

1. Peace and Security in Eastern Europe and the Caucuses

Bearing in mind the numerous unsolved conflicts which are on the rise in the region of Eastern Europe and the Caucuses they even escalated further in the last months.

The Situation in Ukraine

Since the full-scale invasion of Russia on 24th of February 2022, Data Friendly Space reported over 22.000 civilian Casualties, more than 6.309 million displaced people and a total of 3.793 educational institutions which have been damaged.¹ The situation for many worsens even more through the Russian withdrawal from the Black Sea grain deal, as well as the breach of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Dam.² The frontline changes since the summer remain little, but still in favour of the Ukraine.³ In September, the Ukraine reported the highest number of drone strikes in a single month and on the 25th of November 70 Russian drones hit Kyiv, wounding 5 civilians.⁴ The war is marked by inner unrest on both sides. While after an attended mutiny the Wagner chief Jewgeni Prigoschin died in a suspicious plan crash, the Ukraine dismissed all six deputy defence minister on the 18th of September.⁵

The Security Council constantly convenes for briefings about certain topics related to the Ukraine.⁶ By the start of the year the General Assembly adopted Resolution ES-11/6 (2023), calling for "a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations while the Human Rights Council passed Resolution 52/32. Besides that, three Arria-formula meetings were organized, two by Russia and one by Albania, France, and the United States of America (USA), targeting different topics of the conflict. Furthermore, on the 17th of July and on the 20th of September a High-Level open Debate on Ukraine was held, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy participating in-person for the first time since the war started. After the investigation of war crimes, on the 17th of March the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants of arrest for Russian president Vladimir Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation.⁷ The Situation seem stuck: Large scale attacks by Russia keep increasing,⁸ while Ukraine lately attacked the Russian city of Belgorod⁹. Among others the United Nations (UN) tries to spread civilian aid to reduce the suffering of civilians in east Ukraine.¹⁰

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

In February, the International Court of Justice ruled in favour of Armenia, ordering Azerbaijan to "take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions".¹¹ Even after a reaffirmation, Baku did not comply and instead even established a checkpoint to control the flow of goods through the Lachin corridor further.¹² After

¹ Data Friendly Space. *Ukrainian Crisis Situational Analysis*. 2023. p.6.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Security Council Report. *Ukraine*. 2020.

⁷ International Criminal Court. *Ukraine*. 2022.

⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN chief condemns Russian attacks against Ukrainian cities and towns*. 2023.

⁹ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Security Council holds emergency meeting on attacks in Belgorod, Russia*. 2023.

¹⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *World News in Brief: Senior Humanitarian Coordinator for Gaza, cholera spreading in Sudan, aid for eastern Ukraine*. 2023.

¹¹ International Court of Justice. *Application of the international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan)*. 2023.

¹² Security Council Report. *Briefing on the Situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh Region*. 2023.

Azerbaijan stated that the checkpoint is used to prevent weapons, soldiers and military equipment from entering the region, accusations from Armenia rose, that humanitarian aid was blocked by Baku as well.¹³ The former ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo in August published an expert opinion, strongly emphasizing the Article II (c) of the Genocide Convention, supporting Armenia's calls of a Genocide by blocking humanitarian cargo.¹⁴ On the 19th of September Azerbaijan announced the launch of an "anti-terror measures", resulting in "several hundred casualties, the death of civilians, among them particularly vulnerable persons, and tens of thousands of people fleeing from their homes" according to the European Parliament. The clash resulted in a surrender after 24 hours, leading to the "reconquest" of the territory of the former self-proclaimed democratic Republic of Artsakh.¹⁵

Already before the outbreak Armenia stated on the ratification of the Rome Statute and with that the recognition of the ICC.¹⁶ The Security Council convened for an, under Article 35 by Armenia, invoked meeting on the 21th of September. The UN Human Rights Council-appointed Special Rapporteur Morris Tidball-Binz said that Azerbaijan needs to guarantee the rights of ethnic Armenians as well as investigate the killing of dozens of people, including peacekeepers.¹⁷ The World Health Organization deployed teams and material to help wounded civilians and to provide refugees with vital health services.¹⁸ More UN Agencies participated in the relentless efforts to help the civilians, such as United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Program and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.¹⁹ Also the United Nations Population Fund helped to make the situation less worse, but despite international affords the crisis left more than 100.000 people displaced and hundreds dead or injured.²⁰

