

DIPLOMATIC ROLE OF THE UN IN SOLVING THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE AND GAZA

Dejan Milikic¹

¹ General Staff of the Serbian Army, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, dmilikic1@gmail.com

Received: 31th August 2024

Accepted: 18th September 2024

Review paper

Abstract: *The United Nations was formed after the Second World War, with the aim of preventing the recurrence of suffering caused by war conflicts and with the main task of preserving international peace and security. It was created as a successor to the League of Nations, which was judged to be ineffective. Although the mission of the United Nations was complicated in the first decades of its formation, due to Cold War relations, the Organization of the United Nations was a key diplomatic institution that influenced the provision of peace in the world. The beginning of a special military operation in Ukraine by the Russian Federation marks the beginning of a new tightening of relations between Russia Federation and USA. With the attack of Hamas on Israel and the beginning of the bombing of the Gaza Strip, another hot spot of war is opening, with the danger of drawing other countries into the conflict. Is the United Nations becoming ineffective for maintaining peace in the world? Through this paper, I will explain the place in the role of the United Nations in the light of the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza and the possibilities of the United Nations to be a factor in the diplomatic resolution of the conflict.*

Keywords: *United Nations, diplomacy, peace, Ukraine, Gaza*

1. INTRODUCTION

The historical context of the creation of the United Nations is deeply rooted in the experiences of the Second World War. After the end of the war, the international community recognized the need for a system that could prevent future global conflicts. In June 1945, in San Francisco, 50 countries signed the United Nations Charter, which created a framework for international cooperation and peace. This organization succeeded the previous one, the League of Nations, which unsuccessfully tried to maintain peace in the interwar period. The UN was established with the aim of promoting peace, security and human rights, using a comprehensive approach through dialogue, development and peace operations.

The mission of the United Nations was complicated in the first decades of its existence because of the Cold War relations between the USA and Russia and their allies. Even then, it was clear that the mission of the United Nations and the achievement of its proclaimed goals will depend on the relations between the great powers, and especially on the five permanent members of the Security Council.

2. THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE WORLD

The role of the United Nations in peacekeeping began with its establishment in 1945. As an international organization created to prevent conflicts and maintain international peace, the UN uses a number of mechanisms. Basic functions include mediation in negotiations, sending peacekeepers to the field, and providing humanitarian aid. Resolutions of the Security Council, as well as the engagement of specialized agencies such as UNHCR and UNICEF, are crucial for the stabilization of crisis zones. The organization also helps build capacities for peace and sustainability by supporting the development and reform of institutions.

Membership in the United Nations expanded in the sixties of the last century, after decolonization, when about 80 new countries were admitted to the United Nations.

By the 1970s, the United Nations budget for social and economic programs significantly exceeded their spending on peacekeeping („Post Cold War UN”. peacekeeping.un.org). With the end of the Cold War, the United Nations expanded its field operations, undertaking a wide range of complex tasks.

The founders of the United Nations believed that the organization would act to prevent conflicts between nations and thus prevent future wars. On the other hand, despite this goal, there was almost no period without some kind of conflict in the world. The United Nations organization was formed with the aim of being a factor of collective security. However, the division of the world into hostile blocs made the creation of peace agreements much more difficult.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union put the USA in a unique position as a global power, creating new challenges for the United Nations. The USA, as the only superpower, is in a position to implement its plans, regardless of the views of other UN members. Although the United Nations is the most important diplomatic forum, a place for conducting key discussions related to maintaining peace in the world and preventing war destruction, due to the existence of one superpower, it is beginning to lose its influence.

There have been more and more calls for reforms of the United Nations, in particular, considering the actions that have been initiated against the opposition of the majority of members of the United Nations (USA against Iraq in 2003), and actions without the permission of the United Nations (Aggression on SRY in 1999). That is why requests for changes in the functioning of the UN are becoming more frequent. On the one hand, it is requested that the UN plays a more significant role in maintaining peace in the world, and on the other hand, it is requested that the UN be reduced to a humanitarian organization.

3. CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, most countries join NATO, which expands NATO to the east, i.e. towards the border of Russia. Ukraine is one of the last countries that was preparing to join NATO, which Russia saw as a direct threat to its national security.

The conflict in Ukraine, which escalated into the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, has deep roots in historical, political and social factors. Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union until its disintegration in 1991. During that period, many areas of Ukraine experienced profound changes in demographic structure, culture and economy. These changes have had long-lasting consequences for national identity and relations between different ethnic groups within Ukraine.

