Dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Analysis of Indonesia's Political Attitudes and International Legal Responses

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Abstract

This study analyzes the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and Indonesia's response to the conflict. In the context of this global conflict, constructivism theory reveals the important role of social norms in shaping foreign policy. Indonesia's foreign policy stance, which prioritizes the principles of freedom of activity and non-interference, is in the spotlight in dealing with this conflict. In addition, aspects of international law are also analyzed, highlighting Russia's violations of international legal norms. Indonesia's response reflects diplomacy and a neutral stance in an effort to stop the use of military force. This study identifies lessons that Indonesia can draw from this conflict to strengthen its role as an active player in maintaining international peace and security.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Constructivism Theory, Indonesian Foreign Policy.

1. Introduction

In the long history of relations between Russia and Ukraine, armed conflicts and political disputes have been an inseparable part. The Duke of Kiev, Vladimir the Great, ruled what is now Ukraine in the 10th century AD. Over time, Ukraine, Russia, and their surrounding neighbors, including Belarus, formed a medieval superpower, encompassing much of Eastern Europe. The peak of the historical conflict between Russia and Ukraine occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 (Soldatenko, 2021; Shlikhta, 2020). At the time of the collapse of the Russian Monarchy, the Russian government granted autonomy to Ukraine by forming the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR). However, the Bolsheviks refused to recognize Ukraine's independence and invaded the country to incorporate it into the Soviet Union.

After the civil war ended with the victory of the Bolsheviks, the Soviet Union was officially founded on December 30, 1922, with members including the Russian SFSR, Transcaucasian RSFSr, Ukrainian SSR, and Belorussian SSR. Although the formation of the Soviet Union gained stability within the region, conflicts between Soviet states still continued. On February 24 2022, the world was shocked by the sudden attack of Russian troops in several major Ukrainian cities, on orders from the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. This attack covered cities such as Berdyansk, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Sumy, and the capital Kyiv. International observers and Western officials rate this attack as one of the largest in Europe since the end of World War II in 1945 (Wicaksana & Ramadhan 2022).

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded and verified more than 1,100 civilian deaths in Ukraine from the start of the conflict to March 27, 2022. After almost a month of conflict, the Russian invasion has created a humanitarian crisis, causing thousands of Ukrainians to flee to the west of their country or abroad. As of March 26, 2022, Poland noted that nearly 2.3 million Ukrainian residents decided to flee to neighboring countries. The impact of this attack was not only local, but also had a significant impact on the contemporary international legal order. A number of Western officials, big figures and the world community consider this action to be a serious violation of international legal norms, including International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights and International Morality. In response, transnational leaders and public figures around the world have issued comments and calls for an end to Russia's military actions against Ukraine (Junaedi, 2022; Purwati et al., 2022).

Russia's attack on Ukraine is considered one of the largest attacks in world history. The impact was not limited only to Eastern and Western Europe, but also spread to almost all countries that responded and were involved in this
conflict. This causes serious disruption in various aspects of life, including economics, politics and the protection of human rights.

As a country with the political principle of being free and active in foreign affairs, Indonesia does not adopt absolute neutrality. This principle reflects Indonesia’s ability to choose attitudes and policies that are considered appropriate in responding to international issues. In the context of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it is hoped that the principle of active freedom can be used wisely and effectively to help find a solution to the dispute between the two countries. This attack and conflict certainly did not just happen. A number of factors and events have given rise to a heated situation between Russia and Ukraine. To understand more deeply the roots of the problem and the dynamics of this conflict, a detailed analysis of the historical, political and economic context of both parties is needed.

Through this study, it is hoped that a comprehensive picture of this conflict can be revealed, including its long-term implications for international stability and security. Apart from that, this paper also aims to provide guidance for the parties involved, including the international community, in efforts to mediate and find a just and sustainable solution to end this conflict. With various complex aspects and broad impacts, global collaboration and joint efforts are needed to handle and respond to this situation. Hopefully this paper can be a useful contribution in seeking a deeper understanding and finding a fair solution for both parties involved in this conflict.

2. Research methods

To validate this research, the author used several data collection techniques, namely interviews with one of the informants who has a background as a lecturer and legal expert. Apart from that, research data was also obtained through reference sources in the form of books and electronic journals, as well as searching for information on websites on the internet. The research approach used is descriptive qualitative. This descriptive qualitative research uses the case study method, which focuses on in-depth analysis of one particular study object. Case study data was taken from various sources related to the object of this research.

