

Victory, Justice, and a Non-Nuclear Future:

A Framework for Ending Russia’s War Against Ukraine

“The war won’t end until Russia is destroyed—demilitarized, denuclearized and disintegrated into dozens of independent states with their own regional/national identities.”
— Cemil Kerimoglu, writer, analyst, and commentator on Russia and Eastern Europe.

Four years have passed since the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Twelve years have passed since Russia’s first occupation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas in 2014. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are dead or wounded. Cities lie in ruins. A sovereign nation has been subjected to systematic destruction. People’s lives have been destroyed.

However, all wars end. The only question is how.

Will this war end in a way that rewards aggression and nuclear blackmail? Or will it end in a way that restores the rule of law, secures Europe, and strengthens the global order?

Our Centre’s position is clear: the war must end with a decisive Ukrainian military victory, the accountability of Russia’s leadership, and a structural transformation of European and global security. It must end as described by Cemil Kerimoglu with Russia demilitarized, denuclearized and disintegrated. Anything less leaves Ukraine — and the world — vulnerable to repetition.

I. The Nature of the War

This is not a territorial misunderstanding. It is a war of Russian imperial conquest.

Since 2014, Russia has:

- Annexed sovereign Ukrainian territory.
- Launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.
- Systematically targeted civilians and infrastructure in Ukraine.
- Engaged in documented war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.
- Attempted to erase Ukrainian statehood and identity.

A state willing to wage aggressive war in the 21st century while committing atrocities is not merely a threat to one neighbor. It is a systemic threat to regional stability and to the international order itself.

Twentieth century history teaches that expansionist regimes do not stop voluntarily. They stop only when they are stopped.

II. The First Requirement: Military Defeat of Aggression

Security guarantees alone are insufficient. Memoranda without enforcement are futile. The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 demonstrated that solemn assurances, without structural deterrence, can fail.

Ukraine surrendered the third-largest nuclear arsenal in the world, including tactical and strategic warheads, in exchange for security guarantees. Those guarantees did not prevent invasion.

The hard truth is this:

Only a clear military defeat of Russia's aggression can secure Ukraine's independence in a sustainable form.

That means:

- Full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity.
- Withdrawal of Russian forces from all occupied Ukrainian territory.
- Destruction of Russia's ability to resume aggression at will.

Frozen conflicts are not peace. They are delayed wars.

Durable stability requires clarity: aggression must fail decisively.

III. Accountability: A Modern Nuremberg

After the Second World War, the Allied powers established a principle that reshaped international law: aggressive war is a crime.

The Nuremberg Tribunal did not merely punish atrocities. It criminalized the act of launching war itself.

Russia affirmed that principle by participating in the Nuremberg Trials. It cannot now pretend it does not exist.

A just settlement must therefore include:

- An international tribunal for Russia's crime of aggression.
- Prosecution of those responsible for orchestrating and executing the invasion of Ukraine.
- Accountability for documented war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

Justice is not revenge. It is deterrence.

Without accountability, the lesson to future leaders will be simple: if you survive politically, you can escape legal consequences.

That lesson must not stand.

IV. Reparations and Reconstruction

Ukraine has suffered vast destruction: shattered infrastructure, destroyed cities, displaced families, and lost generations. Ukraine's allies have also invested billions into supporting Ukraine in the war. All must be made whole.

Reconstruction of Ukraine must be financed in substantial part by:

- Seized Russian state assets.
- Structured reparations mechanisms.
- International rebuilding frameworks modelled on post-war Europe.

Ukraine's defense has protected not only itself but also the broader European continent and beyond. These sacrifices must be recognized and compensated for materially, not merely rhetorically. In addition, allies who supported Ukraine must also be made whole.

V. Nuclear Accountability and the Survival of Non-Proliferation

There is an unavoidable and foundational issue at the center of this conflict.

Russia, which committed the crime of aggression against Ukraine while shielded by the world's largest nuclear arsenal, cannot be permitted to retain that arsenal after defeat.

To allow Russia to keep its nuclear arsenal would destroy the credibility of global non-proliferation.

Ukraine relinquished its nuclear weapons in good faith to Russia based on a guarantee by Russia of Ukraine's sovereignty. Then Russia violated its guarantee. If Russia as an aggressor retains its nuclear shield after committing aggression and atrocities, the lesson to the world will be unmistakable:

Nuclear weapons are the only real guarantee of sovereignty.

That precedent would be catastrophic.

It would:

- Normalize nuclear blackmail as a tool of policy.
- Encourage nuclear proliferation across Europe and Asia.

- Pressure Ukraine itself to reconsider nuclear rearmament.
- Undermine decades of arms control efforts.

