

The UN Resolution on Ukraine: How Did the Middle East Vote?

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Brief Analysis

A comprehensive record of what regional officials said—or didn't say—about the emergency wartime vote in the General Assembly.

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, an emergency special session of the UN General Assembly was called on March 2. During the session, members voted overwhelmingly (141-5) to pass a resolution denouncing the invasion and demanding that Moscow withdraw its military presence. Fourteen countries in the Middle East and North Africa voted in support of the measure, one voted against it, three abstained, and one did not vote (see below for full details).

Notably, the United Arab Emirates supported the UNGA resolution after abstaining from a similar UN Security Council resolution spearheaded by the United States on February 25. Only two countries from the region **had supported that UNSC resolution (<https://www.undocs.org/en/S/2022/155>)**: Kuwait and Turkey. The UNGA resolution was **cosponsored (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/N22/272/27/pdf/N2227227.pdf>)** by four countries from the region: Israel, Kuwait, Qatar, and Turkey. In a statement before the assembly, the UAE's representative to the UN **voiced (<https://uaeun.org/statement/uae-unga-eov-2march2022/>)** concern about the humanitarian situation caused by the crisis and called for renewed diplomacy and dialogue in order to end the hostilities, but did not condemn Russia explicitly.

Although Israel declined a U.S. request to cosponsor the UNSC resolution, it took on the sponsorship role with the UNGA resolution. Ambassador Gilad Erdan did not address the assembly, but Deputy Ambassador Noa Furman made a statement on March 1 (see below).

Votes and Statements

The following list indicates what action each country in the region took in response to the UNGA resolution. The included remarks represent excerpts from written statements and transcriptions from UNGA speeches, sometimes using the English renditions produced by UN translators. As of this writing, representatives from Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen have not made statements before the assembly, though their votes are indicated below.

Algeria: Abstain

“At a time when my country Algeria is closely following the developments of the situation and the escalation in

Ukraine, my delegation would like to emphasize once again that Algeria is committed to the principles and the objectives of the United Nations...Algeria can only join all the other efforts and diplomatic calls aiming at de-escalating the current situation and adopting dialogue in order to foster peaceful coexistence among nations to safeguard international peace and security.”

Bahrain: In Favor

“We voted in favor of the draft resolution based on our strong conviction of the importance of the principles of the UN Charter, particularly the principles of good neighborliness and peaceful resolution of conflicts, but also the principle of respect for the independence and territorial integrity of all countries. The Kingdom of Bahrain underscores its support for all efforts that seek to end hostilities and for dialogue to resume and use all diplomatic means necessary to achieve peace.”

Egypt: In Favor

“Egypt would like to reiterate the following points with regard to the draft resolution that has been adopted and for which we have voted positively...: Finding a swift political settlement to end this crisis through dialogue and peaceful means...We should not disregard the necessity of dealing with root causes of the current crisis. Egypt rejects the exploitation of economic sanctions outside the multilateral international mechanisms, because previous experiences have shown that such sanctions can have dire humanitarian consequences and lead to escalating the suffering of civilians...Egypt warns of the economic and social consequences of the current crisis on the global economy. The global economy is still suffering the consequences of the pandemic, and the disruption in the supply chains and international aviation is the best proof.”

Iran: Abstain

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is following the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine with grave concern...We note that the current complexities in the fragile region of Eastern Europe have been exacerbated by the provocative actions and decisions of the U.S. and NATO. The security concerns of Russia must be respected...We believe that the current text of the resolution before the General Assembly lacks impartiality and realistic mechanisms for resolving the crisis through peaceful means...My government continues to call for a comprehensive, peaceful, and sustained resolution to the current conflict, including an immediate ceasefire and start of the dialogue as well as provision of humanitarian assistance to the people in need. For the above-mentioned reasons, my delegation abstained from voting on this draft resolution.”

Iraq: Abstain

“Iraq regrets the deterioration of the situation and the escalating tensions between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and Iraq calls upon all parties to settle this conflict by giving priority to dialogue and through diplomatic means. We invite them to go back to negotiations in order to solve their concerns, safeguard international peace and security, and not threaten the world with economic and political crises resulting from this situation. Iraq expresses grave concern over the possibility for terrorists to exploit this crisis and the expected division in the international community. This would hinder international efforts and our joint endeavors aiming at preventing terrorism and violent extremism. Iraq has decided to abstain because of our historical background in Iraq and because of our sufferings resulting from the continuing wars against our peoples.”

Israel: In Favor, Cosponsor

“The Russian attack on Ukraine is a serious violation of the international order. We have condemned it, and we call upon Russia to heed the calls of the international community to stop the attack and respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Israel has longstanding and positive relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Given our

deep ties with both sides, we are willing to contribute to the diplomatic effort if so requested, and have been trying to do so in the last couple of weeks. Israel expresses its concern for the safety of the people of Ukraine, including the numerous Israeli citizens living there and the sizable Jewish communities in the affected areas.”

Jordan: In Favor

“Jordan has voted for the draft resolution that has been adopted in order to emphasize the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity and political independence...because we believe that force should not be used in international relations, [and] because it goes against the provisions of international law and the UN Charter...Jordan would like to remind of the necessity of respecting international provisions and the UN Charter, whereas force should not be used against other countries, peoples, and should not be used against the right of self-determination.”

