

## POSITION PAPER FOR MONGOLIA

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### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PROTECT THE UKRAINIAN POPULATION DURING THE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION?

Mongolia in geographical terms lies on the far side of Eurasia and has managed to maintain enduring relations with both the Russian and the Ukrainian counterparts. Being a former USSR nation, it possesses a good number of Russian language speakers making it one of the 16 countries that share strong historical and systematic links with Russia. Against this backdrop the country shares a position similar to that of Ukraine in terms of its stance on independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Mongolia is a nation which has adopted an official neutrality stance in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict of 2022 as signified by its abstinence from voting in the two UN General assembly votes that were done to name and condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, it should be highlighted that Mongolia is not turning a blind eye to the humanitarian crises ensuing as a result of the conflict which is affecting the general Ukrainian population. There a number of ways should be deployed in finding a lasting solution both for the elite protagonists in the invasion and the ordinary populace bearing the brunt of the war.

To start with, the Ukrainian population is facing a continuous human rights violation including the right to life, the right to liberty and security as well as prohibition of torture stemming from the conflict. In addition, there is a high rising number of internal displacements of Ukrainian civilians with the number surpassing 7.1 million people. In the crux of the conflicts are also foreign nationals including Mongolians living in Ukraine who found themselves in the middle of gunfire and insecurity. The above political, social and economic downturn which has been as a result of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict has degenerated into a global delinquent which geopolitical and economic effects.

Faced with the above challenges affecting the Ukrainian population in particular and the globe in general, the time to get solutions is now. Understanding Russia's legitimate security concerns caused by the advancement of NATO close to its borders since 1990 where Russia is accusing NATO of violating the 1990 Non-Advancement agreement 14 times on one hand and Ukrainian's interest of being part of an economically viable European Union bloc, the parties should employ diplomatic solutions that can be undertaken initially by employing

the Zone Of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) tactic. In this diplomatic and negotiation strategy, the parties to the conflict can seek a bargaining range in which a common ground can be found in addressing the two divergent national interest goals for Russia and Ukraine with a goal to settle the diplomatic relations and save the civilians from a degenerating humanitarian situation.

In light of the above, seeking a solution that can stop the Aggression and restore peace between the two countries remain the best solution that can be employed rather than using methods that escalate and maintain the hostility such as has been shown by the West in providing further weapons to Ukraine and/or the disinformation campaign meant to mislead the public while the general populace continue to be on the receiving end of the firepower. It is Mongolia's position that peaceful dialogue between Russia and Ukraine be strengthened and supported focusing especially on the protection of civilians.

Understanding Mongolia's geographical challenge that will make it one of the nations to be easily affected by the conflict and paying attention to the reported summary executions in the Bucha and Mariupol regions in Ukraine resulting in hundreds of deaths, continued war efforts only carries immense suffering on the civilian population and will have long term effects to the Eastern Europe regional geo-economics. The civilians in Ukraine needs to be protected now from the Russian firepower and will need to be protected from the post war possible aggression by combatants understanding the conscription method employed by the Ukrainian government where guns and weapons have been given to all who stood ready to fight. This creates a dangerous future problem for the Ukrainian civilians after the war unless a clear and strict disarmament programme is employed. If not, the weapons are open to abuse which can even affect the nations sharing borders with Ukraine including Mongolia.

A strategy to protect civilian needs to be adopted holistically establishing a safer and secure environment including convincing Ukraine to adopt a Neutrality position which can reduce the tension and in the long run avoid another possible war. In summary other urgent ways to assist and protect the civilians includes issuing of donations, psychosocial support and holding of information campaigns especially in conflict ridden areas to allow civilians access to food, health facilities, education, accommodation and other socio-economic needs. In a more light hearted vein, parties to the conflict should be encouraged to avoid use of explosive weapons in populated areas as this can damage schools, homes, electricity grids, hospitals etc.

In conclusion and in line with Mongolia's official neutrality position, international conflicts should always be solved using diplomatic routes which culminates as the best possible way to protect civilian populations from the effects of war. The UN should ensure better protection through negotiation, bargaining and balancing of interests.