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# RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES TO DISCREDIT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

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## **Abstract**

The article considers the peculiarities of assessments, conclusions of Ukrainian and Western analysts, experts and politicians of Russian activities to discredit international institutions in the light of the Russian-Ukrainian war, which were published in the last two-three years by organizations and media as: UN, RBC-Ukraine, Reuters, Censor, Bellingcat, The Wall Street Journal, Lloyd's List, Yemen Shabab, Myrotvorets, The Guardian, Naval News, Kyiv School of Economics, CEPA, Foreign Policy, CNN, European Pravda, Euro Integration, Ukrainska Pravda, Bloomberg, TSN, Ukrinform, The Kyiv Independent, ICRC, Deutsche Welle, Market Watch, Daily News Hungary, Voice of America, The Parliament, NATO, Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania, Aerotime, Wikipedia, Politico, Euronews, Sabah, BBC, Kyodo News and others. The relevance of the proposed analysis is determined by the fact that it allows to understand the main activities of Russia aimed at discrediting the well-known international institutions and to reduce its impact on the global security. The conducted qualitative analysis allowed identifying a number of issues that proved to be a priority for analysts in the political, economic, judicial, cultural and social spheres. It has been discovered that Russia provides different kind of operations which have a negative impact on the UN, NATO, EU, ICRC, IMF, ICC, IAEA, local, international media and others institutions. These aggressive Russian policy lead to falling the credit of trust to international institutions and can change all existing world order. If active countermeasures in the nearest future will not be provided, this negatively will affect the global and European security.

**Key words:** Joint Coordination Centre (JCC), European Union (EU), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), International Criminal Court (ICC).

## **Introduction**

Analysis of assessments, statements and conclusions of experts, analysts, politicians and economists, current topics for discussion, as well as forecasts for further Russian policy, considering the war in Ukraine, provide a deeper understanding of the process-taking place on the international arena in 2022-2024. This will help, first, to identify the main aims for discreditation of Russian operations and find necessary solutions for countermeasures; second, will provide the possibility for democratic international community aware vital necessity of comprehensive Ukrainian support in restoring its sovereignty on the Russian-occupied territories, including Crimean Peninsula.

## **Material and methods**

With the help of qualitative content analysis and the use of the method of real-time analysis, there were selected and analyzed a number of different levels expert materials aimed at highlighting

features on the Russian operations for discreditation international institutions and their connection with war in Ukraine. Have been used electronic versions of media resources (available in Ukraine) as: UN, RBC-Ukraine, Reuters, Censor, Bellingcat, The Wall Street Journal, Lloyd's List, Yemen Shabab, Myrotvorets, The Guardian, Naval News, Kyiv School of Economics, CEPA, Foreign Policy, CNN, European Pravda, Euro Integration, Ukrainska Pravda, Bloomberg, TSN, Ukrinform, The Kyiv Independent, ICRC, Deutsche Welle, Market Watch, Daily News Hungary, Voice of America, The Parliament, NATO, Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania, Aerotime, Wikipedia, Politico, Euronews, Sabah, BBC, Kyodo News and others.

### ***Result and Discussion***

In the analysis of the array of dominant problems that are highlighted on the pages of the above-mentioned mass media, there is one to which the attention of international experts is growing today. How to restore lost trust in well-known international institutions that suffered significant reputational losses due to the Russian-Ukrainian war? This issue is extremely important and sensitive in the international arena.

In a modern world the main guarantor of the global security **UN and its executive body UNSC** have dire time after the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine. That starts in March 2014 by illegal occupation of Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula, prolonged by Russian hybrid war in the East of Ukraine with shout down by Russian separatists the Malaysia Airlines plane MH-17 and became catastrophic consequences after full-scale military aggression of Russian troops against Ukraine in February 2022.

Due to Russian permanent place in UNSC and its veto power the normal work of UN almost impossible regardless of the number of antiwar adopted resolutions. This situation not only completely undermines trust for UN in the world, but also gives for Russia legal opportunity to have impact on international policy and push their own propaganda narratives.

In June-July 2022, in order to reduce criticism of himself, the UN carried out large-scale work with Turkey, Ukraine and Russia on the launch July 27, 2022, in Istanbul the Black Sea Grain Initiative. For that moment it was a great success of international diplomacy and major contribution to global food security. The Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) facilitated the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. This Initiative to allow ships to safely export grain, other foodstuffs and fertilizers, including ammonia, from Ukraine via a maritime humanitarian corridor.

During its implementation, over 32 million metric tons of grain and foodstuffs were moved to 45 countries, in close to 2,000 voyages back and forth helping to bring down global food prices and stabilizing the markets. Thanks to the Initiative, the World Food Programme shipped over 725,000 metric tons of wheat from Ukraine in direct support of its humanitarian operations in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and Yemen. The UN's role in this Initiative was subject to the United Nations authorities and mandates, including OCHA's existing global humanitarian mission (UN 2023).

But the Initiative was terminated on July 17, 2023. The main reason was that Russia withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, citing alleged non-compliance with its terms and start to demand exemptions from economic sanctions. UN and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made few unsuccessful attempts to back Russia in the Initiative, but after that, the Russian side began intensive shelling Ukrainian ports and grain infrastructure south of Ukraine.

The next Russian step was leaking in the media UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres letter to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that has some UN propositions to persuade Russia not leaving the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

During this operation media informed that UN made for Russia four propositions that includes:

- to lift the financial sanctions imposed by the European Union on the Russian Agricultural Bank (“Rosselkhozbank”) in June 2022. Specifically, the UN Secretary-General suggests using a specially created subsidiary of the sanctioned Russian bank named RSHB Capital SA to bypass sanctions, and this company will be connected to SWIFT for food and fertilizer transactions;

- insuring Russian ships against Ukrainian attacks in the Azov and Black seas by a jointly financed UN insurance company for the export of Russian food products and fertilizers that could be finalized with Lloyd’s of London (with cargo insurance, and potentially expanding to also include hull Casco and P&I);

- help unblock assets related to Russian fertilizer companies frozen due to sanctions in the European Union. Russia has been asked to provide a list of specific accounts or assets and based on these requests, UN promise to work with the relevant EU authorities (Daria Dmytriieva 08.09.2023);

- willingness to further explore ways with the European Commission to facilitate access to EU ports (in Germany, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands) for Russian vessels carrying agricultural products (Michelle Nichols 08.09.2023).

This situation had a very negative impact on the reputation of UN and directly UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. After Black Sea Grain Initiative UN doesn’t have big success projects connected with Russia-Ukrainian war.

The last UN attempt to restore safe navigation in the Black Sea was during UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to Russian Kazan for an unannounced visit to the BRICS summit October 22-25, 2024. On the last day of summit Guterres met with Putin on the sidelines and discuss the situation in Ukraine and the Black Sea Region security which is critical for global food and energy security, especially for the most vulnerable countries around the world.

Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry blasted UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for his acceptance of an invitation from Putin to a BRICS summit, while staying away from the first Global Peace Summit in Switzerland on the war in Ukraine. This choice only damages the UN’s reputation (Censor 23.10.2024).

Also, **Russian grain smuggling from occupied Ukrainian territories** is a very unpopular issue for the UN and its affiliated organizations. The UN paid no attention to this smuggling during the operation of Black Sea Grain Initiative and refrains from commenting on it today.

After the occupation of Crimea Russia’s ghost ships on permanent base heading south in the Black Sea from the officially closed and sanctioned Ukrainian ports towards to Syrian, Iran, Egypt and Turkish ports.

During grain smuggling operation Russian ships disappearing from ship monitoring services, going dark change its automatic identification system (AIS) data, which allows the position of vessels to be monitored. Also, some operations going on in anchorage in the southern area of the Kerch Strait, in what is known as the Kavkaz ship-to-ship transfer area. It is a common tactic for those evading sanctions or engaging in illicit activities. Such actions are in contravention of United States, European Union and United Kingdom sanctions that have targeted exports from Crimea and Sevastopol. The UK has even specifically targeted grain stolen from eastern Ukraine, but not UN.

Investigations in 2022 by the likes of the Financial Times, Bloomberg, CNN, Reuters, the BBC, the Wall Street Journal and Associated Press have all reported on grain being exported from sanctioned Crimea. Russia has previously denied exporting grain from occupied Ukraine. But some in occupied Ukraine appear to have spoken openly about the practice. In June 2022, the head of Russian Crimea was reported to have stated that grain from occupied Kherson and Zaporizhya was being transported to and exported via Sevastopol. A March 2023 news report from a Sevastopol television station, meanwhile, detailed how grain grown in the occupied Melitopol region was being exported from Sevastopol.

Satellite images taken in 2023 show that Russian ships also appear to have been exporting grain from other ports in Crimea and other occupied territories such as Feodosia, Mariupol, Berdyansk and Kerch. This supply chain also is used to export oil and oil products as well as bulk commodities, mainly grain, to foreign markets.

Analysis by Bellingcat and its investigative partners, with AIS data provided by Lloyd's List Intelligence and satellite imagery from Planet, found that since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine there have been over 6,000 ship to ship transfers carried out in the Kerch Strait (Bellingcat 21.08.2023).

Since 2022 from occupied Ukrainian farmlands Russia and its partners have sold almost 1 billion US dollars in stolen grain on a burgeoning black market. The occupiers have either seized harvests or bought them cheaply, often forcibly. Russia deems Crimea its territory but other countries don't and consider any exports from it illegal.

The business involves a wide network of clients who benefit from Moscow's wartime patronage system, including a Russian shipyard equipping the invasion, a company affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard and a Crimean businessman who trades with Syria and Israel. Another company sells through the United Arab Emirates.

Russian authorities say that in the first half of this year they sent 15 ships carrying 81,000 tons of wheat to Turkey from Mariupol, another city conquered during the war.

Turkey bans ships from occupied Ukrainian terminals and cooperates with Kyiv to block illicit trade, the country's foreign-affairs officials said.

Ukraine is applying diplomatic pressure on importing countries, with some success. In the past two years, Egypt, Israel and Lebanon either canceled loadings or stopped buying grain cargoes after Ukrainian diplomats told them they had departed from Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials. Lebanon shifted to Ukrainian grain. Egypt has refused some grain shipments that originated in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, according to Ukraine's military intelligence agency.

Russian allies Iran and Syria have said they won't abide by sanctions. Iran has supplied the Kremlin with deadly weaponry that enhanced Russia's ability to hit military and civilian targets. This month, Tehran started to supply ballistic missiles to the Kremlin. Iranian politicians said they were in exchange for Russian grain. Tehran denies transferring weapons to other countries.

Yemen is a new market for Crimean exports. In June, a Russian state-controlled vessel, the Zafar, delivered grains to al-Saleef, a port held by the Iranian-backed Houthi faction in Yemen, according to shipping and corporate records (Benoit Faucon 16.09.2024).

This delivery was also another nail in UN reputation. The shipment, which was effectively given an UN stamp of approval to a trade from one internationally contested region to another, has raised questions over the veracity of the UN-led approval mechanism and allowed Russia to further its stated goal of expanding grain exports from occupied territories.

To complete this trade, Zafar had to get clearance from both the UNVIM – a body that approves shipments into Yemeni ports not under the government's control – and the Saudi-led Evacuation and Humanitarian Operations Cell (EHOC), a body entirely separate from the UN. Security analysts called this a concerning development that should have rung alarm bells within the UN-led mechanism. There is international consensus for UNVIM to prevent the flow of arms into Houthi-controlled territory of Yemen, but it doesn't equate to wider policing power for compliance, especially because there are no UN sanctions against Russia.

A Russian-owned and flagged bulk carrier, Zafar (IMO: 9720263), which has been a prolific participant in the growing fleet of Russian-controlled ships moving cargo out of occupied ports since September 2023, loaded a grain shipment in Sevastopol (occupied Crimea) in May this year under the cover of a gap in its Automatic Identification System (AIS) being switched on. It then sailed for

Djibouti, where it received clearance by the UN Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen to proceed to the Houthi-controlled port al-Saleef, where it arrived June 30, 2024 (Lloyd's List 30.06.2024).

This ship arrived and unloading its cargo in port al-Saleef just two days before a visit of a Houthi delegation to Moscow in early July 2024, where issues including Yemen's civil war were discussed. The Iran-backed Houthi militants have dominated headlines this year for their campaign of aggression against merchant shipping in the Red Sea. Since mid-November the Houthis have attacked, or tried to attack, over 70 ships (Yemen Shabab 12.07.2024).

Because of absent adequate UN reaction in October 2024 bulk carrier Zafar participate in the second illegal trip from occupied Sevastopol to port al-Saleef with the 35566,193 ton of stolen Ukrainian milling wheat (Катерина Яресько 08.10.2024).

This time, some western analysts do not exclude its use in the interests of weapons schemes between Russia and the Houthis in Yemen. This is indirectly confirmed by August 2024 negotiation between Houthi emissaries and Russian officials in Moscow.

Houthi representatives discussed 10 million US dollars' worth of automatic and other weapons that Russian side might potentially sell, including Kornet antitank missiles and anti-aircraft sets. Was mentioned, that weapon supplies could start in October 2024 to the port of Hodeidah under the cover of food supplies, where Russia has already carried out several grain deliveries (Rob Lee, 07.10.2024).

The main person who organize this deal can be Viktor Bout, the Russian arms dealer known as the "Merchant of Death," walked out of a U.S. prison almost two years ago in a trade with Moscow for U.S. basketball star Brittney Griner. Now he is back in business, trying to broker the sale of small arms to Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militants (Benoit Faucon, Michael R. Gordon, Warren P. Strobel, Alan Cullison, 07.10.2024).

