

# INDIA TO FACE TOUGH CHOICES AT UNGA

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Indian representative voting to abstain from a resolution during the UNSC meeting on the Russian invasion.AP | Photo Credit: John Minchillo

After abstaining from the UN Security Council Resolution 8979 condemning Russian action in Ukraine on Saturday, India faces more difficult choices with the U.S. and European-led coalition now pushing for a vote at the UN General Assembly aimed at “isolating Russia”.

The UNGA vote, which could take place as early as Monday, will follow a discussion of the UNSC late on Sunday night on an “emergency special session” to examine the text of Resolution 8979 which Russia had vetoed. The U.S. and European countries leading the diplomatic charge against Russia are hopeful of gaining a large majority in the 193-member UNGA, given that more than 80 countries co-sponsored Resolution 8979, and have been working the phones to convince others to vote along with them.

“We are presenting our position to the [India’s] Ministry of External Affairs on why it must support Ukraine against Russia’s attacks,” a European diplomat said. “It is up to India to decide whether to stand with the aggressor or the victim,” he added, saying that despite the earlier abstention, diplomats feel India could “potentially” change its position.

“If a UNGA vote happens, India will have to choose where it stands in the much larger global arena: with us, or with countries like China, Syria and Venezuela on the issue,” another Western diplomat told *The Hindu* .

India has thus far refrained from supporting any resolution criticising Russia but officials said India’s growing concerns over the “humanitarian crisis” and Indian students caught in the crossfire in Ukraine could find a mention in the new resolution, which could invite a rethink in New Delhi.

On Saturday night, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock spoke to External Affairs Minister Jaishankar to make another attempt to bring the Modi government on board.

“It is important to speak up in one voice around the world: Russia’s President Putin is an aggressor and has violated international law & the European peace order,” said a particularly strong statement from the German Foreign Ministry.

## Russia thanks India

The Russian Embassy in India tweeted that it “highly appreciated India’s independent and balanced position at the voting in the UNSC on February 25”.

MEA officials declined to comment on how India will vote on the resolutions.

The wording of the agenda for the meeting indicates that Western countries could ask the UNGA to summon a “Uniting for Peace” resolution, and agree to strong measures against Russia unless it announces a ceasefire and withdrawal of troops from Ukraine.

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