Ongoing tensions between Kosovo and Serbia

In the recent months the situation between Kosovo and Serbia remains highly tense. The establishment of the Association of Serb Municipalities, agreed on in 2013, is still not enforced by the Kosovo and resentments are drawing the line between the Kosovo Albanians and local Serbs in the Kosovo itself.²¹ An election, following the resignation of four mayors in Serb municipalities, in 2023 was boycotted and led to a turnout of 3.47 percent of the registered voters.²² Many Kosovo Serbs, who were public employees (e.g. police officers) resigned as a consequence from their positions, leading to the fear of discrimination due to the ethnicity and a less diverse police force.²³ Violent protests erupted, leading to several injured on both sites, while the combat level of the Serbian army was raised to its highest readiness level. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization deployed more than 700-members to Kosovo. While several Memberstates and supranational Organisations continuously

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ocampo. *Expert Opinion: Genocide against Armenians in 2023*. 2023.

¹⁵ European Parliament. *Motion for a Resolution on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan's attack and the continuing threats against Armenia (B9-0397/2023)*. 2023; Security Council Report. *Briefing on the Situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh Region(2)*. 2023.

¹⁶ Parliamentarians for Global Action. *Armenia and the Rome Statute*. 2024.

¹⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Karabakh: Azerbaijan must 'guarantee the rights of ethnic Armenians'*. 2023.

¹⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN teams support burn victims amidst Karabakh crisis*. 2023.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *UN Karabakh mission told 'sudden' exodus means as few as 50 ethnic Armenians may remain*. 2023.

²¹ *United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo*, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/735), 2023.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

call on both sides to deescalate, the situation instead further escalates on the 24th of September leading to a shootout with heavily armed elements and four dead.²⁴

Two times a year, the Security Council holds a briefing on the Situation in Kosovo mostly briefed by the Special Representative and head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Besides that, the Third Joint Steering Committee discussed the implementation of the SDGs in the upcoming years.²⁵ To facilitate the dialog process, the European Union (EU) 2020 appointed a Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue, which since then act as a negotiator in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.²⁶ Due to the escalating tensions this year, in the summer Months, the EU as well as the USA initiated a range of different measures against Kosovo.²⁷ Noting that the measures are temporary and reversible the EU especially criticised that its requests for de-escalatory steps went unheeded.²⁸

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Parliamentarians for Global Action. *Armenia and the Rome Statute*. 2024. Retrieved 11 January 2024 from: <https://www.pgaction.org/ilhr/rome-statute/armenia.html>

²⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Political Impasse on Kosovo, Rising Tensions between Pristina, Belgrade Can Only Be Overcome by Compromise, Mission Head Tells Security Council*. 2023.

²⁵ United Nations Kosovo Team. *Building a Sustainable Future: Successful Joint Steering Committee Meeting Propels SDG Progress*. 2023.

²⁶ European Union External Action. *Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue*. 2022.

²⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/735)*. 2023.

²⁸ Ibid.

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2. Addressing Threats to International Peace and Security from Non-State Actors

In 2023, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) published his New Agenda for Peace. There, he outlines amongst others the topicality of threats stemming from non-State actors (NSA), including terrorists, for international peace and security. Besides once again pointing to the prevalent threat from improvised explosive devices, proliferation of armed groups in some regions of the world causing damage to civilians, infrastructure and peace operations, he raises his concern about malicious usage of new and emerging technologies such as uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and cyberspace.¹ In the same manner, the UN Security Council has continuously engaged in the topic, working especially along two strands of action: Preventing the access of NSA to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and countering terrorism.

The Security Council's work related to NSAs' non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery by NSA is significantly directed towards implementing resolution 1540 (2004).² Resolution 2663 (2022) extended the mandate of the 1540 committee as well as the Group of experts until end of 2032, requesting the conduct of two comprehensive reviews on the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and the submission of annual Programmes of Work.³ In 2022 and 2023, the 1540 committee provided technical and financial support to Member States, organized outreach events, offered and co-hosted several workshops with international, regional and subregional stakeholders and organizations.⁴ One workshop, co-hosted by Kenya, included officials from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development region and 1540 committee representatives who discussed WMD proliferation risks with regards to NSA and how to mitigate those as well as the resolution's obligations and relation with legally binding regimes.⁵ In the same manner, more than 60 international participants deliberated and strengthened the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region, having a particular focus on knowledge sharing about updating national legislation, supporting better procedures to account for and secure chemical, biological and nuclear materials and training of border officers to identify sensitive items.⁶

Corresponding to these efforts, the 2022 Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) demonstrated steady progress in the international non-proliferation obligations regarding WMD and NSA. While notable variations between Member States exist, most states strengthened their measures to prohibit NSA from producing, accessing, transporting or using WMD equipment. Furthermore, the review found the 1540 committee's cooperation with civil society, organizations and the private sector to be an effective scheme. As key

¹ United Nations, Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. 2023; United Nations, Security Council. *Protection of civilians in armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/345)*. 2023.