These findings appear to show the ever-increasing complexity of Russia's operation to move grain from occupied eastern Ukraine out into the wider world. In addition to obtaining illegal financial profits, Russia also uses grain smuggling on the world market to achieve its own political goals, also in UN.

In February 2024 Russia's agriculture minister Dmitry Patrushev said that Moscow had completed its initiative of shipping 200,000 metric tons of free grain to six African countries, as promised by President Vladimir Putin in July 2023. Russia shipped 50,000 tons each to Somalia and the Central African Republic and 25,000 tons each to Mali, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe and Eritrea (Reuters 21.02.2024).

Early, Vladimir Putin has promised free grain supplies to six African nations as Moscow seeks to capitalize on the collapse of the Black Sea grain deal. Putin claimed his country would be able to replace Ukrainian grain exports blocked by Moscow's decision to abandon the UN-brokered arrangement which had allowed the export of grain and other products from Ukraine through the Black Sea to markets, many of them in Africa. (Guardian 27.06.2024).

Here it is important to emphasize that the five above-mentioned countries, except Somalia, support Russian policy in their regions and in most cases vote or abstain from it in accordance with Russia's position in the UN. Somalia is a supporter of Turkey, which also has close economic and political relations with Russia.

After unsuccessful UN and Turkish attempts to restore Black Sea Grain Initiative Ukraine took one of the most unprecedented steps – it announced the independent opening of a sea corridor through the Black Sea. On August 16, 2023 the first ship left the port of Odesa. Since then, more than 2,300 vessels with various cargoes have used the corridor. The total volume of transshipment for one year is almost 65,5 million tons of food products. This was made due to military factors, particularly the attack on a Russian landing ship in August 2023 (Reuters 04.02.2024).

In 2023-2024 Russia has systematically attacked Ukrainian grain export infrastructure, but has previously stopped short of attacking merchant ships since the expiry of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Civilian vessels are protected under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This allows freedom of navigation and the use of the high seas for peaceful purposes. There are also a number of norms of international humanitarian law. This is also another method of UN discreditation.

The last incident happened around 23:05 on September 11, 2024, 75 km (46 miles) south of Snake Island. This places it in Romanian EEZ, with merchant vessel MV Aya. It was hit in the Black Sea by a supersonic anti-ship missile Kh-22 that was launched from a Russian Tu-22M Backfire bomber. Only Russia operates this aircraft or missile.

The Turkish operated Belize-owned, St. Kitts & Nevis flagged ship was sailing from the port of Chornomorsk, carrying 26,550 tons of grain for Egypt. After receiving damage, the vessel changed course to the seaport of Constanta. At the moment, the ship is in the territorial waters of Romania on the traverse of the port of Constanta. According to available information, there are no victims among the ship's 23 crew (Naval News, 12.09.2024).

At the end of the study UN issue, it is possible to note that this organization was heavily criticized due to absence the clear position and reaction on the Russian missile attack on the Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv July 08, 2024, and the latest waves of largest and deadliest Russian attacks in August – September 2024 that hit civilian targets killing dozens of people and injuring hundreds elsewhere in Ukraine (Bellingcat 2024).

In attempt to eliminate the consequences of its previous activities and reduce the negative influence of Russia on the UN in September 2024 UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres start to adoption of ambitious 'pact for the future' to reform this institution and UN Security Council to make the body more representative of the 21st century and modernizing UN peacekeeping so it evolves into war prevention. During this process Russia was isolated at UN summit in New York after surprise bid to derail pact (Guardian 2024). This decision was adopted by 143 votes against seven (Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syria) with 15 abstentions September 22, 2024 (UN 2024).

The next area of action for Russia where this country **breaks the international rules and sanctions is the economy sector related to crude oil and the products of its processing**. Russian companies, with assistance of European, Chinese, Indian, UAE, Turkish and other companies, constantly violate sanctions and embargoes with almost impunity. This casts doubt on the effectiveness of the US, EU and G7 mechanism of economic sanctions and lead to discreditation of this institutes.

Russian oil export revenues decreased marginally to 15,7 billion US dollars due to lower export volumes despite higher oil prices in February 2024, according to the March 'Russian Oil Tracker'. The persistent activity of the shadow fleet, despite targeted measures by the US Treasury, has enabled Russia to maintain substantial oil exports and surpass the oil price cap.

In February, Russian seaborne oil exports decreased by 3%, while Urals FOB prices in the Baltic and Black Sea increased by 4 US dollars/barrel to 66 US dollars/barrel. The average oil price cap was breached as only 35% of Russian oil exports were transported by IG-insured tankers, indicating weak reliance on Western maritime services.

The discounts of Urals DAP WCI and ESPO FOB Kozmino to Dubai M1 were recorded at only 1,0 US dollars/bbl and 4,35 US dollars/bbl respectively in February 2024. The target of keeping Russian oil floating to non-EU/G7 markets but leaving Russia without windfall oil revenues by projecting large discounts on Russian oil exports at these markets has not been hit yet.

Russia heavily relies on its shadow fleet for oil exports. In February, 225 loaded non-IG-insured tankers departed from ports, with 2 engaged in Ship-to-Ship (STS) transfers. Concerningly,

84% of these tankers were over 15 years old, posing significant environmental risks for the EU. The shadow fleet exported near 2,4 million barrels per day of crude and 1,4 million barrels per day of oil products.

In February 2024, Russia actively utilized ship-to-ship transfers for its oil exports to bypass price caps, involving over 69 unique tankers. Notably, 5 IG-insured tankers from this group could carry Russian oil exports sold above the price cap, as they were loaded from tankers that navigated without IG P&I insurance coverage.

The US Treasury approach to designate individual vessels effectively hits the target by removing shadow tankers from regular commercial service. As of March 20, 2024, the US Treasury's vessel designation approach successfully targets shadow tankers, with 29 out of 41 sanctioned vessels unloaded and not scheduled for voyages, 7 loaded but inactive, and 5 completing voyages.

While the US Treasury has targeted individual vessels, Russia continues to seek ways to circumvent OFAC sanctions. For example, Russia is actively transferring oil tankers from sanctioned Scf Mgmt Fzco to other UAE companies like Fornax Ship Management and Stream Ship Management Fzco. Meanwhile, UAE-registered companies quickly replaced sanctioned Sovcomflot's shipments to India after Indian refineries halted operations with them.

As for crude oil export destinations, China became the biggest Russian seaborne crude importer, as India decreased its imports by 23%. Altogether India, China and Turkey were responsible for 87% of Russian crude oil exports in February. Turkey also topped oil product imports, increasing its reliance on Russian oil to near 70% of its energy demand.

