

# INDIA ABSTAINS ON UNSC RESOLUTION CONDEMNING RUSSIA'S 'REFERENDA'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

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India was among four countries that abstained on a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemning the so-called referenda organised by Russia across four regions of Ukraine. Hours before Friday afternoon's voting in New York, Russian President Vladimir Putin "annexed" four regions inside Ukraine's internationally recognised borders — Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk — based on the results of Russian-organised referenda in these regions.

The UNSC resolution, sponsored by the United States and Albania, failed to pass the 15-member Council on Friday afternoon, despite winning 10 supporting votes, after Russia used a veto to block it. A similar resolution is likely to be introduced in the U.N. General Assembly — where Russia does not have a veto — in the near future.

The resolution condemns the referenda, calls on the international community not to recognise any alterations to Ukraine's territory and calls for Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine. The other abstaining countries at Friday's voting were China, Brazil and Gabon. India abstained on the resolution "keeping in view the totality of the evolving situation", its Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UNPR), Ruchira Kamboj, said.

India was "deeply disturbed" by the recent events in Ukraine, Ms. Kamboj said, as she explained India's abstention vote and called for an immediate cessation of violence. "We've always advocated that no solution can ever be arrived at the cost of human lives," she said.

## Push for dialogue

The path to peace involved dialogue and keeping open diplomatic channels, Ms. Kamboj said.

She said the global order was based on the U.N. Charter, international law and the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"We therefore sincerely hope for an early resumption of peace talks to bring about an immediate ceasefire and resolution of the conflict," she said.

The U.S., one of the sponsors of the resolution, had earlier in the week said it would seek action against Russia at the General Assembly, if Russia vetoed the resolution in the Council.

"Do you seriously expect Russia to consider and support such a draft?," Russia's UNPR Vasily Nebenzya said after the vote on Friday, accusing the proposers of the draft resolution of intentionally pushing Russia to exercise its veto.

He said the Security Council forum was being used as a "dress rehearsal for the main performance" in the U.N. General Assembly. He accused Washington of double standards over Taiwan, making a reference to its readiness to use force to protect Taiwan.

Ukraine, represented by its UNPR, Sergiy Kyslytsya, called the Security Council a "broken" pillar

of the United Nations. He devoted a large part of his remarks to questioning the legitimacy of Russia as the Soviet Union's successor state on the Security Council.

"Allowing Russia to avail itself of the right of the Soviet Union to veto decisions of the Security Council effectively prevents this body from exercising its primary responsibility under the UN Charter: maintenance of international peace and security," he said.

### **U.S. standpoint**

Speaking to the Council, the U.S.' Permanent Representative to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the referenda were held "behind the barrel of Russian guns".

Countries recognise the implications for their own borders and economies when the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity was set aside, she said, adding that now was not the time to "stand on the sidelines".

China's UNPR, Zhang Jun, stressed that the "legitimate security concerns" of all parties should be taken seriously and urged a diplomatic solution and political settlement to the conflict. Significantly, China, which itself has been and continues to be the subject of U.S. and European sanctions (for human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong for example), said that "political isolation", "pressurisation", "block confrontation" and "sanctions" are not conducive to peace but make the situation worse.

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