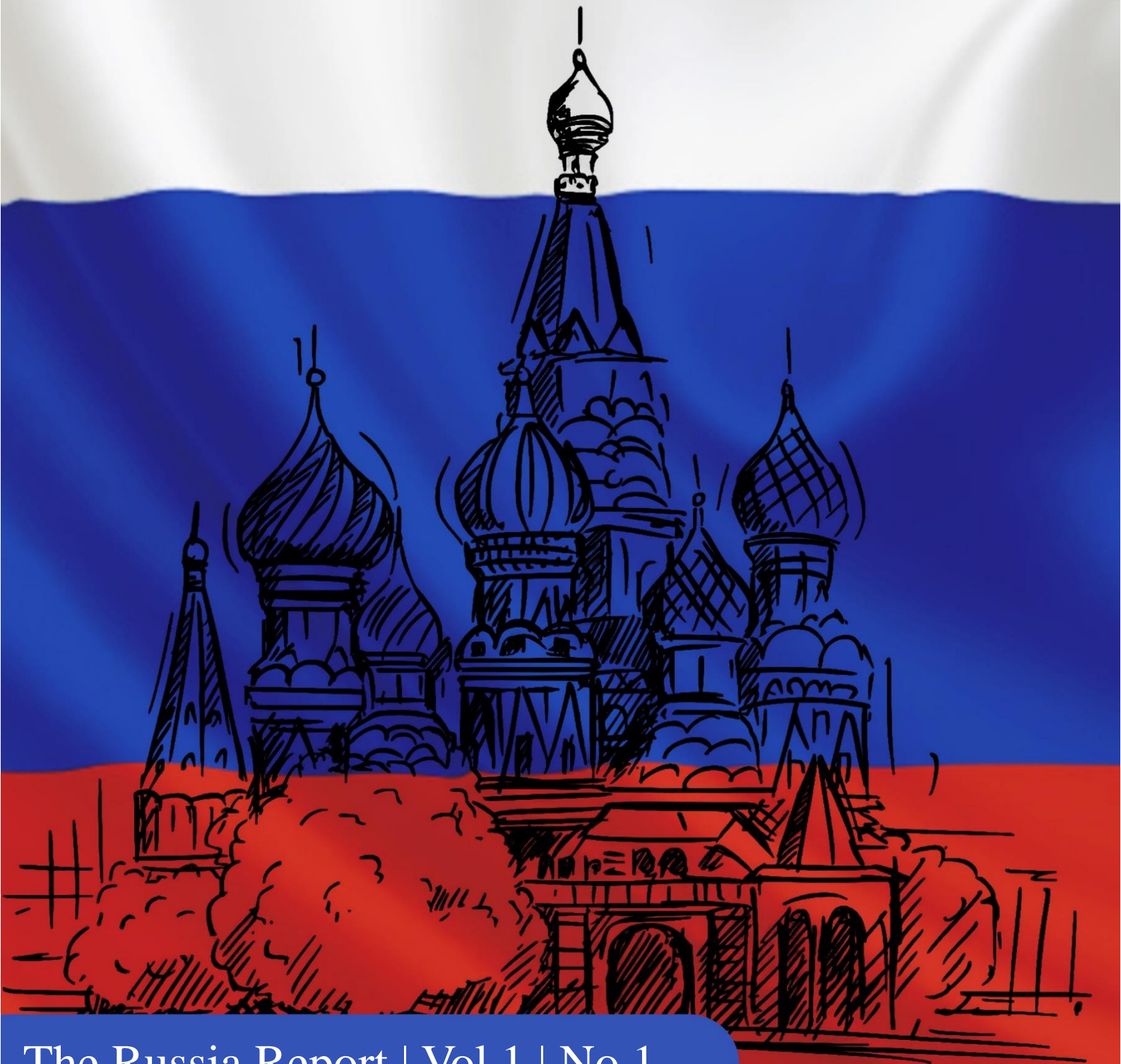


# CLAWS Newsletter



The Russia Report | Vol 1 | No 1

by Anusua Ganguly

## **From Moscow**

### **Top Investigator: Ukraine Has Attacked 34 Russian Regions Since February 2022**

[TASS](#), [TASS](#), 2 March 2025

Since February 2022, Ukraine has attacked more than 30 Russian regions outside the special military operation zone, according to Alexander Bastrykin, Chairman of Russia's Investigative Committee, in an interview with TASS. "Since the start of the special military operation, Ukraine has targeted the territories of 34 Russian regions, all of which are located outside the operational area," Bastrykin stated.

He also noted that Ukraine's armed forces have used a range of Western weapons, including tactical missile systems, multiple rocket launchers, artillery, and unmanned aerial vehicles, to carry out these attacks. Bastrykin also stated that more than 650 people, including 23 children, have been killed in Ukrainian attacks on Russia's borderline and rearmost regions, with nearly 3,000 injured.