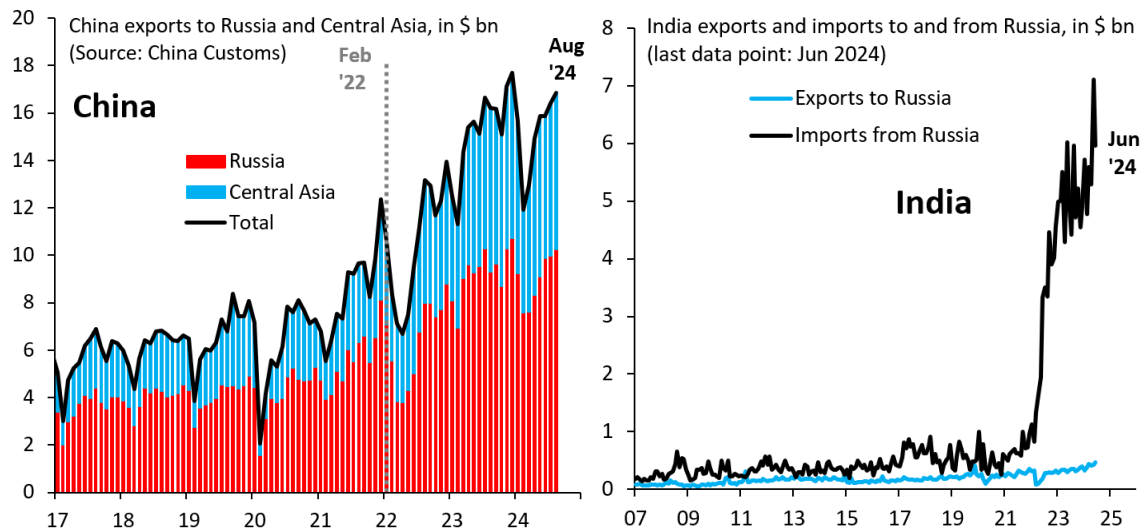
However, India and Turkey have not only retained Russian oil for domestic consumption but have also processed it, exporting refined oil products to EU/G7 countries. This is evidenced by a significant increase in premium oil product exports from India and Turkey to the EU/G7, which were 2,8 and 2,3 times higher, respectively, compared to April 2022.

In February 2024, the volume of Russian oil on water was estimated at record 132 million barrels or 2,7 times higher than the pre-invasion average indicating logistical challenges of rerouting oil to new markets. The volumes of Russian crude and diesel on water were near 3,6 and 4,0 times higher respectively vs. January 2022.

Meanwhile, UAE and Greek ship managers have also played a significant role in transporting Russian crude oil above the oil price cap. Notably, UAE maintained its top position for the third consecutive month, while Greek companies accounted for a substantial share of crude oil exporters and oil product shippers in February.

Russian oil revenues to contract to 163 billion US dollars and 143 billion US dollars in 2024 and 2025 under the base case with current oil price caps and stronger sanctions enforcement. However, if sanctions enforcement is weak, Russian oil revenues could increase, reaching 194 billion US dollars in 2024 and 186 billion US dollars in 2025 (Kyiv School of Economics, 04.04.2024).

According to available statistical data China's exports to Russia have doubled, going from 5 billion US dollars per month pre-invasion to 10 billion US dollars now. But that isn't the full story, as China sends so much stuff to Russia via Central Asia. Factor that in and China's exports have tripled. India's imports from Russia are up 900 % versus pre-invasion. This is mostly crude oil that gets refined and shipped back to Europe. (Robin Brooks, 2024).



Picture 1 –The Robin Brooks infographic of analyze Russian oil exports to China and India for 2022-2024

In 2024, due to the lack of effective mechanisms of influence on Russia, the tankers of its shadow fleet began to create serious problems for the Scandinavian countries. It also challenged one of the oldest international legal instruments, the Admiralty or Maritime Law.

Russia's shadow fleet of uninsured and strangely equipped oil tankers has taken to loitering in the waters of Sweden, NATO's newest member state. They could choose to do so somewhere else but have selected the area just outside Sweden's territorial waters (inside which Sweden would have a bit more power to intervene.) Their presence is certainly provocative.

The frequent presence of the Kremlin's sanctions-dodging vessels off the coast of Gotland, where they perform dangerous ship-to-ship transfers of oil, is a clear provocation, not to mention a looming threat to marine life.

The worldwide estimated their number is about 1,400 vessels. Its activities past two years are growing especially in the Baltic Sea. The fleet transports a lot of Russian oil, because Russia wants to keep exporting above the Western-imposed price cap. This all means trouble for the Baltic Sea states since a large percentage of Russia's oil departs from its Baltic Sea ports. They frequently conduct Ship-to-Ship transfers of oil, the perilous maneuver by which oil is transferred from one ship to another at sea (Elisabeth Braw, 26.04.2024).

Since 2022 till now Denmark daily face with dozens of decrepit, single-hulled, barely insured Russian oil tankers wend their way through the narrowest of straits to the open seas.

What makes this traffic especially galling is that it is done illegally, in circumvention of near-universal sanctions, and in service of a criminal state whose oil exports serve to underwrite the extermination of a neighboring country. The United States and, most recently, the United Kingdom have sanctioned a handful of those tankers, but the trade continues. On paper, coastal states could and might yet take action to stop that trade. In practice, Russia is a very big country that brandishes nuclear threats with abandon.

On the one hand, international law gives coastal states the right to take action against ships that pose grave environmental risks, as the rusting Russian shadow fleet almost certainly does. There are several explicit articles in the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) the global constitution of maritime law that seem to offer coastal states a way to curb shipping that poses a serious risk to the environment.

On the other hand, commercial traffic through the Danish straits is sacrosanct under international law. If UNCLOS isn't clear enough on that point, lawyers will happily point you to the

1857 Copenhagen Convention that guarantees the right of innocent passage through the Danish straits for commercial ships.

The big problem is that Russian oil exports are not, in layman's terms if not legalese, "innocent passage." They are outlaw ships doing outlaw business and carrying dangerous cargo to boot. International law, and maritime law in particular, is rich in verbiage and caveats. What it is often short of, in Western eyes and practice, is common sense. Now, some countries are looking to take a more proactive approach to turn the letter of the law into a way to bring the lawless to heel.

International legal experts have spent years trying to update the dated provisions on UNCLOS however, the deadline for the completion of this work is not known (Keith Johnson, 16.04.2024).

Taking into account the fact that from the issues of Russia's activities in the economic sphere, we have approached legal issues, it is possible to spill the Russian activity of **discrediting the European and international judicial systems** here.

One of the most famous cases of judicial decisions against the Russian side is the **District Court of the Hague (the Netherlands) judgment dated November 17, 2022, in the case of downing of the Malaysia Airlines flight MH-17**. Flight MH-17 was on its way from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur on July 17, 2014, when it was shot out of the sky over territory held by pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine. All 298 people on board were killed, including 15 crew members and 283 passengers from 17 countries.