In qualitative research, the main instrument is the researcher himself or what is known as a human instrument. Researchers must have theoretical understanding and broad insight to be able to ask relevant questions, analyze data carefully, and describe research objects clearly and meaningfully. This is closely related to the research focus on social phenomena in society. The data criteria used in this research are data whose veracity can be ascertained. The data analysis technique used is qualitative analysis following the concept of Philip Mayring's content analysis theory model. Content analysis is an in-depth process of analyzing messages using scientific methods, not limited to the types of variables that can be measured.

This research was carried out from planning, implementation, to making a research report. The time for conducting the research is from March to July 2022. During this process, the literature and research results that have been obtained will be processed, including editing sentences to ensure the flow of writing is in accordance with the research objectives. This adjustment is made without changing the intent and purpose of the writing. The data obtained were then analyzed using a descriptive analysis approach, namely describing the data and facts with theoretical references. This data analysis is used to analyze problems which ultimately produces a synthesis and research findings that can be justified.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Indonesia's International Political Stance Regarding Russia's Attack on Ukraine

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Indonesia's foreign policy with the principle of "free and active" has proven correct in dealing with Russia's attack on Ukraine. Russia's attack on Ukraine has invited the reaction of countries in the region, including ASEAN countries, to unite in responding to this situation without posing a threat to the sovereignty of any country. Russia, since its invasion, has violated the provisions of international law in very significant ways.

In the context of global politics, the impact of the war between Russia and Ukraine on Indonesia is not very significant, considering that Indonesia has good relations with both countries. However, Indonesia has the opportunity to play a role in easing tensions between Russia and Ukraine through the Group of Twenty (G20) platform. Indonesia, as the host of the G20 meeting, can play a role in mediation efforts between the two parties with the help of countries such as India and Brazil.

Although Indonesia may face criticism from Western countries, it is important for Indonesia to maintain its independence and have strong views. This is included in the decision to invite Russia and Ukraine to the G20 summit in Bali next November. As a sovereign country, Indonesia must have the ability to determine its own destiny without pressure from any country. As a neutral country, Indonesia must also maintain its image as a fair and objective mediator in handling international conflicts.

International Relations Observer, Muhadi Sugiono, stated that the current Russia-Ukraine conflict is a challenge for Indonesia's leadership in the G20. Indonesia's ability to ensure that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine does not affect the G20 agenda is very important. Indonesia must demonstrate the capability to carry out an effective mediator role and encourage the countries involved to work together to find a peaceful solution.
Based on this discussion, constructivism theory in international studies becomes relevant. As stated by Alexander Wendt, constructivist theory emphasizes that anarchy in international relations is not permanent, but is the result of interaction and social construction between countries. Social norms have an important role in shaping and changing a country's foreign policy over time. In the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, a constructivist approach views that relations between the two countries can be understood through the dynamics of social norms that shape the perceptions and actions of these countries.

In addition, in terms of Indonesia's foreign policy stance, it can be identified that readiness to act and respond to international political problems is an important element. Indonesia's foreign policy attitude, which has the principle of free and active, allows this country to take the initiative and follow the dynamics of international politics. However, pressure from various parties can also influence the direction of Indonesia's foreign policy. The Indonesian Government's consistency in maintaining a neutral and impartial position is crucial in dealing with global issues. Indonesia's foreign policy aims to maintain the country's independence and security, promote international peace, and build good relations between nations (Syahatia, 2022; Wicaksana et al., 2022; Sukma, 2022).

In the context of conflict resolution and diplomacy, Indonesia needs to implement a rational and moderate foreign policy, based on the principles of international cooperation, respect for national sovereignty and non-interference. Preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution are an integral part of efforts to maintain regional peace and stability. In this case, it is important to restore Indonesia's image in the eyes of the international community, because this is related to Indonesia's capacity to play an active role in international political dynamics.

### 3.2. International Law in Relation to the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

The situation in Ukraine caused by the Russian military attack has raised various serious problems in the context of international law. The attacks have resulted in mass displacement, damage to vital infrastructure, and the loss of hundreds of innocent civilian lives. This development also brings economic and geopolitical instability and crisis to the region, which has far-reaching impacts.

In terms of international law, Russia's actions in this conflict are questionable. The use of Article 51 of the UN Charter on the Right of Self-Defense as a basis for Russia's military actions in Ukraine does not have a strong and valid legal basis. The attack is a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, contrary to the principles of the UN Charter.

Russia's actions also violate the norms of contemporary international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights. The attack which resulted in the deaths of more than 550 innocent civilians is a direct violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular Geneva Convention IV which regulates the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Apart from that, this attack also violated Article 51 paragraph (5) letter (b) Additional Protocol I of 1977 which prohibits attacks that could harm civilians (Gross, 2021).