### **Putin meets Rustam Minnikhanov**

[President of Russia](#), 3 March 2025

Vladimir Putin met with Head of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov. During this meeting, Minnikhanov highlighted Tatarstan's economic development progress, emphasising over-fulfilled targets in military operations, with significant financial support and humanitarian aid. Tatarstan leads in various industries, including agriculture and machine building, with notable growth in sectors like IT and energy. The republic is modernising production facilities to meet global standards, while infrastructure projects worth billions continue to improve roads, housing, and social services. Minnikhanov also reaffirmed Tatarstan's commitment to eco-friendly development.

### **"The Kiev Regime does not want peace": Peskov**

[TASS](#), 3 March 2025

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated at a briefing in response to a TASS inquiry that statements made by Vladimir Zelensky at the White House indicate that Kiev is not seeking peace and is unwilling to engage in negotiations. He emphasised that efforts by Russia and

the United States alone are insufficient for resolving the conflict. “The Kiev regime and Zelensky do not want peace. They want the war to continue. Therefore, Washington’s efforts and Moscow’s readiness alone will not be enough,” Peskov remarked. He further noted that the Kiev regime is refusing to resolve the conflict through negotiations.

Since President Donald Trump’s administration took office in January, the United States has shown interest in bringing an end to the Ukrainian conflict. Unlike the European Union and the previous administration under Joe Biden, Washington is no longer offering unlimited support to Kiev and has even initiated dialogue with Moscow.

### **Russian Foreign Ministry bans nine Japanese citizens**

[TASS](#), 3 March 2025; [NHK](#), 4 March 2025

In response to Japan's sanctions policy, Russia has imposed a ban on nine Japanese citizens, preventing them from entering its territory, including Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya. “As part of our response to Tokyo’s ongoing sanctions against our country related to the special military operation, a decision has been made to impose an indefinite entry ban on certain individuals,” the Russian Foreign Ministry stated.

The list of banned individuals also includes Japanese Ambassador to Ukraine Masashi Nakagome, former Ambassador Kuninori Matsuda, Senior Vice President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Shohei Hara, head of JICA’s Ukraine office Hideki Matsunaga, and top executives from IHI Corporation, Isuzu Motors Limited, Prodrone, and Cyberdyne.

### **Fifth Central Asian Conference of Valdai Discussion Club kicks off in Irkutsk**

[TASS](#), [Sputnik](#), 4 March 2025; [Valdai Club](#), 5 March 2025

The Fifth Central Asian Conference of the Valdai Discussion Club has officially started in Irkutsk, Siberia, on the theme “Russia and Central Asia: Cooperation in a Multipolar World.” The conference will be attended by over 50 experts and political figures from 10 countries, including Russia, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Organisers of the event have stated that the conference aims to enhance

intellectual discussions among the expert communities in Russia and Central Asia amid significant shifts in the global order.

### **Russia against stationing European Peacekeepers in Ukraine**

[TASS](#), 4 March 2025

Russia strongly opposes the deployment of European peacekeepers to Ukraine, according to Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's Permanent Representative to international organisations in Vienna. In a post on his Telegram channel, Ulyanov stated, "The idea of hypothetically stationing European peacekeepers in Ukraine is, to put it mildly, highly questionable for at least two reasons. First, the European Union is biased, while peacekeepers must remain impartial. Second, Russia categorically opposes this." He further criticised European officials for "putting the cart before the horse" when discussing the possibility of sending peacekeepers to Ukraine.

### **Russia welcomes Belarus' efforts in Ukrainian settlement**

[TASS](#), [TASS](#), 4 March 2025

Russia supports all efforts aimed at peacefully resolving the Ukrainian conflict, including those from Belarus, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated. In response to a question about Belarusian initiatives for settlement, Peskov emphasised, "All efforts for peaceful resolution are welcomed."

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko expressed his desire to assist in ending the conflict, highlighting the importance of achieving a ceasefire. Peskov added that Ukraine is regularly discussed during meetings between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Lukashenko, with the issue consistently on the agenda.

The Ukrainian conflict is a significant source of instability for Belarus, as Lukashenko mentioned that Western powers have pushed the Kiev regime to involve Belarus in the conflict. The government agencies in Kiev are also deploying Belarusian nationalist units in this conflict. Lukashenko also raised concerns about NATO's growing support for Ukraine, noting that the presence of NATO forces, including troops from Lithuania, Poland, and Germany, increases the threat to Belarus's western borders.



