

THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR ON THE SOUTH CAUCASUS REGION

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The Russian-Ukrainian war, which began in 2014 and escalated in 2022, has emerged as the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II. Its impact has extended beyond the directly involved parties, influencing the geopolitical landscape of neighboring regions, particularly the South Caucasus. Comprising Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, the South Caucasus is a strategic crossroads where the interests of major powers such as Russia, Türkiye, Iran, China, and the West converge. This study explores the multidimensional impact of the ongoing war on the South Caucasus in political, economic, military-strategic, and humanitarian contexts.

Politically, the war has intensified the need for South Caucasus states to recalibrate their foreign policies amidst increasing pressure from global powers. Georgia leans cautiously pro-Ukrainian, Armenia faces internal tensions as it navigates between its traditional alliance with Russia and emerging Western ties, while Azerbaijan maintains a pragmatic, balanced approach. Türkiye's growing influence—especially following the 2020 Second Karabakh War—has been further solidified due to Russia's distraction in Ukraine, shifting the regional power balance.

Economically, Azerbaijan has become a key energy partner for Europe, offering alternatives to Russian oil and gas via pipelines such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and the Southern Gas Corridor. Simultaneously, Georgia and Azerbaijan have emerged as vital transit points due to disruptions in Russian trade routes, while Armenia, heavily dependent on Russia, has suffered from sanctions-related economic impacts.

Militarily, Russia's reduced presence has weakened its traditional role as a security guarantor, especially for Armenia. In contrast, Türkiye continues to strengthen military ties with Azerbaijan. The influx of weapons to Armenia from various countries and rising revanchist sentiment threaten regional security.

Humanitarian challenges, including increased migration from Russia and public unrest, particularly in Georgia, reflect broader societal consequences. Overall, the war has reshaped the South Caucasus' geopolitical trajectory, creating both challenges and new opportunities for regional cooperation and adaptation.

References

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