

## PRACTICAL WAYS AND METHODS OF INVOLVING 'GLOBAL SOUTH' STATES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UKRAINIAN PEACE FORMULA

### Authors:

Hanna Shelest, Ph.D. in Political Science,  
Nataliia Shevchenko, Ph.D. in History

*The analysis of the voting on the UN General Assembly resolution (23.02.2023), which incorporated the key provisions of the Peace Formula, demonstrates opportunities for expanding the circle of states that could support the Ukrainian initiative. At the recent meeting in Malta (28-29.2023), representatives from 63 countries were present, 19 of which represented the so-called Global South, compared to 141 countries that supported the Resolution. Among the main challenges affecting the level of support for the Peace Formula, as a comprehensive ten-point proposal, the most serious are the conditional neutrality towards the conflict on the part of Global South countries, the perception of the Russian-Ukrainian war as something distant that does not concern their country and does not affect events in their region, or the perception of themselves as a state that cannot influence the situation, internal agendas, and political struggles within countries, as well as the active work of Russian diplomatic representatives and the history of relations. Anti-American or anti-Western sentiments, which have recently intensified in Global South countries, also prevent these countries from considering the Russian-Ukrainian war beyond this context. Most importantly, in most countries, there is a lack of understanding of how the conditions for ending the conflict can be formed within the framework of national security advisor meetings if the other side of the conflict – Russia – is not involved in the negotiations.*

*To involve more countries from the so-called Global South, prioritizing work with regional leaders, organizing thematic summits, and working with specific target audiences can be effective. Involving countries in specific points of the Peace Formula and holding thematic summits can expand the circle of engaged states. At the same time, it is necessary to be prepared for the fact that most so-called neutral countries may be "swinging states," meaning they may appear at one meeting and ignore another.*

## POSITION OF GLOBAL SOUTH COUNTRIES REGARDING THE PEACE FORMULA AND INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES WITHIN ITS FRAMEWORK

Of the 63 countries present at the last meeting of advisers on national security and foreign policy regarding the implementation of the Ukrainian Peace Formula in Malta (28-29.10.2023), only 19 belong to the so-called Global South, of which 8 countries represented the Latin American region, 4 each – the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific region, 3 – Africa. At the same time, the fifth present country of the Indo-Pacific region - Australia, like Japan, can hardly be classified as part of the so-called Global South as a political-economic concept.

Most regional leaders, namely Argentina, Brazil, India, Qatar, Mexico, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, were present. However, unlike the meeting in Jeddah (5-6.08.2023), representatives of China, Indonesia, Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, and Oman did not participate in the meeting. Comparing the composition of participants, the meeting in Malta managed to attract more new representatives from the Latin American region, but failed to retain the countries of the Middle East.

The increase in the number of Latin American and Caribbean countries (LACB) is partly a result of changes in the voting results of Latin American countries on UN resolutions dedicated to the war since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. If previously Venezuela, Cuba, and Bolivia voted against 'Ukrainian' resolutions, aligning with the position of the Russian Federation, since February 2022, their representatives either do not vote at all or abstain during the final vote.

At the same time, the decrease in Middle Eastern countries during the meeting in Malta can be partially explained by the distraction caused by the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, which began on October 7, as well as the demonstration of the inadequacy of arguments that would support the relevance of the Ukrainian agenda.

China occupies a special position, not refusing at the official level the desire to be involved in the settlement, while emphasizing the continuation of 'in its own way promoting peaceful negotiations and working on the political resolution of the crisis.'<sup>1</sup> The participation of official Beijing in the meeting in Jeddah demonstrated that China would like to have full access to information and observe the discussion on the Ukrainian Peace Formula, but is not ready to depart from the position of the so-called pro-Russian neutrality, primarily driven by its own anti-American policy.

---

<sup>1</sup> China's Foreign Ministry said Beijing would facilitate peace talks between Russia and Ukraine "in its own way" and called the war a "crisis" once again, Ecnpeco, 30.10.2023, <https://espresso.tv/kitay-zayaviv-shcho-spriyatime-mimim-peregovorom-mizh-rf-ta-ukrainoyu-po-svoemu>

At the same time, the analysis of the voting on the resolution of the UN General Assembly (23.02.2023)<sup>2</sup>, which incorporated key provisions of the Peace Formula, shows possibilities for expanding the circle of states that could support the Ukrainian initiative – 141 countries voted "for", 32 "abstained", and only 7 countries voted "against". For example, India and South Africa abstained from voting, while their representatives participate in meetings at the advisor level.