## **Putin meets Prime Minister of Myanmar Min Aung Hlaing**

[President of Russia](#), 4 March 2025

Vladimir Putin held talks with Min Aung Hlaing, to enhance their bilateral relations. Several key agreements were signed, including mutual recognition of education qualifications, customs cooperation and nuclear energy development. Memorandums of Understanding were also signed between ministries of health, sports, and technology, as well as in space exploration. Additionally, agreements on promoting investment protection and cooperation in geological exploration were finalised. These initiatives aim to foster stronger ties between Russia and Myanmar across multiple sectors.

## **Kremlin Responds to Macron's 'War' Speech: Moscow Calls for Apology**

[RT](#), [RT](#), 6 March 2025

In his address to the nation on 5 March, French President Macron described Russia as “a threat” to the EU and called for a significant boost in defense spending to counter the perceived danger from Moscow. He also stated that France would be ready to send troops to Ukraine if a truce were reached in the ongoing conflict.

Responding to these comments at a regular press briefing, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov emphasised that the message did not promote peace: “France apparently is contemplating war, a continuation of war.” He added that such remarks naturally provoke a negative response from Moscow. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told RT that Macron should apologise for making “misleading” statements about the origins of the Ukraine conflict, particularly criticising his claim that Russia was responsible for the collapse of the Minsk Accords.

## **Kremlin Expresses Serious Concern Over EU Militarisation**

[RT](#), 7 March 2025

The Kremlin has criticised the EU's plan to boost defense spending across the bloc, describing it as a step toward confrontation that obstructs peace efforts with Ukraine. During an emergency summit in Brussels on 6 March, EU leaders approved a proposal from

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to allocate €800 billion to “rearm Europe.”

“The European Union is actively discussing its militarization, specifically in the defense sector,” the Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated. The measures are “primarily aimed at Russia, which is, of course, a matter of deep concern,” he added.

### **Russia Defends Against Kyiv's Largest Drone Attack on Moscow Civilian Areas**

[RT](#), 11 March 2025

Moscow has witnessed its most significant wave of Ukrainian kamikaze drone strikes to date, on the night of 11 March, with Russian air defense systems successfully intercepting a substantial number of incoming unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as confirmed by officials.

In parallel, senior representatives from Ukraine and the United States were scheduled to convene in Saudi Arabia later in the day to explore potential avenues for peace negotiations, a process that U.S. President Donald Trump has strongly advocated for, urging both Kyiv and Moscow to engage in dialogue.

The Russian Ministry of Defense reported that 337 Ukrainian drones were neutralised overnight. Specifically, 126 drones were intercepted over the Kursk Region, which borders Ukraine and is heavily defended by Russian air defense systems, while 91 drones were downed over the Moscow Region, which encircles the Russian capital.

### **Nikolay Patrushev: Tensions in the Baltic Will Rise Due to Europe's Position**

[TASS](#), 13 March 2025

Nikolay Patrushev, Russia's presidential aide and Chairman of the Maritime Board, has warned of an increasing military threat to Russia from Europe and NATO in the Baltic region. “Judging by the outcomes of the recent European Union summit, which resolved to pursue large-scale militarization, military threats will only escalate. The current forecast for the Baltic area indicates a deliberate effort to stoke regional tensions by the naval forces of European alliance countries. There is a significant likelihood of intensified threats to Russian port infrastructure and freedom of navigation,” Patrushev stated in an interview with National Defense magazine.

## **Kremlin: No Benefit for Russia in US Ceasefire Proposal for Ukraine**

[Al Arabiya](#), 14 March 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin's senior foreign policy aide stated on Thursday that he had informed Washington that the 30-day ceasefire proposed by the United States to pause the war in Ukraine would merely provide Kyiv's forces with a much-needed break on the battlefield. Russia's advances along the front since mid-2024 and US President Donald Trump's attempt to strike a peace deal to end the three-year-old conflict in Ukraine have raised fears that Kyiv, which was backed by the West, could lose the war.

On 13 March, Trump's Middle East special envoy, Steve Witkoff, arrived in Moscow for talks. Russian officials also noted that US national security advisor Mike Waltz had shared details of the ceasefire proposal on Wednesday, with Russia indicating its readiness to engage in discussions. Yuri Ushakov, a former ambassador to Washington who speaks for Putin on major foreign policy issues, told Russian media that he had spoken to Waltz, to outline Russia's position on the ceasefire. "I stated our position that this is nothing other than a temporary respite for the Ukrainian military, nothing more," Ushakov said.

