

Mexico's Initiative for Dialogue and Peace in Ukraine

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*In his [statement](#) on the occasion of the 212th anniversary of Mexican independence, delivered on Sept. 16, the President of Mexico **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** presented his proposal for the establishment of a High-Level Caucus for Dialogue and Peace in Ukraine. Yesterday, during his statement in the [Security Council](#), and later in the [general debate](#) of the 77th General Assembly, **Secretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ebrard** formally presented Mexico's proposal.*

This article will address the rationale behind this initiative, its proposed operation, and steps that have been taken toward its realization.

Standstill at the United Nations

The escalation of tensions in the ongoing war against Ukraine is deeply worrisome. From Feb. 24 to July 31, 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded [12,584 civilian casualties](#) in Ukraine. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has recorded [7,278,696 refugees](#) from Ukraine across Europe. And according to a [July Report](#) of the Food and Agriculture Organization, initial estimates indicate a damage to agriculture between USD \$4.3 billion and USD \$6.4 billion due to the war.

In addition to these appalling figures, the [precarious situation](#) at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station, which the International Atomic Energy Agency called "untenable," has added a new threatening nuclear dimension to international peace and security.

In the meantime, given the direct involvement of a permanent member in the conflict, the Security Council has proven unable to take action, thus failing to comply with its U.N. Charter-mandated primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and

security. So far, the only declaration it has adopted is the brief [Presidential Statement S/PRST/2022/3](#) of May 6, 2022, co-authored by Mexico and Norway, in which the Council expressed strong support for Secretary-General António Guterres' efforts in the search for a peaceful solution. However, it has not been able to back the diplomatic efforts undertaken by him that led first to the opening of humanitarian corridors that allowed the evacuation of civilians and, more recently, to the facilitation, along with Türkiye, of the [Black Sea Grain Initiative](#), which allows the export and safe transportation of grain from Ukraine as well as the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to world markets.

Given the paralysis of the Security Council and building on [General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-11/1](#), Mexico and France also co-authored [General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-11/2](#), entitled "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine," adopted on March 24 with overwhelming support. This resolution "strongly encourages the continued negotiations between all parties, and again urges the immediate peaceful resolution of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine through political dialogue, negotiations, mediation and other peaceful means in accordance with international law."

But tensions continue to escalate and urgent action is needed.

Mexico's Foreign Policy As a Peace-Loving Nation

As we emphasized in another *Just Security* [piece](#), one of Mexico's key priorities as an Elected Member to the Security Council for the term 2021-2022 has been the peaceful settlement of disputes and mediation.

Mexico's foreign policy as a peace-loving nation has borne fruit in the past. This was the case with the [creation](#) of the Contadora Group in the 1980's that led to the Accords for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America. More recently in 2019, it also led to the [establishment](#), together with Uruguay, of the Montevideo Mechanism with the purpose of opening a path for dialogue and negotiation in Venezuela.

Regarding the war in Ukraine, Mexico made clear its position on a political solution in its [Feb. 25 statement](#) in the Security Council, in which the following six points were highlighted:

1. We are facing the invasion of a sovereign country by another, which represents a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the UN Charter and constitutes, in addition, an aggression by the terms of resolution 3314 (XXIX) of the General Assembly, adopted by all members of the United Nations.
2. Mexico has suffered four invasions during its history as an independent state: two by France (1838 and 1862-67) and two by the United States (1846-48 and 1914). The first U.S. intervention in 1846 resulted in the loss of almost half of our national territory at the time.
3. Mexico has always condemned all acts of aggression, as was evidenced by our protest before the League of Nations against the annexation of Ethiopia and Albania by Italy (1935-36) and the annexation of Austria by Germany (1938).
4. Our rejection of the use of force led us to convene, in 1945, the Inter-American Conference on the Problems of Peace and War in Mexico City, in order to arrive at the San Francisco Conference with a clear and defined regional position on this issue.

5. Mexico's foreign policy is pacifist. Since the founding of the United Nations, it has defended and will continue to defend, in this organization and in all other forums, the prohibition on the threat or use of force in international relations.
6. In 1988, we inscribed in our Constitution (art. 89, X) the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as normative principles of our foreign policy.

Given its long-standing tradition for peace and diplomacy, embedded in our national Constitution, and in accordance with our responsibility as an Elected Member of the Security Council, it is only natural that Mexico has decided once again to champion a political solution to the conflict and to exhaust all efforts towards that end.

Pursuing a High-Level Caucus for Dialogue and Peace

Mexico's proposal on the establishment of a High-Level Caucus for Dialogue and Peace in Ukraine is intended to boost the mediation efforts of Secretary-General Guterres and would therefore operate under his leadership, in partnership with other Heads of State and Government. Given their high moral character, it is hoped that the Prime Minister of India, H.E. Narendra Modi, and H. H. Pope Francis would support Guterres in this endeavor.

The objective of this Caucus would be to serve as a diplomatic channel to engage with both the Russian Federation and Ukraine, with a view toward confidence-building measures, lowering tensions, and brokering a cease-fire that could lead to a truce, thus opening a path for dialogue towards the ultimate goal of achieving a sustainable peace agreement.

Needless to say, this is easier said than done. Mexico is fully cognizant that the precondition for any mediation effort to succeed is the political will of the parties and we are cognizant that tensions continue to grow. In the past days, we have led several bilateral meetings with all relevant actors at the ambassadorial level on this proposal in New York, and more will take place at the ministerial level on the margins of the General Assembly's high-level week. So far, albeit with caution, all parties have expressed their interest in learning more details about this proposal.

Conclusion

We are convinced that it is the duty of all Members of the United Nations to exhaust all diplomatic efforts towards the peaceful settlement of disputes. Indifference is unacceptable. It is precisely in dire times like these that our endurance is put to the test. We cannot and must not give in to despair. This initiative is now at the mercy of the political will of the parties. We hope that it leads to a new chapter in this conflict, one governed by diplomacy and political dialogue, for the sake of the people of the world who continue to suffer from the scourge of war and to whom we will always remain accountable for our actions and for our omissions.

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