## THE MAIN REASONS FOR NON-SUPPORT

Among the main challenges affecting the level of support for the Peace Formula, a comprehensive ten-point proposal, the following should be noted:

1. Conditional neutrality regarding the conflict from the countries of the Global South.
2. Perceiving the Russian-Ukrainian war as something distant, unrelated to their country, or seeing themselves as powerless to influence the situation.
3. Internal agenda and political struggles within countries.

Most Global South countries try to present their **position on the Russian-Ukrainian war as neutral**. Among the main reasons for this position are:

- General anti-American sentiments in certain countries, which do not necessarily align automatically with a pro-Russian stance.
- Associating Russia with the so-called anti-imperialist force, the ideological successor of the USSR, and consequently, viewing most Western countries that supported Ukraine as representatives of imperialist states associated with dictatorship and a colonial past.
- Failure to perceive the Ukrainian struggle as anti-colonial. This includes the stereotype that "whites cannot be colonies"<sup>3</sup> and the association of Ukraine with Europe, which is always perceived as a colonizer.
- Simultaneous dependence on Western economic aid and promises of economic assistance or existing contracts with Russia.
- Historical affiliation with the non-alignment movement.

In some countries, there is a lack of understanding of **how conditions for conflict resolution can be formed if the other party – Russia – is not involved in the negotiations**. Therefore, the format and purpose of the initiative remain unclear to these countries. Those who consider

<sup>2</sup> The UN approved the Ukrainian "peace formula", harmful amendments were "shot down", *Європейська правда*, 23.02.2023, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2023/02/23/7156819/>

<sup>3</sup> A direct quote from one closed discussion between representatives of African think tanks and experts of "Ukrainian Prism".

themselves neutral have reservations because they believe that current meetings aim to form the position of one "side" (Ukraine and the West) against the other (Russia). Consequently, their participation in meetings dedicated to the Ukrainian Peace Formula will be seen as taking sides in the conflict.

As for the **internal political agenda** that influences the decision to participate or not, the following factors should be noted:

- Human rights issues within the country, and the relevance of specific points.
- Own history of conflicts.
- Political weight of extreme left or populist forces.

Another significant misunderstanding in the countries of the so-called Global South is **why they should be interested in Ukrainian issues** and participate in resolving a conflict that is so far from them. This is facilitated, in part, by extensive diplomatic and propaganda work by Russia, promoting fake information about the causes of the war, the situation with Ukrainian refugees, reasons for the lack of grain exports, and more. However, internal discussions often include arguments that Ukraine has never been interested in their problems, and thus, there is no basis for solidarity.

Support for Ukrainian initiatives within the Peace Formula cannot be considered separately from the overall agenda of Ukraine in bilateral relations with Global South countries. For example, the absence of an ambassador in Ethiopia for 14 years is unlikely to contribute to the official Addis Ababa's interest in supporting the Ukrainian initiative. Many Global South countries attach significant importance to the principle of reciprocity, the diplomatic protocol of bilateral relations, rather than following the position of the US or other Western countries. Therefore, Ukrainian interests and engagement are crucial for them.

It is also problematic that **the most Global South countries did not have a permanent diplomatic representation in Ukraine**, performing their duties on a concurrent basis. Moreover, until 2014, a considerable number had their responsible diplomatic representation in Moscow, thus being part of the Russian discourse and under Russian informational influence.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As of today, Ukraine faces the question of both expanding the circle of participants in the Peace Formula meetings and maintaining those who do not have a stable position regarding participation. It is necessary to be prepared for the fact that the majority of so-called neutral countries may be "**swinging states**", meaning they may attend one meeting and ignore another depending on the agenda and political situation.

At the same time, there is a possibility of **involving countries in specific points of the Peace Formula** that they may support. Therefore, in addition to holding thematic meetings in Ukraine at the ambassadorial level, it is worth organizing thematic meetings on specific points of the Peace Formula at the level of advisors on national security and foreign policy.