Ukraine consists of different regions with different linguistic and cultural characteristics. The eastern part of the country, where Russian is spoken and where a significant Russian minority

lives, has different attitudes towards Russia than the western part of Ukraine, which is more pro-European oriented.

In November 2013, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich decided to suspend negotiations on joining the European Union in favour of closer economic relations with Russia. This decision sparked mass protests in Kiev, known as Euromaidan, which turned into a political crisis and led to the overthrow of Yanukovich in February 2014. Russia saw the changes in Ukraine as a threat to its interests, especially in the context of the geopolitical balance and its influence in the region. Russia reacted by annexing Crimea in March 2014, which the international community condemned as a violation of international law.

After Crimea was annexed, separatist movements in the eastern parts of Ukraine, such as Donetsk and Luhansk, began to organize with the support of Russia. These movements sought greater autonomy or complete independence from Ukraine. Clashes between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists have turned into an armed conflict in the Donbas region. The conflicts caused significant human and material losses and complicated the problem of security and stability in Ukraine.

Russia had strategic interests in preserving its influence in the former Soviet republics, and especially in Ukraine due to its importance to Russian security and access to the Black Sea. On the other hand, the West, including the European Union and the United States of America, saw Ukraine as a key point for the spread of democracy and integration into European structures, which led to a conflict of interests between Russia and the West.

The conflict in Ukraine is complex and multi-layered, being the result of historical tensions, political decisions, regional identities and geopolitical interests. Understanding these factors helps clarify why conflict occurred and how it has developed over time.

4. THE GAZA CONFLICT

The conflicts in Gaza, particularly between Israel and Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have complex causes that are several decades old.

Conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians are rooted in conflicts over territorial rights and national aspirations that date back to the first half of the 20th century, especially after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. These conflicts were exacerbated by post-war events, including the wars of 1967 and 1973, and a series of subsequent conflicts and peace negotiations. The Gaza Strip is part of the Palestinian territory, but is subject to various forms of control and blockade. The territorial disputes over Gaza are part of the wider conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

After Hamas' victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections and the violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Hamas established power in the area. Hamas is a militant Islamist organization that opposes the recognition of Israel and aims to establish an Islamic state in the Palestinian territories. Conflicts with Israel are often the result of these ideological differences and militant activities. Within the Palestinian political structures, the rivalry between Hamas and Fatah (which governs the West Bank) also contributes to the destabilization of the region and makes a unified approach to negotiations and peace processes difficult.

Israel imposed blockade of the Gaza Strip in order to limit access to materials that could be used for military purposes by Hamas. The blockade, which has been in place since 2007, has significantly affected Gaza's economy and humanitarian situation, contributing to low living standard and increased tensions. Poor living conditions, high unemployment, and limited access to basic needs such as food, medicine and energy worsen the situation and contribute to social unrest and conflicts.

Conflicts between Israel and Hamas have often escalated into serious military actions. Hamas carried out rocket attacks on Israeli territories, while Israel responded with military operations in Gaza. These military actions often result in heavy civilian casualties and further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Conflicts are often cyclical, with periods of relative peace interrupted by new violence, making it even more difficult to resolve the conflict and find a sustainable solution.

Different international powers have different interests and attitudes towards the conflict. For example, the United States of America is a long-time ally of Israel, while many Arab countries and Iran have supported Palestinian groups such as Hamas. These international influences further complicate the possibilities for a peaceful solution. Attempts by the international community, including the UN and other mediators, to mediate conflicts and find a solution have often encountered difficulties due to the complexity of the situation and the lack of consensus among key actors.

The conflicts in Gaza are the result of a combination of historical, political, ideological and humanitarian factors. Understanding these causes helps explain why conflict resolution is so challenging and why achieving lasting peace is difficult. Each of these factors is linked to the complex dynamics that shape the current situation in Gaza and the impact on regional and international stability.

5. THE ROLE OF THE UN IN RESOLVING THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE AND GAZA

The role of the United Nations in resolving the crisis in Ukraine, which began in 2014, can be analyzed through various aspects of the UN's involvement. The crisis in Ukraine is complex and multi-layered, and the UN has tried to contribute to the resolution of the conflict through diplomatic, humanitarian and mediation activities.

The UN General Assembly adopted several resolutions condemning Russia's annexation of Crimea. For example, Resolution 68/262 from March 2014 confirmed the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, and declared the referendum in Crimea as illegal.

