

Singapore's Stance towards Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Mar 2022

What's Happening in Ukraine?



Map of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

> 2 million Ukrainians have fled



The civilian and military death toll is rising

Why does it matter to Singapore?

Russia's unprovoked military invasion of Ukraine violates a key principle of international law: it is **unacceptable** for any power to violate a country's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

Singapore's ability to survive, exist, and prosper as a sovereign nation rests on this principle.

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Singapore staunchly supports **INTERNATIONAL LAW** and the **UN CHARTER**, which prohibits acts of aggression against a sovereign state.

If “might is right”, the world will be a dangerous place for small countries.

”

“ Unless we [...] stand up for the principles that are the very foundation for the independence and sovereignty of smaller nations, **our own right to exist and prosper as a nation may similarly be called into question one day.** ”

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's Ministerial Statement on the Situation in Ukraine and its Implications, on 28 Feb 2022

What is “taking a principled stand”?

Singapore has **consistently opposed** the violation of the sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of all countries.

Voted Yes on UN resolutions to demand the withdrawal of foreign troops

1978 Vietnam’s Invasion of Cambodia
1979 USSR’s invasion of Afghanistan
1983 US invasion of Grenada

Condemned foreign invasions

1990 Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait

Voted Yes on UN resolution to call on all states to desist from actions that disrupt Ukrainian territorial integrity

2014 Annexation of Crimea

We **do not succumb** to external pressure to take sides or support the position of bigger countries.

Why do Russia's irredentist claims on Ukraine matter to Singapore?

- Ukraine and Russia have a shared history.
- However, Ukrainian identity is distinct from Russia's. Ukraine was also recognised as an independent state on **2 Dec 1991**.
- Despite that, Russian president Vladimir Putin continues to view parts of Ukraine as **'stolen' from the Russian 'motherland'** - a concept which has no basis in international law.
- This is how he justified the 2014 annexation of Crimea.

What has Singapore done in response to the Russian invasion?



Co-sponsored a UNGA Resolution

condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and demanded withdrawal of foreign troops.

Co-sponsored UN Human Rights Council resolution condemning human rights violations and abuses as a result of Russian aggression against Ukraine.



BANNED

Imposed sanctions and restrictions to constrain Russia's capacity to conduct war against Ukraine and undermine its sovereignty:

- limit the transactions and financial activity of Russian banks with ones in Singapore, and fund raising activities benefitting the Russian Government.
- ban export of certain goods to Russia, including computers and military goods.



BANNED



Fundraising efforts to support affected communities in Ukraine

- Singapore Red Cross has raised over \$3.3 million from public fundraising.

“ It is important that all countries, especially the small states, send a clear signal that we are united for peace, and we are united to defend the principles of the (UN) charter, and that we are united to uphold international law. ”

- Burhan Gafoor, Singapore's Permanent Representative to the UN, during an emergency special session of the UN General Assembly in New York on 5 March 2022

Potential Impact of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Singapore

Supply chain disruptions, rising costs, inflationary pressures, and rising electricity and petrol prices.

Disruptions to organised events and business transactions.

Cybersecurity threats with potential retaliation in cyber space.

Disinformation could distort situation and sow seeds of discord and distrust.

Food for Thought

- What are the fundamental principles that guide Singapore's foreign policy?
- How can we ensure that Singapore does not take sides when dealing with similar issues in the future?
- What can Singaporeans do in support of Singapore's stand?