By this judgment after two-year trial Court sentenced the accused Kharchenko, Dubinskiy and Girkin to life imprisonment for causing flight MH-17 to crash and for the murder of the 298 persons on board. Defendant Pulatov has been acquitted (The District Court of the Hague, 17.11.2022).

That was the first European judgment of European Court that can prove the Russians responsibility for the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014. As was mentioned above, Court found two Russians and a separatist Ukrainian guilty of mass murder for their involvement in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH-17. Igor Girkin, a former colonel of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), and Sergey Dubinskiy, who worked for Russia's GRU military intelligence agency, were convicted along with Ukrainian separatist Leonid Kharchenko, who is believed to have led a combat unit in Donetsk in July 2014. The three were sentenced to life in prison and ordered to pay the victims more than 16 million euros. A fourth suspect, Russian national Oleg Pulatov, a former soldier of the Russian special forces Spetsnaz-GRU, was acquitted.

The court found that Malaysia Airlines flight was hit by a Russian Buk missile launched from farmland outside a village in eastern Ukraine that was held at the time by pro-Russian rebels who were under the control of Moscow, and that the missile system had been moved back to Russia after the strike.

The court also ruled that since the defendants were not official parties to the conflict and thus did not have combat immunity, they were not allowed to shoot down any aircraft, military or civilian (Sophie Tanno, 17.11.2022).

In turn, if previously Moscow has repeatedly denied any responsibility for the attack, and Russian officials and state media have put out a range of often contradictory explanations for the tragedy, now Russian side described the verdict as "politically motivated" and said it would not extradite the sentenced Russians to the Netherlands.

After this Court verdict a lot of international experts made the statements that the case in light of Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine could impact other cases involving Russia, including one at the United Nation's top court, the International Court of Justice. Additionally, was mentioned that the convicted men have a right to appeal and as the convictions were handed down in absentia, none of them are likely to serve their sentences.

The main problem of this sentence is that it is an important moment for bringing the perpetrators to justice and exposing the organizers of the crime, but it cannot be ensured in terms of the implementation of its decisions. The absence of an opportunity to punish Russian led criminals responsible for the downing of the mentioned passenger plane led to a certain disappointment among Europeans, specially relatives of victims, in their own judicial system.

We observe a similar situation with the activities of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** in 2024 related to the arrest warrant for the international criminal Vladimir Putin.

With the help of Mongolia, Russia conducted a successful discredit operation of the ICC and the Rome Statute. As we know international war-criminal Vladimir Putin made an official visit September 03, 2024, in Mongolia. That was the first visit of Putin to ICC member after it issued an arrest warrant against him in March 2023.

Previously avoiding a possible political judgement and any risk of arrest under the ICC warrant for him in connection with war-crimes the abduction of the Ukrainian children during Russia-Ukrainian war Putin did not attend the BRICS summit in South Africa in November 2023 (European Pravda, 19.07.2023) and the G20 Summit 9-10 September 2023 in New Delhi, even though it isn't an ICC member (Euro Integration, 28.08.2023).

But the Mongolian government made a decision to host a war-criminal Vladimir Putin in Mongolia and to offer him security guarantees during his stay, because of the country's energy dependence on Russia (Ukrainska Pravda, 03.09.2024).

Putin's visit comes only six months after the first Mongolian judge to serve on the ICC took up his post at the court. The country's president Khurelsukh Ukhnaa hailed the development as a proof of Mongolia's growing reputation and strengthening status in the international arena (Bloomberg 30.08.2024).

Another international organization that criticized by their weak position in the nuclear sphere is the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**. The events of the Russian-Ukrainian war clearly showed that this organization has an exclusively advisory body. This is fully used by Russia to discredit it, especially during Russians illegal activities related to Ukrainian nuclear energy facilities.

For example, the IAEA resolutions say that Russia should leave the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant, but do not specify that the organization will enforce this. The IAEA cannot force the Russians to comply with its resolutions, because it does not have the authority to do so. In particular, it is about the urgent withdrawal of all Russian unauthorized personnel from the Zaporizhzhya NPP and the immediate return of the plant to the control of Ukraine (TSN, 20.06.2024).

The very important moment that IAEA concentrates exclusively on technical issues and deliberately avoids political statements. This is explained by the need for a balanced position and fact that political statements make it impossible to work to protect nuclear security on the Russian occupied territories of Ukraine.

The current lack of nuclear energy sanctions against Russia is explaining by the fact that Russian industry is very actively involved in many countries, including the United States. Russian uranium fuel is exported to many European countries. There are many VVER reactors in the world that depend on nuclear technology or spare parts and components coming from Russia. The IAEA has no mandate for sanctions, whether nuclear or otherwise. At the same time, according to the IAEA management, changes in this situation are not expected in the nearest future (Василь Короткий, 19.06.2024).

The same we can say about the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, that after Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 stopped its annual consultations with Russia. But, according to its official position prefers to avoid in its reports blaming Russia for the direct effects of its invasion: economic shocks in Europe, soaring food prices in Africa, and the suffering of millions of people.

Moreover, in September 2024 IMF officials announce that will send staff led by Deputy Head of Division Jacques Miniane to Moscow to review the Russian economy for the first time since the invasion of Ukraine. This group will help publishing an assessment of the economy and providing recommendations about how the Russia might improve its economic handling and tackle issues such as the climate crisis. In reality work with Russia only ruin IMF reputation and only can help to better run a Russian war economy.

The IMF said it was a “mutual obligation” to carry out an article IV review of a member country and the process was only suspended because of the volatility of economic data. The situation in Russia was now “more settled”. Article IV reviews are about surveillance they are also about providing policy advice to countries as to where they are going wrong and trying to provide advice as how to improve their economic outturns.

According to the latest data from Moscow’s Federal State Statistics Service, Russia’s economy grew by 4% annually in the second quarter. However, much of the expansion was in the manufacturing sector, where factory output is increasingly dedicated to the war effort.

Consumer spending is believed to have fallen by as much as 10% but there is little reliable data to make an assessment. Russia’s trade with many countries is also disguised to avoid sanctions, hindering efforts to assess how much foreign income Moscow has accumulated. Also, much of Russia’s oil output was being sent abroad on “dark ships” to evade international sanctions. The actual publishing trade figures that showed low income from oil produced in the Urals, even though the price of Russian oil has remained “quite elevated”. It meant the current account, which measures the net effect of trade and financial flows, would disguise the size of Russia’s war chest.

Nine European countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Poland) protested against the IMF’s plans, saying it would damage the reputation of the Washington-based fund to resume dialogue with a country that had invaded another (The Guardian, 13.09.2024).

This decision is a big diplomatic win for the Kremlin, even if the IMF is acting as though it's business as usual. The Fund has tried to keep the mission low profile: we know about it mainly because of an incidental remark made by the head of the IMF’s Russia department.