The Security Council discussed the situation in Ukraine, but due to Russia's veto, it had limited ability to take direct action. Nevertheless, the Council provided a forum for international discussion and coordination. The UN has supported various peace initiatives, including those resulting from the Normandy format and the Minsk agreements. The Minsk agreements (Minsk I and II) were crucial to the attempt to end the conflict, although their implementation and effectiveness were limited.

Various UN agencies, including UNHCR (High Commissioner for Refugees), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), and WFP (World Food Programme), were engaged in providing humanitarian aid to people affected by the conflict. Aid included refugees, internally displaced persons, and those affected by violence and humanitarian crises.

The UN has been involved in the coordination of humanitarian aid through the Humanitarian Coordination System and Humanitarian Coordination Groups, which provided assistance in conflict-affected areas, as well as resources for basic needs such as food, shelter and medical assistance.

The UN cooperated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which had a role in monitoring and mediating the conflicts in Ukraine. The OSCE field observation mission contributed to the reduction of violence and the provision of situation reports.

Although the United Nations has not been able to directly end the conflict in Ukraine, its contribution is significant in providing humanitarian aid, supporting dialogue, building capacity for peace, and monitoring human rights. The UN has provided an important forum for international coordination and support, and continues to play a key role in providing assistance and promoting peace in this complex context. But it is precisely in that forum for dialogue that the relationship between the coalition supporting Ukraine, led by the USA, on the one hand, and Russia on the other, comes to the fore.

The United Nations is also involved in providing assistance in solving the crisis in the Gaza Strip. The role of the United Nations in solving the crisis in Gaza is multifaceted and includes various aspects, from humanitarian aid to diplomatic efforts and mediation. The UN agencies such as UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) and UNICEF regularly provide humanitarian aid in Gaza. This includes the distribution of food, medicine, education, and health services for people affected by the conflict and blockade. The UN coordinates aid through the Humanitarian Coordination System, ensuring that aid reaches those most in need, despite the difficulties caused by the blockade and conflicts.

The UN has engaged in mediation between Israel and Palestinian groups. The UN Secretariat and the General Assembly regularly discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip and call for an end to violence and a return to negotiations. The UN Security Council adopted resolutions related to the conflict in Gaza, condemning attacks on civilians and calling for a ceasefire. However, these resolutions were often vetoed or opposed, which limited their effectiveness. UN missions and reports document human rights violations during the conflict. The Human Rights Commission and other UN bodies collect data on attacks on civilians and other forms of violence, providing important information for the international community.

Although the UN has a significant role in providing humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts, its efforts are often limited due to the complexity of conflicts, blockades and political pressures. The role of the UN is crucial in reducing humanitarian sufferings and supporting international peace efforts, but achieving a lasting solution requires additional efforts and cooperation of all parties involved.

6. CONCLUSION

The conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza are multi-layered and very complex. As we have seen, the reasons that led to these conflicts can be found in historical relations, cultural differences, but above all in geopolitical movements in the world.

At first glance, these two conflicts are separate and independent. But in these two conflicts, the geopolitical relations of the great powers are intertwined. In Ukraine, on the one hand, we have a coalition led by the US that supports Ukraine in the war against Russia. They help it through the delivery of weapons, financial aid, training of members of the Ukrainian armed forces and in other ways.

On the other hand, in Gaza, the USA supports Israel, even in its actions in Iran, because it accuses Iran of helping Russia in the war in Ukraine.

The United Nations tries to justify its role in these conflicts. But the manoeuvring space of the United Nations is limited by the relations of the great powers, primarily Russia and the USA. A special fact that made it difficult to resolve the conflict in both Ukraine and Gaza is the accusations of the President of Russia for war crimes by the International Criminal Court. The United Nations still remains the biggest debating club, but the possibilities to influence the resolution of the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza are very small.

The solution to the conflict will depend on a direct agreement between the US and Russia. For such a solution, it is necessary that the most responsible representatives of the great powers sit down at the table and find a solution, and then the agreements are verified through the General Assembly and the Security Council.

The United Nations remains the most important diplomatic body for the prevention of crises in the world and for the maintenance of peace. Especially for small countries, which are the most numerous and whose voice can be heard best in the institutions of the United Nations. United Nations reforms remain a necessity if they are to play a more significant role in conflict prevention. In the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, the United Nations has no space to solve the crisis, but still plays a significant role in humanitarian actions.

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