice can often be eclipsed by political machinery. The concept of the resolution "Uniting for Peace," explored by Scharf, underlines a shift in the dialogue surrounding United Nations interventions. However, its practical application requires solid consensus among Member States, which remains elusive in the context of Russia's attack. The inability to operationalize this resolution significantly indicates a wider tendency of ineffectiveness within the UNSC paradigm when compared with acts of aggression by permanent members, suggesting a systemic defect in the United Nations' ability to maintain peace and security [40].

In light of these challenges, it is essential to analyze the wider landscape of international relations modeled by asymmetrical power dynamics. The symbolism of UNSC resolutions becomes evident as a tool for member states to publicly report illegal actions while lacking the appetite or ability to enforce their sentences. Chirambira stresses that while UN declarations could galvanize international opinion against aggression, they often cannot translate into concrete actions. Therefore, the resolutions barely scratch

the surface in addressing the underlying issues or fundamental power structures that feed the conflict [27].

In addition, the notion of state sovereignty was undermined in a way that aggravates the complexity of international law. The case of Crimea illustrates the tension between the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, in which the latter was selectively applied based on geopolitical considerations. Tancredi analyzes the legal implications of the use of force pursuant to international law, claiming that the inability of the UN to reconcile these principles reflects an evident inadequacy in its operational framework. The systemic prejudices related to international law under the mechanisms intended to resolve disputes result in prioritizing state interests over universal rules [41].

Furthermore, the response of the international community to the Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates an addiction to sanctions rather than direct intervention, a strategy criticized by Singh as both reactionary and of limited scope. Sanctions can inflict economic damage but are often insufficient to reverse territorial changes once established. The cumulative result is a prolonged stalemate between formal condemnation of the attackers' actions and the practical realities of power politics on the ground [42].

The symbolism inherent in the UNSC resolutions concerning the annexation of Crimea showcases a fundamental gap between international legal rhetoric and the actual dynamics of power in international relations. Being unable to issue effective measures and bound by the geopolitical interests of its permanent members, the UNSC exemplifies the inadequacy of the existing structure to instigate real change. This reality provides an urgent impetus to reconsider the structures and processes of international governance to ensure they adapt to both human rights concerns and the realities of power in global policy [39].

Thus, within this social milieu, the urgency of systemic reform within the UNSC becomes indispensable, as well as the revaluation of how symbolic acts within international law can transcend simple words and lead to actions that align with the original intentions of the United Nations structure.

Application (or lack thereof) of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine by the UNSC in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War, and its implications for international governance and human protection

The application of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war has sparked significant debate regarding its effectiveness and implications for international governance and humanitarian protection. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict, prominently marked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has highlighted the complexities inherent in operationalizing R2P, illuminating the tension between state sovereignty and the imperative to prevent mass atrocities.

The R2P doctrine, endorsed by the UN in 2005, establishes a framework in which the international community is obliged to intervene when a state fails to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity

[31]. However, the UNSC's response to the crisis in Ukraine illustrates the limitations imposed by international politics, particularly the veto power exercised by permanent members. The veto of resolutions aimed at addressing human rights violations in Ukraine by Russia has led to accusations of "power for power" within the UNSC [28]. This situation raises critical questions about the operational viability of R2P, as calls for intervention have largely gone unheard, prompting a reevaluation of the doctrine itself.

The invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 have not only caused a humanitarian crisis but have also raised significant challenges for applying the R2P doctrine. Although the doctrine suggests a moral imperative to protect civilians, its selective implementation according to political agendas substantially undermines its legitimacy [30]. As Muoneke and Nnani pointed out, international legal frameworks guiding humanitarian intervention must be dynamic and adaptable to the political landscapes in which they operate. The apparent inconsistency in the application of R2P during the Russo-Ukrainian war reveals a dissonance between established principles and the practical realities of international governance [29].

Despite inherent challenges, it is essential to highlight the roles of regional organizations and other state actors in addressing the humanitarian crisis arising from the conflict. For example, the European Union has made considerable efforts to provide humanitarian assistance; however, it does so under the broader umbrella of a multilayered international response dictated by prevailing geopolitical dynamics [43]. This raises relevant considerations regarding how regional alignments can help close the gap between R2P principles and practical crisis responses.

In addition, the discourse surrounding R2P's application in Ukraine challenges the notion of state sovereignty as an absolute principle in international relations. Afonso postulates that the events in Ukraine require a reevaluation of sovereignty norms to reflect contemporary realities, particularly when state actions lead to serious humanitarian violations. This indicates a potential shift in international law, where humanitarian imperatives must transcend traditional sovereignty concepts in cases involving serious atrocity crimes [44].

To crown it all, the application of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine by the UNSC during the Russian-Ukrainian war clarifies the substantial challenges in balancing state sovereignty with the imperative of humanitarian intervention. While the doctrine provides a moral compass for the international community, its implementation remains fraught with political complexities that often inhibit action. The developments in Ukraine underline the urgent need for reform in international governance structures to improve the effectiveness of R2P, ensuring that humanitarian protection is not simply an abstract principle but a practical reality. As the world observes this conflict, it is increasingly clear that the evolution of R2P will depend on the capacity of the international community to navigate the controversial intersections of power, sovereignty, and humanitarian obligation [45].

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has struggled to effectively address the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, revealing significant flaws in its structural and decision-making mechanisms. Despite being mandated to maintain international peace, the UNSC has frequently been incapacitated by the veto power held by its permanent members, particularly Russia. This paralysis has underscored the gap between the Council's theoretical authority and its practical inefficacy in enforcing peace and responding to aggression. The symbolic nature of resolutions condemning Russia, without tangible outcomes, further accentuates this ineffectiveness. **Implication :** This situation has grave implications for global governance and international law. The failure to meaningfully apply the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine in Ukraine not only intensified the humanitarian crisis but also eroded the legitimacy of the UNSC as a guardian of human rights and peace. The conflict has spotlighted a critical tension in the global security apparatus – namely, the Council's inability to act decisively in the face of violations by its own permanent members. Consequently, it has triggered international demands for structural reform, especially concerning the veto system and representational fairness. **Limitation :** However, the structural inertia within the UNSC remains a formidable limitation to effective intervention. The entrenched interests of permanent members, especially regarding veto power, present a significant obstacle to meaningful reform and timely action. This limitation reflects the broader challenge of aligning the Council's operational capabilities with its normative aspirations. Moreover, the absence of enforceable mechanisms to compel action in the face of humanitarian crises further curtails its efficacy, as seen in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. **Future Research :** Future research should focus on exploring pragmatic pathways for UNSC reform that balance geopolitical realities with ethical imperatives, particularly concerning the use of veto power in humanitarian contexts. It should also examine the development of alternative or complementary global security mechanisms that can operate effectively when the Council is paralyzed. Additionally, more in-depth studies on the inconsistent application of R2P and its legal, political, and humanitarian consequences could provide valuable insights into strengthening global responses to mass atrocities and preserving the credibility of international institutions.

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