POSITION PAPER

MADIHLEKO DOROTHY PHAAHLA

Seychelles

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The history of Seychelles:

As an introduction, Seychelles, which is formally known as the Republic of Seychelles, is an Island country that is located on the western Indian Ocean. Seychelles measures an area of 176 square meters and the population spans just below 100000, 99,400 to be exact, although it has been shown that it is challenging to get a proper census done on the country due to many outer inhabitants. The capital of Seychelles is called Victoria and the population is a mix of the French, African, and Asian population. The main languages spoken in Seychelles are Creole, English, French and the dominant religion is Christianity, predominantly Roman Catholic and Anglican. There are smaller populations of Hindus and Muslims.

The currency used in the Seychelles is rupee. Located east of north-eastern Tanzania, Seychelles is compiled of two main island groups, being the Mahé group, which consists of over 40 central, mountainous, granitic islands and a second group of over 70 outlying, flat, coralline islands. The country has a developing economy that depends heavily on the service sector in general and the tourism industry mostly. Seychelles mainly exports fish, copra, and cinnamon. Seychelles is a multiparty republic which has one legislative house. The head of state and the government is the president. The first recorded landing on uninhabited Seychelles was made in 1609 by an expedition of the British East India Company. The archipelago was claimed by the French in 1756 and they surrendered to the British in 1810. Making it a British crown colony in 1903 and a republic within the Commonwealth in 1976. Also making Seychelles a one-party socialist state since 1979, multiparty elections were held in 1992 and a new constitution was adopted in 1993 [1].

History of the Russia-Ukraine war:

As we may be aware, the Russo-Ukrainian War is an on-going war between Russia, together with the pro-Russian separatist forces, and Ukraine. This war began in February 2014 after the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity. The war was initially focused on the status of Crimea and the Donbas, internationally recognised as part of Ukraine. In the first eight years of the conflict, it included the Russian annexation of Crimea, in 2014 and the war in Donbas which began in 2014 to date; this was between Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists, as well as naval incidents, cyber-warfare, and political tensions. This was following a Russian military build-up on the Russia–Ukraine border as of late 2021, the war expanded significantly when Russia launched a full-scale invasion on the Ukraine on 24 February 2022 to be exact.

Following the Euro-maidan protests and a revolution resulting in the removal of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014, pro-Russian unrest erupted in parts of Ukraine. In August 2014, unmarked Russian military vehicles crossed the border into the Donetsk republic. An undeclared war began between Ukrainian forces on one side, and separatists intermingled with Russian troops on the other, although Russia attempted to hide its involvement. In 2021 and early 2022, there was a major Russian military build-up around Ukraine's borders. NATO accused Russia of planning an invasion, which it denied. Russian President Vladimir Putin criticized the enlargement of NATO as a threat to his country and demanded Ukraine to be barred from ever joining the military alliance. He also expressed Russian irredentist views, questioned Ukraine's right to exist, and stated wrongfully that Ukraine was created by Soviet Russia. On the 21st of February 2022, Russia officially recognised the two self-proclaimed separatist states in the Donbas, and openly sent troops into the territories. Three days later, Russia invaded Ukraine. Much of the international community has condemned Russia for its actions in post-revolutionary Ukraine, accusing it of breaking international law and violating Ukrainian sovereignty. Many countries implemented economic sanctions against Russia, Russian individuals, or companies, especially after the horrific 2022 invasion [2].

Seychelles' Stance on the matter:

President Putin, who is the President of Russia, emphasized in his two speeches his view of Russia's actions in Crimea and the war in Donbas, which Seychelles is mostly in support of this, however we as Seychelles do not promote the use of violence but rather a forum in which the matter may be discussed and resolved verbally first. Therefore, even though we understand the reasoning that Russia is using, our intention as Seychelles is to help bring peace between these two nations and not war. Seychelles is not part of NATO and we do not take part in any wars or war-provoking activities, we promote peace.

What constitutes the ground for invasion and war, and has Russia abided by those articles allowing them to pursue those military actions?

President Pultin, mentioned that Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk freely made their choice to be part of Russia, whilst the Ukraine attempted to undermine their choice by activating what he called terrorist cells and operating a terrorist underground, with the international community's support. The Ukraine was furthermore unwilling to comply with the Minsk agreements and organized a Blitzkrieg into the region. The residents of Donbas were suffering from indiscriminate killing, Putin said, with their only sin being that they opposed the 2014 "coup" and shift away from Russia. Therefore, Putin saw "no choice" and recognized the independence of the two regions at the end of his February 21 speech. The Russian parliament ratified the decision a day later.

President Putlin also stated that Donbas is proof that <u>Russia is under attack by the West, and serves as immediate justification to defend itself by launching the operation</u>. Putin's legal argument is based on Chapter VII, Article 51 of the UN Charter, which states: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security." The President of Russia, Putlin, also referenced the principle of equal and indivisible security, as stipulated in the 1999 Charter for European Security of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which was adopted in Istanbul, in addition to the 2010 OSCE Astana Declaration [3].

The principle is therefore simple: A state cannot strengthen its own security at the expense of the security of other states. In Putin's eyes, this is exactly what Ukraine is doing. The "special military operation" is, therefore, a pre-emptive act of self-defence, and it will have fulfilled its purpose if the following three goals are achieved: Firstly, it prevents further NATO expansion. Secondly, it leads to guarantees that NATO will refrain from deploying assault weapon systems on Russian borders. Lastly, the rolling back of NATO's military capability and infrastructure in Europe to where they were in 1997, when the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed.

In summary, Putin has expressed concern over the expansion of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, into Eastern Europe and former Soviet Republics, especially Ukraine. NATO is a political and military alliance that dates back to 1949 and comprises 30 member countries, including the US, Canada, the UK, France, Belgium, and many other European nations. NATO membership is open to any European country that meets its criteria. The alliance has said Ukraine is among three nations currently considered aspiring members. President Putin has criticised NATO for expanding eastwards since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. He has said NATO enlisting nations on Russia's borders represents a provocation, although NATO insists it is a defensive alliance and not a threat to Russia [4].

What is the best way to protect the Ukrainian population?

There is no doubt that today, more than ever, Ukrainians need help or aid from all over the world to find or build new homes in safer areas, to get food and medication or health care. All these three social spheres are the most necessary for people to be able to continue their lives [5]. Providing these essential resources to the Ukrainians may be seen as the best way to protect them and their well-being, and different organizations are in the process of assisting and Seychelles is willing to assist with these basic needs, as well as to advocate for peace between the two nations.

Is there a common interest that can allow for Ukraine and Russia to end the conflict through an agreement?

The war in Ukraine is undoubtedly causing a food and fuel crises. As smaller supplies and higher prices for food mean that the world's poor could be forced to do without food and other basic essentials. The rapidly rising commodity prices have been the most immediate economic impact of the Ukraine conflict, and this alone is a good enough reason for the war to end as this affects both countries.

According to the World Trade Organization, the war has created "immense human suffering", but it is also damaging global trade. Disruptions to food supplies could have "potentially dire consequences" for poor countries. The WTO has downgraded its forecasts for goods imports and exports, and is calling on governments and partners to help facilitate trade. New COVID-19 lockdowns in China are also disrupting trade by sea [6].

In conclusion, one may state that the Russia-Ukraine war is a global crisis whose sustainable solution rests with international co-operation and solidarity. It is a war that cannot be solved through unilateral condemnation and other sanctions alike. It is a complex confrontation whose resolution do not rest with sending weapons that will potentially only result in inflaming further a fire that can consume all of humanity [7].

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