In general, it is **advisable to focus on regional and thematic leaders** whose positions influence other states, which can have a multiplier effect in case of their joining. Countries such as Singapore, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Peru, Morocco, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Liberia, Uganda, Jordan, Colombia, Ethiopia should be a top priority for engagement.

A way to involve a wider range of countries is **to hold thematic summits** on specific directions of the Peace Formula. **The highest interest** may be in points related to radiation and nuclear security, food and energy security. The medium level includes ecocide, the urgent need to protect nature, and the issue of deported children, implementing the UN Charter, and restoring world order (where the question of the territorial integrity of Ukraine is not necessarily an axiom for all involved). The lowest level of interest among countries of the so-called Global South may be in questions of security guarantees for Ukraine, withdrawal of Russian troops, fixing the end of the war, and creating a tribunal.

If we analyze **the theme of the Peace Formula in the geographical context** of possible interest from individual states, then:

- **Nuclear safety** may attract the interest and involvement of states that possess weapons or technologies themselves (for example, India and Pakistan) or are neighbors to such states (for example, neighbors of China and North Korea, etc.). But also, countries involved in the development of peaceful atom or have a history of interaction with Ukraine after the Chernobyl disaster may show interest. For example, at one time, the governments of Fidel and Raul Castro accepted approximately 21,000 Ukrainian children for rehabilitation in Cuba as part of a humanitarian program following the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident. Consequently, drawing an analogy with events of 30 years ago, they may understand the world community's concerns about "nuclear blackmail" by Russia, which has militarized Europe's largest Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and conducts shelling in the area of the Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant.
- The theme of **food security** has the potential to attract, primarily, African and Middle Eastern countries, which were Ukraine's main trading partners in this field or receive food aid from the UN. In addition, Cuba has long been a recipient of food aid sent by Ukraine as part of humanitarian cooperation, so it may support Ukraine's demands to unblock Ukrainian ports and ensure "grain corridors" as part of the food supply initiative to various regions of the world.



- **Issues of justice and the creation of an international tribunal** can be a point of convergence with countries that have experienced conflicts in the past or have gone through the process of truth and reconciliation commissions (Colombia, Sri Lanka, Liberia, Rwanda, Chad, Uganda, etc.). This concept should also include the issue of deported children (perceived as humanitarian, not political), as well as violations of the rights of the Crimean Tatar population. Through the Crimean Tatar theme, Muslim countries in not only the Middle East but also Asia, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, should be approached.
- **The issue of security guarantees** may interest small Asian states, but only in the context of a broader discussion on security guarantees, not just within the framework of Ukraine's future membership in security alliances. In this perspective, working with ASEAN countries, especially the Philippines and Singapore, which are exploring Ukrainian experience due to the possible threat from China, is worth considering.
- The issue of implementing **the UN Charter** and restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity and the world order is relevant for many Latin American countries. Analogies with the "Atlantic Charter" of 1941, the principles of which initially formed the basis for the formation of the anti-Hitler coalition during the Second World War and later became the foundation for the establishment of the UN, are relevant here. In this light, the ideas of the Ukrainian Peace Formula in the LAC region, where all the then-independent countries of the region (there were 20 of them) became participants in the anti-Hitler coalition and later contributed 20 votes out of the first 50 for the UN Charter, which launched the organization's work, can be positioned. Just as then, the German attack on Poland was considered by political elites mostly as a "foreign" conflict in "distant" Europe, and also due to the sufficiently powerful positive image of Germany and Italy in the LAC region (similar to the current situation with Russia's image in the region). At that time, the Latin American elite's position on the war changed due to factors such as the increasing security threats to the region and the direct involvement of the United States in it.

At the same time, without a clear formulation by Ukraine of the ultimate goal of the Peace Formula (for example, the formation of a position for future negotiations with the Russian Federation or the proposal of new norms of international order), as well as a clear answer to the question of how these negotiations can affect the resolution of the conflict if Russia, as a party to the conflict, is not involved, the involvement of countries emphasizing their neutral position will be extremely problematic.