In international law, Russia's actions in Crimea in 2014 and ongoing attacks in Ukraine today can be qualified as acts of aggression, according to the definition adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1974. These actions include attacks by the armed forces of a state against the territory of the state or military occupation by the use of armed force against the territory or part of another country. Russia's actions in Ukraine meet the criteria for that definition of aggression (Nugraha et al., 2022; Wenas Inkiriwang, 2022).

It is important to note that international law affirms important principles such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the protection of human rights. Actions that violate these principles constitute violations of international law and can give rise to international legal consequences for the perpetrator. In situations such as the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it is important to seek peaceful solutions and ensure the enforcement of international law to ensure peace, security and protection of human rights.

Despite facing limitations in international legal mechanisms to stop Russia's military attacks against Ukraine, optimism regarding the resolution of this crisis must remain maintained. The international community has an important role to play in helping to defuse conflict and promote peace. First, reform of the political design of the veto right in the UN Security Council needs serious attention. This aims to prevent countries holding veto rights and their allies from taking actions that could threaten international peace and security. The veto mechanism should not hinder efforts to crack down on acts of aggression and violations of international law.

Furthermore, Ukraine can use the provisional measures mechanism at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to fight for its case regarding this crisis. However, it is important to remember that enforcement of ICJ decisions still requires support from the UN Security Council, which can be a challenge. The international community can also play an active role in mitigating this crisis by utilizing influence and diplomacy. Continued efforts to push Russia and Ukraine towards a ceasefire and peace on humanitarian grounds is essential.

In closing, we must all continue to hope that Russia will listen to the collective voice of the international community and cease military action. Russia is also expected to return to the basic principles of recognizing a country's sovereignty and prioritizing international peace and order. In this difficult situation, the collective hope and efforts of the international community are key to achieving a just and sustainable solution for all parties involved.
3.3. Indonesia's Response to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Indonesia's response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict reflects the free-active foreign policy approach that this country has long adhered to. Active freedom is an approach that allows Indonesia to carry out independent foreign policy, free from political alliances or blocks, and decide on attitudes and policies in accordance with its national interests. Indonesia has a history of warm relations with Russia (and previously the Soviet Union), and President Putin has the sympathy of some Indonesians. This is partly due to a positive view of President Putin's attitude towards the Islamic religion and recognition that global conflicts are not solely caused by the Islamic religion. This attitude has earned President Putin the support of some Indonesian people who are predominantly Muslim.

However, Indonesia must also maintain balance in its response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Some Indonesians also expressed sympathy for the Ukrainian people and President Zelensky. In a free and active foreign policy, Indonesia must maintain its independence and neutrality in international conflicts. Furthermore, Indonesia has a history of friendship with the Soviet Union and received assistance from that country during the early days of its independence. This is part of the warm diplomatic history between the two countries.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, also has a responsibility to maintain relations between Muslim and non-Muslim countries at the international level. Therefore, in responding to this conflict, Indonesia must consider various factors, including historical relationships, societal views, and the principle of free and active foreign policy. Apart from that, as a country committed to peace and diplomacy, Indonesia can also act as a mediator in this conflict, in line with a free and active foreign policy approach that promotes international peace. In this case, Indonesia can try to reconcile Russia and Ukraine and provide humanitarian assistance to victims of the conflict.(Perbawa, 2022).

Indonesia's response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict reflects the free-active foreign policy approach that this country has long adhered to. This approach allows Indonesia to carry out a foreign policy that is independent, neutral, and based on the principles of international law. President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) has spoken well with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, expressing concern and encouragement to end the conflict in Ukraine through peace negotiations. Indonesia is ready to contribute to achieving this goal. This reflects Indonesia's role as an active player in efforts to mediate and reconcile international conflicts.

Indonesia also emphasizes the importance of respecting international legal norms in handling conflicts. The Indonesian government emphasizes its neutral stance and does not simply follow other countries. In situations of international conflict, it is important for countries to maintain their independence and neutrality and promote peace and diplomacy. Indonesia as the host of this year's G20 Summit must also consider the issue of inviting Russia and Ukraine. Despite pressure from several Western countries to expel Russia from the G20, Indonesia has emphasized that its stance is neutral and respects international legal norms.

In Indonesia's overall response, it is important to maintain a balance between maintaining relations with various countries, reflecting the principles of free and active foreign policy, and acting as a mediator in efforts to achieve international peace. This response reflects Indonesia's role as a large country with an independent and peaceful foreign policy.

