

Key takeaways from 77th Session of UNGA

written by Ezba Walayat | September 28, 2022



Introduction

The United Nation's primary policy making body is the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The UN General Assembly provides a platform for international cooperation to address the most important issues the world confronting today. The 77th UNGA and High-Level Week initiated from September 19-23. The greatest annual meeting of world leaders rescheduled in person to a globe torn apart by numerous crises, the most pressing of which is the conflict ongoing in Ukraine. The 77th session of the UN General Assembly, which began on September 20, 2022, was forewarned by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that the world is in "great peril and paralyzed". The theme for this year is "A watershed moment: transformative solutions to interlocking challenges," which recognizes the shared causes of crises like COVID-19, climate change, and conflict and the necessity for solutions that increase global sustainability and resilience.



Ukraine Remained in Focus at 77th UNGA

World leaders at the 77th UNGA in New York discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a worldwide food crisis exacerbated by the war. As the United States and its allies in the West fight with Russia for diplomatic influence, geopolitical divisions that have been resulted because of the conflict, therefore, at the UN General Assembly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has taken center stage. Russia and Ukraine are key exporters of grains and fertilizers, the UN and other countries are trying to manage the food crisis from getting worse, which was already fueled by climate change and the COVID-19 epidemic by playing significant and due role in the situation. Along with a COVID-19 global action plan meeting and a replenishment conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the United States will co-host a food security summit alongside the European Union and the African Union on the sideline of the UNGA event. Meantime, Germany and France have denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin's and condemned the war launched by Russia, while Qatar, Senegal, and Turkey have called for immediate peace talks and Lithuania has called for the creation of a war crimes tribunal for accountability. According to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Washington will keep helping Ukraine defend itself. In Russia's War, France and Turkey presented themselves as key mediators in the ongoing conflict. During his speech to the 77th U.N. General Assembly on the first day, French President Macron referred to Russia's war as a return to "imperialism", and asked other countries to play their part for resolution of crisis between Russia and Ukraine. Whereas the President of Turkey stated "We need to find a dignified way out of this situation through a diplomatic process that is reasonable, fair and applicable."



Russia at UN General Assembly

Ukraine has dominated debates at the UN. Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, claimed that Ukraine is posing challenges to Russian security and "brazenly trampling" on the rights of Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine. However, a key development has been witnessed i.e. on September 21, Russia and Ukraine carried out an unexpected prisoner swap involving around 300 prisoner of war, the largest since the start of the war. Ukraine said that 215 Russian servicemen had been freed, including soldiers who had commanded the defence of the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol. Viktor Medvedchuk, a former Ukrainian politician and Putin loyalist, was among the 55 inmates that Kyiv handed over to Russia in exchange.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres did not perceive an immediate light at the end of the tunnel with regards to putting an end to the war, according to a statement from UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric. However, United Nations believe that there are ways to lessen suffering in Ukraine, and the UN is quite active with humanitarian support in Ukraine, as well as considering ways to manage the effects of the war at regional and global level particularly in the form of food and energy crisis experiencing by number of countries and Europe.