

The Glaring Difference Between What People of Ukraine Need and What Its Policy-Makers Impose

By [Bharat Dogra](#)

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Ukraine today is among those countries with some of the highest rates of external and internal displacement, and a country with significant demographic decline due to displacement as well as well increased mortality.

While a very large number of people have died in battle, the number of injured and disabled persons who need better medical care is also huge.

According to the Centre for Disaster Philanthropy, nearly 14.6 million persons constituting about 40% of the population here need humanitarian assistance while nearly 6.3 million have already fled the country.

Hence the biggest need for the country is a very big, community based relief and rehabilitation effort.

For such a relief and rehabilitation effort to take place without disruption and with continuity, the biggest need is for immediate peace. However the country's present leaders and policy makers are not taking any significant steps which in real-life conditions will bring the country closer to peace. Their recent peace efforts, not being rooted in real life conditions, show hardly any promise of bringing much-needed relief to people.

Ukraine's leaders and policy-makers are increasingly alienated from the real needs of their own people. They have failed to implement the agenda of peace and reconciliation on which they were elected. They instead implemented policies which took the country towards domestic war and external war.

Ukraine is an extremely tragic example of how much people of any country can suffer once they are used by any big power in a proxy war. A country which on the basis of its natural resources could both be a bread basket and industrial hub at the same time, a country which on the basis of its location could have received the help both of Russia and the West by adopting neutrality and non-alignment, was pushed heavily and speedily by NATO countries into a relentlessly hostile relationship with Russia, using many unethical channels including a west-engineered coup which ousted a democratically elected democratic government in 2014, instigation of hostilities against people on ethnic and regional grounds leading to domestic war conditions and heavy arming of those violent groups with neo-Nazi leanings which could be most 'trusted' to be most hostile to Russia and ethnic Russian Ukrainian citizens. This and the sabotage of Minsk accords and the escalated shelling of ethnic Russians (or Russian language speaking people) in Eastern Ukraine in early 2022 finally led to the Russian invasion.

Despite NATO countries provoking and fanning all this violence, the Russians and Ukrainians who have known and understood each other for centuries knew instinctively that what was happening was wrong and so peace efforts were made within just a few weeks of the invasion, leading almost to a peace agreement about to be signed , but this too was sabotaged by the then British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's rushed visit to Ukraine who conveyed that the west's support is for fighting with Russia and not for living peacefully with Russia! After that, the path to peace has appeared more and more to be beyond reach.

However, it is still available to any Ukraine leadership which decides that the interests of its people, the peace and stability of the country, the satisfactory rehabilitation and return of all displaced people, the satisfactory treatment of all injured people, is much more important than attaching the country to the wider economic , strategic and hegemonic interests of the USA and its leading NATO allies.

With increasing disregard for even a fig leaf, several western leaders have been arguing very blatantly that the people and soldiers of Ukraine have been fighting their war to weaken and bleed Russia in ways that are cost-effective for the west, ignoring entirely the very heavy costs to the people of Ukraine in terms of the large number of people who have died, have been seriously injured and disabled (as well as the distress of their near and dear ones).

Hence the best course now for Ukraine is to immediately seek an agreement for unconditional ceasefire with Russia, to be followed later with negotiations, which can be prolonged but must not break down, to settle all disputed issues in a spirit of give and take.

Strong feelings for living with peace with Russia as well as the rest of the world should be reflected by the Ukraine leadership, and this is possible only on the basis of an agenda of neutrality and non-alignment.

Ukraine should be a camp-follower of none, but should steadfastly pursue the protection and betterment of its people, who have suffered such heavy harm in recent years, on the basis of an agenda of peace and seeking the friendship of all countries who are willing to be sincere friends.

However those leaders who are presently wielding power in Ukraine are not sincerely seeking peace with Russia and instead are all the time reposing their great hope in trying to get more and more money and weapons from western countries. The corruption and

increasing disunity prevailing among the present-day top leadership of Ukraine has also been an important concern, something which also contributes to discontent and demoralization in armed forces as well as among people. The path ahead for peace is not to strengthen such forces, but instead to strengthen those forces which can take Ukraine towards peace and the kind of big, community-based rehabilitation effort the country really needs.

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Bharat Dogra is Honorary Convener, Campaign to Save Earth Now. His recent books include Planet in Peril, Protecting Earth for Children, Man over Machine and A Day in 2071. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.

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