The IMF claims to be outside politics, but its actions show a blatant disregard for international law and human rights. The invasion of Ukraine isn’t a matter of policy debate – it’s a crime. In reality, by attempting to move toward normalization, they strengthen Russia today, prolonging the war and emboldening future aggressions. Russia’s aggression is reshaping Europe’s economy and destabilizing global markets.

Rest assured that the Kremlin will make the most of the mission. Russian officials will hug and smile for the cameras, detailing every minute of the visit. They will cite it as proof that the war is as good as over, that Russia has been forgiven by the West, and that Ukraine no longer matters.

To Russia, this is more than a financial review – it’s a geopolitical victory. The IMF’s actions will be spun as a signal that the West and the U.S. have written Ukraine off, leaving Russia powerful, prosperous, and influential (Tymofiy Mylovanov, Nataliia Shapoval, 17.09.2024).

The next Non-Government Organization whose reputation suffers from the activities of Russia is the **International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)**. ICRC made a big job for supporting forensics work in Ukraine before the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022. It was a lot of help about searching for, recovering, analyzing and identifying the dead bodies of people and missing persons in Russian-Ukrainian war since 2014 and forensic activities, DNA analysis and procedures for forensics personnel, investigators and the Armed Forces of Ukraine up to international standards (ICRC, 20.10.2016).

ICRC provides advice, support, and training to local authorities and forensic practitioners in searching for, recovering, analyzing, identifying, and managing large numbers of unidentified remains in varying states of preservation (ICRC, 24.07.2017).

This ICRC work do not stop after February 2022. Organization donated in Kramatorsk (Ukraine) forensic equipment to medical examination centers handling both civilian and military casualties (ICRC, 04.09.2024), but the reputation of ICRC was tainted by the lack of a clear position regarding the detention of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in Russia.

According statute of ICRC the right of this organization as an impartial humanitarian body to regularly visit POWs is protected by the Third Geneva Convention to which both Russia and Ukraine are parties. In this frames ICRC try to their best (Reuters, 08.12.2022).

However, since 2022 Ukrainian side accusing ICRC that it has a full access to Russian POWs in Ukraine and do not visit Ukrainian POWs in Russia in terms of transparency.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy also accused the ICRC of inaction in upholding the rights of Ukrainian POWs and urged it to undertake a mission to a camp in the Russian-occupied east of the country.

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in the series of Ukrainian criticisms of the ICRC, said no one had yet visited Olenivka – a notorious camp in eastern Ukraine where more than 50 Ukrainian POWs died in an explosion and fire in 29 July 2022, many of them soldiers who had defended the Azovstal steel mill in Mariupol before giving themselves up.

He also suggested an ICRC mission could be organized along the lines of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has visited both Russia and Ukraine to uphold safety at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station.

There was no one available from the ICRC to comment (Reuters, 13.10.2022).

Since that situation does not chance much. As of January 2024, 8 000 Ukrainians, both military and civilians, remained in Russian captivity, according to the Ukrainian authorities.

Russia do not give full access for ICRC to Ukrainian POWs and the vast majority of them saying that they haven't seen or communicated with representatives of the ICRC during the entire time of their Russian captivity.

In the interview of head of the delegation of the ICRC in Russia Boris Michel he said that ICRC staff visited 3,100 prisoners of war in Russia and Ukraine. But he didn't specify how many visits were paid to POWs separately in Russia and Ukraine. Because "almost all" the POWs who received the visits were Russian prisoners held by Ukraine in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

Previously, the ICRC refused to disclose the number of Ukrainian POWs it visited in Russia. The organization had been criticized by Ukrainian society before for violating its principles of neutrality and failing to fulfill its duties related to Ukrainian prisoners held in Russia (Natalia Yermak, 21.07.2024).

In addition, the September 12, 2024, the Russian occupiers struck vehicles of the ICRC humanitarian mission in the village of Virolyubivka, Donetsk region. The ICRC staff arrived in the settlement to distribute fuel briquettes to local residents for heating their homes. At the time of the shelling, they were unloading the delivered aid. Three Ukrainian citizens, who were ICRC employees, were killed, and two other staff members were injured. But ICRC officials remains silent and did not acknowledge Russia's violations of the Geneva Conventions. This silence only covers up Russia's criminal policy (TSN, 13.09.2024).

It is necessary to say that in April 2024, the Ukrainian government denied the petition from the families of Ukrainian POWs asking to limit the right of Russian captives for calls until the same rights are granted to Ukrainians held by Russia. But in September 2024 after row of Russian live videos and photos of execution, even with sword, of Ukrainian POWs in the battle field the Ukrainian government denied this privilege for Russian POWs.

There have been multiple reports of Ukrainian POWs being tortured or killed while in Russian captivity since the start of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. Such actions are a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War. As of September 2024, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine said 28 criminal investigations were underway regarding the execution of 62 Ukrainian POWs (Kateryna Hodunova, 17.09.2024).

In October 2024 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe accused Russia of concealing information about captured Ukrainians and called on the international community to pay more attention to this issue.

As of September 18, 2024, 65 956 Ukrainian military personnel and civilians are considered missing or captured, of which 50 916 people are registered as missing based on verified data. It is noted that in reality there are many more victims, because Russia, contrary to its international obligations, does not provide real information about the whereabouts of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian hostages. According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, 49 permanent detention centers for Ukrainian prisoners of war and 16 in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, as well as 6 places of detention of Ukrainian civilians have been discovered on the territories controlling by Russia.

Moreover, torture is often used against these people in places of detention. In addition to insufficient and poor-quality nutrition and lack of proper medical care, cases of systematic beatings, electric shocks and rape are recorded. Unsanitary conditions of detention, overcrowding, humiliation, excessively harsh regime, verbal abuses have been confirmed (Виктория Власенко 02.10.2024).

It should be noted that Russia tries to use or discredit not only international governmental and non-governmental organizations for its own purposes. Russian attention is also paid to **mass media and various public events, such as film festivals**.

In September 2024 The U.S. State Department announced new sanctions on Russian state media Russia Today, accusing a Kremlin news outlet of working hand-in-hand with the Russian military and running fundraising campaigns to pay for sniper rifles, body armor and other equipment for soldiers fighting in Ukraine.

While the outlet, Russia Today, has previously been sanctioned for its work to spread Kremlin propaganda and disinformation, the new allegations suggest its role goes far beyond influence operations (Market Watch, 15.09.2024).

Also, in the September 5, 2024, on the **Venice International Film Festival (La Biennale di Venezia)** a Russian-Canadian filmmaker Anastasia Trofimova submitted for screening documentary film Russians at War outside the competition programme of the Film Festival. In the film subscribing was written that author, gains unprecedented access to follow a Russian Army battalion in Ukraine. Without any official clearance or permits, she earns the trust of foot soldiers and embeds herself over the span of a year with one battalion as it makes its way across Eastern Ukraine. What she discovers is far from the propaganda and labels pushed by the East or the West: an army in disarray, soldiers disillusioned and often struggling to understand what they are fighting for (La Biennale di Venezia, 05.09.2024).

