

A Ukraine Initiated UN Resolution on Crimea, Supposedly “Annexed” and “Occupied” by Russia

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Global Research, November 21, 2018

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#) 18 November 2018

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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A Ukraine-initiated [resolution](#), condemning alleged human rights violations in Crimea, has been approved by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues) of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The text is openly hostile toward Russia. The peninsula is supposedly “annexed” and “occupied” as a result of “military conflict” – the term used for the first time to toughen the wording as compared to the two previous UN resolutions on the issue.

Has anybody heard about combat actions in Crimea? Definitely not, but the authors of the document think otherwise. The resolution affirms that Crimea was “seized” and offers its readers concocted stories about detentions, tortures and the usual stuff about “human rights violations”. According to it, the rights of people in Crimea to have Russian citizenship with all the social benefits it implies, to vote or serve in the armed forces go against international law. It says minorities are oppressed and not allowed to speak their native languages, which is evidently not true. Many Western delegations [have visited Crimea](#). None of them saw anything to show that there were any problems with human rights or the plight of minorities.

A group of German politicians [visited](#) the peninsula in February. What they saw made them call for lifting the sanctions against Russia. A [delegation from Norway](#) went to Crimea last month to express its satisfaction with the progress the region had made. This year, Matteo Salvini, Vice Prime Minister of Italy, [told](#) the Washington Post that he believes that Crimea’s re-unification with Russia is legitimate and branded the Ukraine’s 2014 “revolution” as fake and funded by other countries. Mr. Salvini is a staunch opponent of the sanctions imposed by the EU on Moscow for incorporating Crimea – the region he visited himself in 2014 after it became Russian. The [Yalta International Economic Forum – 2018](#) brought together a large number of high-level guests on April 19-21. In August, a Slovak delegation of businessmen led by [Peter Marcek](#), a deputy of the National Council of Slovakia, was in Crimea to study business opportunities.

The document calls on all international bodies to use the term “the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation.” The Secretary General is to ensure the implementation of the resolution, which will be put to vote in December to be endorsed by UN General Assembly.



The resolution was supported by only 67 votes, with 26 nations voting against, including

Russia, China, India, South Africa and Serbia, and 87 abstaining. Totally, 108 out of 193 UN member states did not vote for it.

The results deprive Ukraine of opportunity to affirm that its stance on Crimea enjoys wide international support. Last year, a similar resolution with a “milder’ wording was endorsed by 70 states (26 voted against and 76 abstained). The first Crimea resolution in 2016 was backed by 70 UN members with 71 abstaining and 26 voting against. So, the approval has gone down a bit while the number of abstentions grew with the number of nations backing Russia to remain unchanged. As one can see, the support for Ukraine’s position is growing weaker.

The principle of [responsibility to protect](#) (R2P or RtoP) adopted at the World Summit in 2005 is omnipresent in all UN documents. Suppose Crimea was Ukrainian today, would the people living there be protected? It’s important to be impartial. No way could anybody accuse the famous British Chatham House think tank of having anything to do with “Russian propaganda”. Here is its [report](#) published on Nov.8 devoted to the threat coming from Ukraine’s radicals and the violence they spread. It’s horrible. Even Atlantic Council admits Ukraine’s Nazi problem. It expressed its alarm in the [report](#) published in October. As a UN member, Russia was obliged to protect the people of Crimea from this threat. That’s what it did in strict compliance with its international commitment.

Nazism on the rise in Ukraine is an acute problem for all. On Nov.15, the Third Committee approved a draft on combating the glorification of Nazism by a recorded vote of 130 in favor to 2 against with 51 abstentions. Guess what countries said no. The only ones to object were Ukraine and the United States. The UN resolution expresses concern over the influence and intensified activities of ultra right and neo-Nazi groups. It calls for the universal implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. If Ukraine thinks the vote on Crimea was a victory, the vote on Nazi glorification was a big loss. Everyone can see where the threat comes from and who tried to obstruct the UN resolution, which was first of all targeted at Kiev, even if it did not say so directly.

Also in December, the UNGA will vote on an Azov Sea resolution. The area has turned into a real [flashpoint](#) where a spark can easily ignite a big fire anytime. Here again, Ukraine pins its hopes on the West, hoping its pressure, not negotiations with Russia, will help solve the problem. Perhaps, the West exerts its influence to make push through a “tough language” Azov Sea resolution to condemn Russia. So what? Is Moscow in violation of the 2003 agreement with Ukraine on the Azov Sea? Certainly not, nobody says it is, even Kiev. Ship inspections are allowed under the document.

The Azov Sea situation is artificially created by Ukraine to distract the attention of international community from what’s happening in the country. Neo-Nazis gain prominence in Ukraine – that’s the gist of the problem. This fact is key to understanding why re-unification of Crimea with Russia was a step in the right direction. The people of the peninsula expressed their will in a referendum. One of the reasons the idea of re-unification received overwhelming support was the search for protection against the Nazi threat – the problem addressed in the recent UN resolution that Kiev vigorously opposed. Russia fulfilled its international duty in line with the UN guiding principle, stating that “all states have a responsibility to protect.” The time is right for the UN to adopt a special resolution to condemn Ukraine as a state where neo-Nazism is thriving while the US and some other states, who sponsor the Ukrainian government, hush up the burning problem.

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