The Indonesian government continues to encourage de-escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict with the aim of making the negotiation process more effective and opening up humanitarian channels. The government also appealed to the Indonesian people to be wise in dealing with the Ukraine issue, so as not to cause divisions within the country and to maintain Indonesia's territorial integrity. The Indonesian government emphasized that Indonesia continues to maintain good relations with Russia and Ukraine, considering that these two countries are friends of Indonesia. This affirmation is in line with the invitation to Russia to host the G20 Summit in Bali next November, which was attended by President Vladimir Putin.

Member of DPR Commission I, Dave Laksono, highlighted that the G20 is a forum established to discuss economic issues and social welfare. Therefore, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which is largely rooted in foreign policy and inter-state relations, should not be a major issue in this forum. The resolution of the Ukraine problem should be carried out in other more appropriate forums. China also expressed its support for Russia's presence at the G20, stating that Russia has an important role in this forum.

The Russian Ambassador to Indonesia, Lyudmila Vorobieva, emphasized Putin's desire to attend the G20 Summit in Bali and asked Indonesia not to be swayed by pressure from Western countries. This view reflects the importance of keeping issues in line with the G20 agenda and leaving complex foreign policy issues to be resolved in more relevant forums. Indonesia, as the host of the G20 Summit, is trying to maintain balance in dealing with various global issues.

3.4. Lessons that Indonesia can take from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine

The following are lessons that Indonesia can take from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as a whole:

1. Diplomacy as the Main Option: This conflict emphasizes the importance of diplomacy as the main tool for resolving international disputes. Indonesia can learn a lesson about how important it is to find peaceful solutions in overcoming differences with other countries.
2. Neutrality and Non-Interference: This conflict underscores the importance of being neutral and not interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. Indonesia can re-emphasize this principle as part of a free and active foreign policy.

3. Role of Mediation and Mediator: The conflict between Russia and Ukraine shows that Indonesia has great potential as a mediator or mediator in resolving regional and global conflicts. This allows Indonesia to play an active role in achieving peace.

4. Maintaining Diplomatic Relations: Even in a conflict context, it is important for Indonesia to maintain strong diplomatic relations with both parties to the conflict. This reflects Indonesia's commitment to diplomacy as a way to resolve differences.

5. Prioritizing National Interests: This conflict reminds Indonesia to always prioritize national interests and state security. National security must be carefully guarded, and foreign policy must support that goal.

6. Solidarity with the International Community: Indonesia can learn about the importance of solidarity with the international community in condemning actions that violate international law and world peace.

7. Emphasis on International Law: This conflict shows how important international law is in regulating the behavior of states in the world. Indonesia must maintain and comply with international legal norms.

These lessons provide guidance for Indonesia in managing foreign policy, carrying out its diplomatic role, and maintaining national stability and security in the context of international conflict.

4. Conclusion

From the results of the analysis of the data that has been presented, several important conclusions can be drawn:

1. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has created a significant impact, not only for the two countries involved, but also for regional and global stability and security. Russia's military offensive against Ukraine has caused serious humanitarian consequences, including massive displacement and loss of civilian lives.

2. The constructivist theoretical perspective on international relations provides important insights in understanding this conflict. The view that anarchy is a state construct highlights the role of social norms in shaping foreign policy. This shows that human interaction and interpretation of anarchic situations influence the dynamics of international politics.

3. Indonesia's foreign policy stance which prioritizes the principles of freedom, activity and non-interference shows the importance of maintaining the country's independence and sovereignty. However, in facing global conflict, consistency in foreign policy needs to be maintained, while still considering pressure from various parties.

4. In relation to international law, Russia's actions against Ukraine are considered a violation of a number of international legal norms, including the UN Charter and the Geneva conventions. In this regard, it is important to seek effective dispute resolution mechanisms and comply with the principles of international law.

5. Indonesia's response to this conflict reflects a neutral attitude and diplomatic efforts to stop the use of military force. Efforts to maintain diplomatic relations with both parties, while emphasizing the need for peace and negotiation, demonstrate Indonesia's commitment to preventive diplomacy and peaceful solutions.

6. Lessons that Indonesia can take from this conflict include the importance of diplomacy, neutrality, the role of mediator, maintaining diplomatic relations, prioritizing national security, solidarity with the international community, and complying with international legal norms.

These lessons provide guidance for Indonesia in managing foreign policy, carrying out its diplomatic role, and maintaining national stability and security in the context of international conflict. Taking into account all the aspects that have been described, handling this conflict requires cooperation and commitment from the entire international community. Efforts to achieve regional peace and stability must be based on the principles of international law and humanitarian norms. Thus, this conflict can be a momentum for Indonesia to strengthen its role as an active player in maintaining international peace and security.

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