But in reality, this film was Russia Today propaganda that lead to discreditation of the Venice International Film Festival and Canadian found which has been sponsored mentioned filmmaker.

The film does not show the destruction and casualties that the Russians are inflicting on Ukrainians. One of the soldiers in the film openly denies the accusations that Russian troops are committing war crimes. Trofimova herself says that while she was making the film, she did not see any such crimes.

The filmmaker starts her narrative with a Ukrainian who now lives in Russia and fights on the Russian side. This is a very intriguing choice for the beginning of a story about Russians at war. Later,

this character will claim that a civil war began in Ukraine in 2014. He will also suggest that Ukrainians bombed the eastern parts of their own country (and this is why he moved to Russia).

Another character will declare that Ukrainians are Nazis. We've heard these narratives before; they are (and apparently still are) widely and actively propagated by Russian media. One of those horns of propaganda is Russia Today channel, for which the director of Russians at War has previously made several documentary films (Ukrainska Pravda, 06.09.2024).

A lot of critics noticed that Anastasia Trofimova attempting to whitewash Moscow's war crimes. Russians at War appears to offer only brief glimpses of combat and critics say it provides no insight into the mass-scale destruction caused by Moscow's forces in Ukraine since February 2022.

Throughout the two-and-a-half years of full-scale war, Russia has targeted civilian sites, while several UN investigations have documented evidence of "indiscriminate attacks" and war crimes by Russian forces in Ukraine, including rape and the deportation of children to Russia. In September 2024 CNN published drone footage filmed during fighting in August 2024 near the embattled city of Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine, showing an apparent execution by Russian troops of three surrendering Ukrainians, the latest in a series of gruesome clips to emerge.

The documentary is likely to prompt a debate over the ethics of filming inside Russia and the territories under Russian occupation. Unlike in Ukraine, where foreign reporters can travel to the frontlines, Russia has largely prohibited such access to independent journalists, only occasionally permitting select ones to join tightly controlled press tours (The Guardian 07.09.2024).

Simultaneously with attempts to discredit the European cultural space, Russia is trying to destabilize the political unity of **European Union**. Mostly for this action Russia using Hungary that now one of the most Russia-dependent European country.

Hungary continues to buy billions of dollars of Russian oil and gas annually, despite most other Western nations' cutting of economic ties with Russia after its invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. Budapest also has sought to strengthen ties with Beijing, bucking Western efforts to reduce dependence on China that also support Russia.

It has led some to label the country as Russia and China's "Trojan Horse" in the West. Russia was once the European Union's largest energy supplier, but the bloc banned Russian oil imports after the Ukraine invasion. Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic demanded exemptions, however, claiming that as landlocked countries they cannot quickly diversify supply.

While Slovakia and the Czech Republic have sought to reduce dependency on Russian energy since the ban came into effect, Hungary has struck new preferential deals to boost supplies from Russia. It is now Moscow's biggest energy customer in the EU, purchasing 343 million US dollars' worth of oil and gas in January of this year alone. It is also building a new pipeline to take the Russian oil products into Serbia. A lot of EU politicians made assumptions that Kremlin selling more cheap gas for Hungary for its support and blockage aid policy for Ukraine.

In addition, to the existing 15-year supply contract since 2021, on October 2024 Hungary signed a new contract for gas delivery with the Russian Gazprom.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó commenting this contract said that Hungary was satisfied with its energy cooperation with Russia and Gazprom long time, and nobody has made a better, cheaper and more reliable offer than Russian partners. He added that the Turkish Stream pipeline, which runs from Russia through Turkiye, Bulgaria and Serbia, could serve as an alternative delivery route for Russian gas for other countries in Central Europe (Daily News Hungary, 10.10.2024).

In addition, Russia is building the new Paks II nuclear power plant in Hungary, on the bank of the Danube River, south of Budapest, that increases the energy dependence of the country on Russia in nuclear sphere.

Hungarian authority rejected criticism of the deals with Russia and mentioned that the security of Hungary's energy supply requires uninterrupted transportation of gas, oil and nuclear fuel. To meet these three conditions, Hungarian-Russian energy cooperation must be uninterrupted. It has nothing to do with political preferences.

But Hungary's links with Russia go far deeper than oil and gas. Prime Minister Viktor Orban has criticized EU sanctions on Russia, blocked EU financial assistance for Ukraine, and delayed ratifying Sweden's accession to NATO. He has made Hungary the outcast of Europe. Orban wants to weaken these institutions from within because he feels they pose a threat to his sovereign decision making (Henry Ridgwell, 23.02.2024).

The last example of Hungarian political closeness to Russia is Hungary's recent decision in mid-July 2024 to extend its lax visa scheme to Russians and Belarusians based on their own regulations so-called National Card.

On this action the European Commission take urgent measures to address potential security risks. Some EU officials have threatened to bring up Hungary's status in the visa-free Schengen area. This decision creates grave loopholes for espionage activities, and potentially allowing large numbers of Russians undercover agents to enter Hungary and after EU with minimal supervision.

One possible explanation could be that the construction of Hungary's new Paks II nuclear power plant would reach such a development phase that it's necessary for a large number of Russian engineers and specialized workers to come and do the actual building of the nuclear technological part. But the power plant construction is just not at that phase. And even if the power plant construction would be in such a phase, this still wouldn't justify why Belarusians also need to get added to the list. This can be a new front of Russian hybrid warfare (Sarah Schug 06.08.2024).

After studying the negative impact of some Russian operations on the EU, including the use of Hungary, it is appropriate to study the negative impact of Russia on the NATO image. It is well known that the destruction of the unity and capabilities of NATO is one of the main goals of Russia, which considers itself the legal successor of the USSR.

Acting NATO Spokesperson Dylan White mentioned that Russia's war against Ukraine has created the most dangerous security situation in Europe in decades. After repeated Russian strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure very close to NATO territory, Allies deployed extra fighter jets to Romania. In October, after subsea pipelines ruptured in the Baltic Sea, NATO sent additional capabilities to the region.

In 2023, NATO air forces across Europe scrambled well over 300 times to intercept Russian military aircraft approaching Alliance airspace, with most intercepts occurring over the Baltic Sea. Along NATO's eastern flank, Russian military aircraft have a history of not transmitting a transponder code indicating their position and altitude, not filing a flight plan, and not communicating with air traffic controllers. Breaches of NATO airspace by Russian military aircraft remained rare and generally of short duration (NATO, 29.12.2023).

In 2024 we also have a lot of NATO jets interception of Russian aircraft flying over the Baltic Sea with violation of flight rules in international airspace (had no pre-filed flight plans, onboard transponders switched off, no radio communication, etc.). Data on interceptions of 21 aircrafts completed near the Baltic States' borders only in September 2024 published by Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania (Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania, 16.09.2024) and other researchers of this topic (Elsa Court 22.09.2024).