² United Nations, Security Council. *Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (S/RES/1540)*. 2004.

³ United Nations, Security Council. *Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (S/RES/2663)*. 2022.

⁴ United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 31 December 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council: Review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) for 2022 (S/2022/1034)*. 2022. Annex.

⁵ United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Eastern African countries strategize on strengthening implementation of resolution to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors*. 2023.

⁶ United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Dozens of stakeholders explore avenues to support ASEAN States with implementing landmark resolution on preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors*. 2023.

difficulties for states a lack of financial resources, technical expertise and legal frameworks were identified.⁷

Hence and in accordance with the Secretary-General's call to further strengthen measures to prevent NSA to acquire WMD, the 1540 committee planned farther to offer expertise to states that have not submitted a first report on steps to implement resolution 1540, share expertise and best practices und update its letter templates as well as the list of assistance providers.⁸

Furthermore, NSA activity in the form of terrorism remains a crucial part of the Security Council's agenda. The easy access to new and emerging technologies for NSA, particularly terrorist groups, is characterized as a significant threat. In 2021, the Global Counter-Terrorism Programme on Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems (AROS) was developed in light of NSAs' increased usage of UAS. As these pose a great risk to civilians and infrastructure, AROS was launched in line with relevant Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism.⁹ In 2022, the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee adopted the non-binding *Delhi Declaration on Countering the Use of New and Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes*. Besides calling on all Member Sates to refrain from supporting any kind of terrorist activity and underlining their obligation to implement strong measures against it, the Declaration notes with concern the misuse of UAS as well as the potential of Information and Communication Technologies, including social media and crowdfunding platforms by terrorists. Therefore, deepened engagement with civil society and private-sector entities is encouraged.¹⁰

Moreover, the Security Council repeatedly recommended national authorities to establish effective public private partnerships (PPPs) with financial institutions, AI experts as well as financial technology and social media companies. The need for implementing such PPPs and allocating sufficient resources to it in order to respond to the financing of terrorism was also noted in the *Thematic Summary Assessment of Gaps in Implementing Key Countering the Financing of Terrorism Provisions of Security Council resolutions*. There, multi-level difficulties regarding the investigation and prosecution of terrorist financing was identified.¹¹ In addition, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) published a new analytical brief *on Establishing Effective public-private partnerships in Countering the Financing of Terrorism* in 2023. It is suggested that states should use the same PPP tactics for dealing terrorism as for anti-money laundering legislation while complying with human rights and data protection. The analytical brief offers solutions and best practices collected through interaction with Member States and assessment visits.¹²

Another topic brought up with regards to countering NSA, particularly terrorist, activity was the gendered nature of terrorist crime. In order to enhance cooperation with civil society organizations,

⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 29 November 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council: 2022 comprehensive review of the status of implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) (S/2022/899)*. 2022.

⁸ United Nations, Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 9: A New Agenda for Peace*. 2023; United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 16 February 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council: Programme of work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for the period from 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024 (S/2023/117)*. 2023. Annex I.

⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems: Global Counter-Terrorism Programme on Autonomous and Remotely Operated Systems (AROS)*. n.d.

¹⁰ United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee. *CTED releases new analytical brief: Establishing effective public-private partnerships in countering the financing of terrorism*. 2023.

technical assistance, legal frameworks and prosecution in gender-responsive and victim-centred approaches, the CTED published a study on Member States' efforts and initiatives to face and counter sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of terrorism.¹³

Lastly, also regional and specific NSA continued to play a role in the Security Council's work. Al Qaida and associated entities were repeatedly mentioned in resolutions, and the need to effectively face their activity was expressed through calls upon the Member States and the prolonging of sanction regimes against relevant actors.¹⁴ Further examples include the expansion of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan and the Security Council issued presidential statement expressing its concern over increased armed group activity in some provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.^{15,16}

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¹³ United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Towards Meaningful Accountability for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Linked to Terrorism*. 2023.

¹⁴ UN Security Council. *Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities*. n.d.; UN Security Council. *Letter dated 16 February 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) addressed to the President of the Security Council: Programme of work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for the period from 1 February 2023 to 31 January 2024 (S/2023/117)*. 2023. Annex I; UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022.

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