That path must not be opened.

Therefore, a durable settlement must establish a new principle of international security:

If a new international Nuremberg-like tribunal today finds that a nuclear state has committed sustained aggression and systematic war crimes against another state, that aggressor nuclear state must be required to relinquish its nuclear arsenal. That is a new tenet that must be introduced and enforced in international law.

Just as post-war Germany and Japan were disarmed of offensive military capabilities, a post-war Russia must undergo verifiable and enforceable nuclear disarmament under international supervision. Its nuclear weapons must be dismantled. Its delivery systems neutralized. Its capacity for nuclear coercion permanently removed.

This is not vengeance. It is structural prevention.

It is also the beginning of a long-needed shift in global thinking: nuclear weapons cannot serve as insurance policies for imperial expansion.

If aggressive nuclear states are allowed to retain their arsenals unchanged, non-proliferation collapses. If aggression leads to disarmament, the logic reverses. The world moves — cautiously but meaningfully — toward reducing nuclear reliance.

Either nuclear weapons remain shields for aggressors, or they become relics of a darker age.

The future of global security depends on which lesson this war teaches.

VI. Reforming Russia's Posture

The objective is not the destruction of Russia as a nation. It is the dismantling of Russia's doctrine of imperial aggression.

Sustainable peace requires:

- Formal recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty.
- Renunciation of Russia's expansionist ideology.
- Democratic transformation of Russia.
- Acknowledgment of historical crimes, including Stalinist atrocities such as the Holodomor.

Post-war Germany demonstrates that profound transformation is possible. Nations can change — but transformation begins with defeat and truth.

VII. Strengthening Democratic Institutions

The war has exposed weaknesses in global governance.

Necessary reforms include:

- Revitalization of the United Nations.
- Reconsideration of veto mechanisms that shield ongoing aggression.
- Strengthened collective security commitments.
- Clear disqualification from privileged international roles for states engaged in sustained aggression and war crimes.

Law without enforcement is meaningless. Enforcement restores credibility.

VIII. The Broader Geopolitical Context

The outcome in Ukraine will shape global expectations.

If aggression succeeds:

- It lowers the threshold for similar actions elsewhere.
- It emboldens expansionist ambitions globally.
- It weakens deterrence in Europe, Asia and elsewhere.

If aggression fails decisively:

- It reinforces territorial sovereignty.
- It strengthens deterrence.
- It raises the cost of territorial expansion ambitions.

The world is watching — including those evaluating their own strategic options.

IX. Democratic Responsibility

Declarations of solidarity are insufficient. Strategy requires alignment between rhetoric and resources.

Ukraine's defense has depended on:

- Military support.
- Financial backing.
- Intelligence cooperation.
- Advanced technological infrastructure.

Modern warfare has revealed that strategic technologies — including satellite systems and communications networks — can determine battlefield outcomes. Democracies must ensure that critical wartime infrastructure cannot rest solely in private hands beyond democratic oversight when national survival is at stake.

In times of existential conflict, states have lawful authority to safeguard strategic assets. Democratic accountability must match technological power.

X. The Vision Beyond War

If Ukraine prevails, the result will not merely be an end to hostilities.

It will mean:

- A sovereign Ukraine integrated into European security structures.
- A revitalized NATO capable of deterrence.
- A Europe prepared to defend its own security.
- A global reaffirmation that borders cannot be changed by force.
- A strengthened nuclear non-proliferation regime grounded in accountability.

Peace built on justice endures. Peace built on fear collapses.

Conclusion: Defining Victory

Victory for Ukraine means:

1. Restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity.
2. Military defeat of Russia's aggression.
3. International criminal accountability of Russia's leadership.
4. Payment of damages for genocide, war crimes, atrocities, and crimes against humanity.
5. Reparations and reconstruction for Ukraine and its allies.
6. Return of all Ukrainian children, prisoners of war, and civilians
7. Enforceable nuclear disarmament of Russia as an aggressor state.
8. Structural reform of European and global security, including limitations on Russia's military forces.
9. Russian compliance with previous international peace agreements signed but so far not respected by it.

This is not maximalism. It is realism in a nuclear world.

If a nuclear-armed state can invade, devastate, commit crimes, and emerge structurally unchanged, the international order becomes unsustainable.

If aggression leads instead to defeat, accountability, and disarmament, the 21st century may yet move toward greater stability.

Ukraine's victory is not merely a national objective. It is a test of whether law restrains power — or whether power overrules law.

History will not judge this moment by our words. It will judge it by our deeds and the structure of the peace that follows.

And that peace must ensure that aggression fails, justice prevails, and nuclear coercion never again becomes a shield for conquest.