Additionally, accept Russian aircrafts a big impact on the NATO airspace have Russian UAV and rockets. This is a part of usual Russian strategy – to be on the brink and watch the reaction of the international community and specially NATO.

From the February 2022 till the October 2024 Russian combat drone's and rockets mostly violated Romanian and Polish airspace. NATO officials say there is no evidence to suggest Russia was

intentionally targeting Romania or Poland, but called the action irresponsible and potentially dangerous.

But, the first well known accident happened March 10, 2022, when an unidentified Soviet-made Tupolev Tu-141 reconnaissance UAV crashed in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. With an unidentified operator and unknown destination, the origin of the drone is presumed to be connected to military actions during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The drone's flight over Croatia, Hungary and Romania (all three being NATO states) prompted criticism of the countries' defense systems as the UAV was detected but not cleared (Wikipedia, 2022).

After that were a lot of similar accidents in Romania, Latvia and Poland:

- a Russian-made military observation drone Orlan-10 landing in Bistrița-Năsăud district, northern Romania in the Eastern Carpathians just over 100 kilometers south of the Ukrainian border (Valius Venckunas, 14.03.2022);

- three Russian Shahed kamikaze drones strayed into Romania's airspace and after crossed the border to Ukraine (Veronika Melkozerova, 25.07.2024) and fragments of another one Russian drone were discovered near the town of Plauru, which is situated across the Danube River from Ukraine's port town of Izmail. Romania have informed with NATO on this matter and strongly condemned these Russia's irresponsible actions. (Euronews, 26.07.2024);

- a Russian Shahed UAV flew into Romanian airspace during the Russian attack on Ukraine on the night of September 7-8, 2024, Romanian F-16s scrambled in response. Fragments of a Russian drone were discovered near the town of Plauru, which is situated across the Danube River from Ukraine's port town of Izmail. The Ministry of National Defence strongly condemns these attacks carried out by the Russian Federation against Ukrainian civilian targets and infrastructure, which are unjustified and seriously contrary to international law (Oleh Pavliuk, 08.09.2024);

- Poland is searching for the remains of a Russian drone that entered the country's airspace early on August 26, 2024, and crashed on in its territory during a Russian bombardment of Ukraine;

- a Russian military drone heading towards a target in Ukraine crashed in in Gaigalava parish in Rezekne district, 85 kilometers (52 miles) northwest of the Belarusian border the Eastern part of Latvia 8 September 2024. The drone flew into Latvian airspace from Belarus and Latvia immediately informed NATO (Euronews, 08.09.2024).

One of the main reasons for the above-mentioned situations with Russian violations of the airspace of the Alliance countries is the inability of the NATO countries to make tough decisions. In most of these violations, NATO representatives' issue political statements with statements of condemnation and the inadmissibility of violations of international norms in the air.

But, even in NATO countries there are exceptions to the rules, like Turkish Republic. This NATO country November, 24, 2015 made one choice that repelled the desire of Russian planes to violate Turkish air space. In that day a Russian Su-24 warplane has been shot down by Turkish F-16 fighter jets, purportedly after it violated Turkish air space.

Turkish presidency stated that a Russian plane was downed under the rules of engagement because it violated the Turkish air space despite the warnings. The downing of the plane was not an action against any specific country but a move to defend Turkey's sovereign territory within the rules of engagement. The Turkish military said in a statement that two F-16s warned an unidentified Russian aircraft 10 times within five minutes before firing (Deutsche Welle, 24.11.2015).

We need mentioned that the downing of the Russian Su-24 warplane came just a month after a similar incident, in which Turkish jets shot down an unidentified drone that had also violated Turkey's airspace. Turkey changed its rules of engagement to fire on any jet entering its airspace after on June 22, 2012, a Turkish McDonnell Douglas RF-4E Phantom II reconnaissance jet was intercepted and shot down by the Syrian Army in international airspace, after having violated Syrian airspace (Sabah 24.02.2015). The air force regularly patrols the border to protect its airspace.

In October, Ankara and NATO warned Russia that Russian aircraft twice violated Turkey's airspace and harassed F-16 aircraft (Deutsche Welle, 08.10.2015).

After a Russian Su-24 jet shot down were a lot of analyzes and reports from Turkish, Russian, NATO and other sides, but the most interesting was the Russia reaction (BBC, 01.12.2015).



Picture 2 – Infographic of the BBC analyze a Russian Su-24 jet shot down 24 November 2015

Despite the empty threats, political, economic and very restrained military measures in response, since November 24, 2015, Russian aircraft have never violated Turkey's airspace.

This once again proves the truth of the judgments that Russia recognizes only real power and does not pay any attention to diplomatic notes, condemnations and extremely stern protests from countries unable to act in response.

It seems that some countries bordering Russia are beginning to understand this. Like an example, in September 2024 after Russian military IL-38 patrol plane violated the Japan's airspace over waters in the Sea of Japan three times, an Air Self-Defense Force of Japan F-15 and F-35 fighter jets for the first time ever to fire a signal flares to stop intruder.

Relationship between Japan and Russia have deteriorated since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 (Kyodo News, 23.09.2024).

## Conclusions

In the last years Russia actively trying to discredit international institutions in the light of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Basically, these actions are aimed at discrediting the main international institutions in the sphere of security, politics and economy such as: UN, NATO, EU, NGO and others. Also, one of the main tools in these operations are international mass media.

Since 2014 the UNGA has passed a number of resolutions against Russia's invasion of Crimea, eastern Ukraine and full-scale Russian aggression in 2022. But unlike some resolutions from the UNSC, on which Russia sits and still has a veto power, General Assembly votes are not legally binding.

Russia now often using the kind of gray-zone tactics and has trampled all existing main international laws by its various war crimes, shadow fleets and sabotage. For international institutions is hard to pinpoint effective legal remedies that can uphold the girders of the international security system.

This modern Russian policy lead to falling the trust to international institutions and step by step changing existing world order. If active countermeasures will not be done, this have negatively

effect on the global and European security. That also give the possibility for other countries, that have a military strength and territorial claims for its neighbors, the right to believe that the force scenario for solving their existing problems will be ignored by the world community and will have consequences in the form of harsh condemnations and diplomatic notes of a negative nature.

Also, it is very possible that in the nearest future Russia may choose one of the Baltic NATO countries to test this scenario again. This will be a new, real challenge for the Alliance collective defence and Article 5.

Taking to account the above mentioned, the prospects for Ukraine cooperation in the politics, economy, military and military-technical spheres on the international arena will be more and more difficult. Now days Ukraine clearly understand that the level of its support in the world will be directly proportional to the degree of indifference of the world's leading countries, including the United States, Great Britain and EU, to the Ukrainian-Russian war, leveled by its own economic and political factors.

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