As for **target audiences to focus on**, besides the immediate leadership of the state, it is necessary to mention journalists, youth, representatives of new left-wing political forces, thought leaders from intellectual circles involved in anti-colonial discourse and struggles in countries, graduates of Ukrainian higher education institutions among the political and economic elite of states, and human rights activists.

For example, in the LACB region, attention should be paid to the renewed political elites. Currently, a change in political elites is taking place in these countries, with the emergence of the generation of the second half of the 80s-90s. In the LACB region, authoritarian (military) regimes were ended, and democratic institutions were actively restored during this period. This generation practically did not experience restrictions on rights and censorship in the media. They are decisive, creative, initiative, and do not yield to the "authority" of the older and more experienced. Often, they are non-systemic politicians not associated with traditional political forces, which they accuse of inability to establish democracy, protect human rights, and serious economic miscalculations. Accordingly, Russia is perceived by them as an embodiment of those old regimes. At the same time, they mostly come from the civil sector and better understand the events of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine and arguments for human rights and against authoritarianism and the rule of the strong.

Moreover, recent electoral trends in the Latin American and Caribbean region show a return of societal trust in representatives of left-wing forces. However, modern "leftists" differ from their older counterparts who came on the waves of anti-neocolonialism, antiglobalism, and anti-Americanism (the so-called "left turn" in the LACB at the beginning of the 21st century). The worldview of the "new left" in international politics is a combination of ideas of alter-globalism, the fight against various forms of inequality, increased participation in shaping the global agenda, a multi-vector foreign policy, and a return to the traditions of international solidarity (especially in relation to the victims of military conflicts and migrants) and environmental protection. Similar positions are often taken by protest movements in Southeast Asia, although left opposition there has had less success so far.

On some issues, the views of the "new left" coincide with those of the "right", and therefore, the similarity of positions makes their potential unity in the implementation of a pragmatic course of foreign policy of Global South countries, especially in the LACB region, potentially possible. This can be seen, for example, in the attitude towards cooperation with IMF structures, which was strongly associated with poverty, inequality, and dependence in the perception of the left. However, the example of Argentina demonstrates that both right-wing forces (M. Macri) and left-wing forces (A. Fernández) were able to change their positions, replacing ideological approaches with pragmatic ones in the implementation of national interests. We also see a pragmatic left-wing politician of the new generation, the leader of Chile, G. Boric, who strongly condemns Russian aggression against Ukraine on all international platforms at the global and regional levels. In this, his positions are close to those of the leader of Uruguay, L. Lacalle Pou, a politician from the right political camp.

In the countries of the so-called Global South, especially in Asia and Latin America, a deep-rooted sense of patriotism and respect for national armed forces (despite sometimes tragic periods of military authoritarian regimes recorded in historical memory) is prevalent. Through the multitude of such "stories" about Ukrainians conveyed to the respective audience in these

countries, solidarity with the ideas laid down in the Ukrainian Peace Formula can be achieved. Ukrainian defense of territorial integrity and refusal to negotiate at any cost can be perceived as an expression of patriotism rather than a rejection of peaceful solutions (a thesis promoted by Russian propaganda in the region).

Taking into account the demographic structure of the majority of Global South countries, a significant portion of **the young population**, a separate track of public diplomacy should be pursued to increase their support for Ukraine, explain the reasons for the war, the current situation, and find topics that would resonate among the youth. Since elections are expected in many important countries in the near future, this can influence the politicians they support in their countries.

Ukraine should actively use the opportunities and platforms of **various international organizations**, in addition to the UN, where Global South countries participate. In addition to ASEAN and the African Union, where Ukraine has recently demonstrated an increased level of interest, it is important to establish continuous communication with other organizations, including ECOWAS, ARES, LAS, the Arab League, etc. Furthermore, for many countries in this region, parliamentary diplomacy will have a significant impact, so Ukraine needs to strengthen the use of opportunities in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where Ukrainian parliamentarians have already intensified their activities.

© Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”

#### Authors:

Hanna Shelest, Ph.D. in Political Science,  
Nataliia Shevchenko, Ph.D. in History



The information and views set out in this study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”

Phone.: +380935788405

Email: [info@prismua.org](mailto:info@prismua.org)

<http://prismua.org/>