Kuwait: In Favor, Cosponsor

“The General Assembly is discussing the Security Council’s inability to discharge its duty to maintain peace and security in Europe and in the world. The multilateral system...is passing through a delicate stage that presents a real test for the UN to defend the values and principles upon which it was founded. The unfolding situation in Ukraine led to the killing and injury of hundreds of people as well as the displacement of many others. This requires us to take a steadfast and immediate stand to resolve disputes by peaceful means. We hail the negotiations held between Russia and Ukraine in Belarus as a glimmer of hope, and we hope this will be followed by other sessions that will lead to peaceful settlement of that conflict. Kuwait, as a small state and given our painful experience in 1991 when we were occupied, upholds its principal positions to abide by international law and the UN Charter, which represent safe havens for small states to maintain their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence, embodying the concept of collective security. From this perspective, we categorically reject the use or the threat of use of force among states...We would like to reiterate our support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine, and we call on parties to abide by Resolution 2202 of the Security Council and end the crisis with a ceasefire to save lives and to abide by restraint. We appeal to all parties to respect their commitments by virtue of humanitarian law and human rights law and UNSC resolutions that call for defending the civilian populations...We call for the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance without any restrictions in accordance with humanitarian commitments.”

Lebanon: In Favor

“Lebanon voted yes on this resolution because Lebanon, a founding member of the United Nations, believes in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter...We lived through invasions, occupations, interventions in Lebanon’s internal affairs, and experienced devastation, loss, and pain that we are still enduring the consequences of today...We in the Middle East are very concerned about this war because of its impact on Europe, but also because we know from experience [that] what happens in Europe does not stay in Europe, [and] that the last two world wars left deep scars in our part of the world, obliterated countries and hopes, and we are still living its aftermath today. I hope we all learn the lessons of the last wars, and I hope that from this moment, we start working only for peace.”

Libya: In Favor

Morocco: No Vote

Oman: In Favor

Qatar: In Favor, Cosponsor

“During the last few days, the world has seen the results of armed conflict...[What] is taking place there increases threats to international peace and security. The State of Qatar urges all parties to exercise self-restraint and to pursue peaceful and diplomatic means to solve conflict. One of the principles of the foreign relations of Qatar

is...commitment to the provisions of the UN Charter's Special Article II, which stipulates the solving of conflict through peaceful means and refraining from the threat or use of force against political independence and territorial integrity. Due to its commitment to these provisions, it emphasizes the territorial integrity, unity, and independence of Ukraine within its recognized borders. The State of Qatar [urges all parties] to pursue negotiations within the parameters of international law [and] the UN Charter, and...reach a conclusion that satisfies the constraints of all parties. In conclusion, the State of Qatar calls on all parties to...fulfill their obligations in concordance with international humanitarian law and to secure safe, unhindered deployment of assistance and relief to...victims.”

Saudi Arabia: In Favor

Syria: Against

“Syria votes against this draft resolution and rejects the West's policy of hegemony that aims to prolong and stir crises, spread chaos, consolidate selectivity, and impose unilateral coercive measures...Those who show enthusiasm today regarding the defense of the UN Charter should show their same enthusiasm against Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands, and against the Turkish and U.S. forces' violation of the sovereignty of Syria.”

Tunisia: In Favor

“Voted in favor of the draft resolution in support of the values of the UN Charter. The crisis must be settled with peaceful means, which is the ideal solution to prevent further human tragedy. The world has witnessed so many grueling wars destructive to the life of people. Military options cannot solve any crisis, but dialogue and negotiations can settle all differences and find compromises. The current crisis in Ukraine comes as the world is coming out of COVID-19 and preparing itself for a new stage based on solidarity and cooperation. We encourage the engagement of the parties in peaceful negotiations.”

Turkey: In Favor, Cosponsor

“Thank you for convening this historic and urgent session, a session that was called because the Security Council once again failed to fulfill its primary responsibility, a session that was convened due to the unjustified, illegal, and illegitimate act of aggression against a founding member of the United Nations by a permanent member of the very organ entrusted...with preserving peace and security, a session that was held as a result of the use of veto power by the very member that is perpetrating this aggression. We reiterate that Russia's ongoing military offensive against Ukraine violates the principles...on which this organization was founded, rules and principles that aim to prevent wars and protect mankind from disastrous consequences. The international community could not have been a spectator to such an act of aggression. In today's resolution, the UN emphasizes loud and clear that it stands against egregious violations of the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political unity of fellow member states. We call on Russia [to heed] the demands of the global community and...its people's pleas to stop its military operations; withdraw...forces from Ukraine; reverse its decision regarding the...Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea; and return to diplomacy and dialogue without delay. We also reiterate our call for an immediate humanitarian [response]. As a neighbor and friend of both the Russian and the Ukrainian people, Turkey stands ready to facilitate the peaceful settlement of the conflict.”

United Arab Emirates: In Favor

“We have seen reports of rapidly growing civilian casualties and massive displacement, the extent of which Europe has not experienced in decades. The UAE is deeply concerned by these developments. Our collective responsibility must, however, be toward exhausting all efforts and using all diplomatic channels to prevent a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation...Global solidarity means doing more than focusing on conflicts in some parts of the world while ignoring others. We need to shift our mindset from conflict management to conflict resolution—our collective security depends on it...We all need to galvanize UN efforts to promote dialogue, work toward an end to the

hostilities, and address the humanitarian situation for those most desperately in need.”

Yemen: In Favor

This compilation was prepared by David Leshchiner, Calvin Wilder, Amal Soukkarieh, Hannah Labow, Margaret Dene, Carol Silber, Gabriel Epstein, Alex Shanahan, and Spencer Cook, under the auspices of The Washington Institute’s Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation Program on Great Power Competition and the Middle East. ❖

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