THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONFLICT AND CIVIL WAR RESOLUTION: THE CASE STUDY OF UKRAINE AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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This article is dedicated to the study of the role of various international organizations in international conflict resolution and other related activities based on the two case studies: one featuring the involvement of international organizations in the conflict of the Donbas region in Ukraine and another one focusing on the resolution of the conflict in the eastern districts of the Republic of Moldova.

The very nature of conflict has always, in one way or another, troubled the minds of people who tried to find ways to resolve them, and also few other domains of conflict resolution offer as much opportunity and risk as the field of international conflict resolution [2, p. 1]. The 20th century did not just bring upon human society a tide of distresses and changes, but the development of academia that occurred then also allowed researchers to systematize their knowledge in many domains including those of conflict and conflict resolution.

The role of international organizations in conflict and civil war resolution as a topic can present a particular interest and is relevant enough to be discussed. This can be argued from the international, regional and national perspectives. First of all, from the perspective of the growing role of international organizations in all spheres of international collaboration in general, due to globalization processes. The relevance of this research on the level of Eastern European region may be explained by the fact that the existing conflicts in Ukraine and Moldova undermine the overall stability and security of the region. Taking into consideration the fact that the Republic of Moldova is still struggling in solving the Transnistrian conflict and that a number of international organizations are involved in the process it seems relevant to further investigate and determine the level of their involvement and assess the overall impact of their activity in this

domain. Even though the theme received some attention from the scientific community, there was no analysis done from this particular angle.

In western literature this topic is being paid a significant amount of attention. Moldovan scientific literature doesn't have the abundance of works dedicated to the study of IOs in conflict resolution in general. Plenty of works exist in Russian academic circles. The historiography of international organizations' activity in conflict prevention and resolution is rich and diverse and includes works touching upon the subject from various angles and viewpoints. Thus, it can be seen as a well-developed base for further research, even though it definitely has some blind spots.

The overall conceptual basis of the domain seems to be relatively well-developed, although it does have a number of blind spots and non-universal definitions. The legal basis of conflict resolution by IOs is too entangled even for a domain of international law and is in desperate need for reconsideration and simplification.

After briefly investigating some of the missions performed by various IOs all around the globe (such as UNAMSIL, ONUC, etc.), we can see that the degree of their efficiency was very different and depended on various factors like the IO involved, the specificity of a particular conflict, the timeline, the nature and characteristics of operation (was it civil or military), the mission's mandate, etc. What is clear however is the fact that it is impossible to develop a conflict resolution or post-conflict restauration strategy that would be applied universally. Each time specific factors should be taken into consideration in order to ensure that the most effective plan is drafted.

The role played by various IOs in the resolution process of the conflict in Ukraine is quite significant, but, perhaps, it is not enough. Realistically speaking, with the stakes being so high, the end to the conflict will most probably not come until the interested parties get what they want. However, one should accept the fact that the Ukrainian public and political elites mostly view Russia as an aggressor and enemy, while the Russian mainstream considers Ukraine to be as a vassal of the United States, so there is virtually no

common ground between the two conflict narratives. Thus, the solutions proposed in Kyiv and Moscow are mutually exclusive [5, p. 32].

Nonetheless, one should also understand that the costs of continued war is high for all parties – for Ukraine, Russia and European security. Such a persistent conflict risks locking Russia and the West into worsening tensions at a time of new and unpredictable challenges, and the current situation proves it. From this perspective, resolving the conflict would be beneficial for all sides. However, any viable and sustainable solution will need to address Ukraine – specific issues, the broader European security, as well as the interests of Russia. Conflicting Ukraine, with no doubt, means conflict in Europe, and its consequences spread far beyond that country's borders [4, p. 18]. That is why the resolution process has become more internationalized and the IOs' involved in it must convince the sides to start a real constructive dialog.

The EU, UN and especially OSCE has done a lot to facilitate the resolution process in Moldova. However, all the undertaken activities have had relatively unfruitful results so far. Nonetheless, it would be unwise to blame the IOs or other international mediators, for the Transnistrian conflict itself is tightly linked to the geopolitics of the region and the interests of some powerful neighbors, which means that, just like the Ukrainian one, it cannot be settled so easily.

Although a number of initiatives bringing the peace to Transnistria were undertaken, they have failed, and Russian troops are still present in the region as peacekeepers [1, p. 73]. It is clear to everyone that with the Transnistrian issue unsolved, Moldova will continue to carry on an almost unsustainable burden of various domestic and external political problems that such a crisis may cause. That is why Moldova has to delegate a great amount of its resources to try to deal with this situation once and for all by finding and negotiating, with the help of its partners, IOs and the whole international community, a comprehensive agreement that would guarantee the unification of the country.

All the recent events and developments point out the fact that the resolution of the Transnistrian issue relies very heavily on the geopolitical environment and the balance of power in Europe.

However, it doesn't mean that some other aspects influencing the resolution process should be neglected. Nonetheless, any major steps towards the final settlement of the Transnistrian issue are not likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

We should also state that any significant changes to the mechanisms of conflict resolution used by modern days IO are not possible without drastically altering the existing international system, which is unrealistic. However, some room for general improvements, as well as the ones that concern conflicts in eastern Ukraine and Transnistrian region of Moldova does exist, but it would require, first of all, the desire of the sides to these conflicts and other interested international and regional actors to collaborate in this regard, make concessions and find ways to reach compromises. Doesn't matter how the situations develop in the future, it is absolutely clear that at some point there will appear a need to decide upon such changes. Considering that the Transnistrian conflict is not purely an internal one, since it has a significant external dimension [3, p. 9], and the conflict in Ukraine in general has a great impact on the whole European security it must be understood by everyone that until these conflicts are settled the stability in the region will always remain under question.

The practical recommendations developed by the author regarding the investigated topic are:

First of all, it is desirable to readjust (in the framework allowed by the current international system) the mechanisms used by IOs in conflict situations. Such realist readjustments may facilitate the conflict resolution processes.

Secondly, it is important to address the issue of bias in mediation by international organizations. It is also worth paying attention to the bias that exists among states when they play such roles be it in the framework of international organizations mediation or independently, for it could have a drastic impact on the outcomes of a particular resolution process and, in the worst-case scenario, slow down such process or stop it completely.

Thirdly, a more active engagement of IOs' representatives in the negotiation processes could also be beneficial and should be

considered as well. This kind of engagement may involve more freedom in developing comprehensive and compromised solution plans. IOs should also be more actively involved in the dialog with the local population in the regions affected by conflict and not just with the authorities of states or breakaway statelets.

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