## **Putin Urges Ukrainian Soldiers in Russia's Kursk Region to Surrender**

[The Moscow Times](#), 14 March 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin called on Ukraine's troops in Russia's Kursk region to surrender, following a request from U.S. President Donald Trump for the Russian leader to spare the lives of "thousands of Ukrainian troops." "We have reviewed today's statement by U.S. President Trump...we emphasize that Ukrainian militants have committed numerous crimes against civilians in the incursion zone," Putin said in a televised address, adding that Russia's Prosecutor General's Office had classified these actions as terrorism. Putin further stated, "I want to emphasize that if they lay down their arms and surrender, their lives will be guaranteed, and they will be treated with dignity in accordance with international law and the laws of the Russian Federation."

"In this context, for President Trump's call to be effectively implemented, the Ukrainian military-political leadership must issue the appropriate order to their military units to lay down arms and surrender," he added.

## **Russia and the World**

### **Russia and China Emphasise Need for Diplomatic Resolution to Ukrainian Crisis**

[TASS](#), 1 March 2025

Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian Security Council Secretary Sergey Shoigu emphasised the importance of ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis, as reported by the Russian Security Council press service. They also highlighted the need for continued coordination on key international platforms, particularly within BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. With China holding the presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, special focus was given to addressing security concerns in the Central Asian region.

### **Russia and Türkiye to continue active dialogue**

[TASS](#), [TASS](#), 3 March 2025

Russia and Turkey continue to collaborate across various sectors, with ongoing and active communication between their leadership, according to Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov. “Relations between Moscow and Ankara are very diverse. They continue to evolve. An intensive dialogue is underway,” he said. Peskov noted that last week, there were discussions at the level of foreign ministers. Additionally, Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko made an official visit to Ankara.

At the BRICS summit in Kazan, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed his expectation for a visit from Russian President Vladimir Putin “in the near future,” to which Putin assured his counterpart that he would certainly visit.

### **Putin Agrees to Mediate Nuclear Talks between Trump and Iran**

[Bloomberg](#), 4 March 2025; [TASS](#), 4 March 2025

Russia has agreed to help the Trump administration in communicating with Iran on issues including the Islamic Republic’s nuclear program and its support for regional anti-US proxies, according to sources familiar with the matter. President Trump had conveyed this request directly to Vladimir Putin during a phone call in February, and senior US officials later discussed the issue with Russian counterparts in Saudi Arabia.



Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov also stated that, “Russia believes the US and Iran should resolve their differences through negotiations and Moscow is ready to assist in achieving this.” However, Peskov has confirmed no acceptance of the proposal to mediate talks.

### **Armenian Parliament Anticipates Visit of Top Russian Senator in June**

[TASS](#), 4 March 2025

Valentina Matviyenko, Speaker of Russia's Federation Council, is set to visit Yerevan on June 5-6, as announced by Armenian Parliament speaker Alen Simonyan. “I am expecting my colleague Valentina Matviyenko to visit Armenia on June 5-6. We agreed on these dates in advance,” Simonyan stated.

Simonyan also confirmed that the visit will be official and mentioned that he had already had three phone conversations with Matviyenko. Earlier, the Federation Council's press service had stated that Matviyenko’s official visit to Yerevan aims to “give a new impulse to Russian-Armenian interstate relations.”

### **Switzerland Extends List of Sanctions Against Russia**

[TASS](#), 4 March 2025

Switzerland has expanded its list of sanctions against Russia by adopting additional measures from the European Union's 16th sanctions package, effective from 10:00 p.m. local time on March 4 (00:00 a.m. Moscow time, 9:00 p.m. GMT). The new sanctions target 48 individuals and 35 entities, freezing their assets and banning the provision of funds and economic resources. These individuals are also prohibited from entering or transiting through Switzerland. Among those sanctioned are supporters of Russia's military sector.

Three banks are added to a transaction ban due to their use of Russia’s alternative to SWIFT (SPFS), while 13 Russian financial institutions will face restrictions on SWIFT transactions starting March 17. Additionally, 74 vessels from third countries, mainly tankers circumventing oil price caps or transporting military goods, will be banned from receiving various services. In the trade sector, 53 new entities are subject to stricter export control measures.

## **President Vladimir Putin Speaks with Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev**

[President of Russia](#), 6 March 2025

In a telephone conversation, both the leaders addressed several key issues related to strengthening bilateral ties, focusing on the progress of joint projects in trade, economy, and energy. They also reviewed the agreements made during President Putin's state visit to Kazakhstan in November 2024 and discussed steps for their implementation to further enhance cooperation between the two nations.

## **Trump Threatens Major Sanctions on Russia Over Ukraine Attacks**

[The Moscow Times](#), [RT](#), 7 March 2025

On 7 March, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he is considering imposing “large-scale” sanctions on Russia in response to its intensified attacks on Ukraine. Trump stated that he would implement banking sanctions, tariffs, and other measures until a ceasefire and peace agreement are achieved. He urged both Russia and Ukraine to negotiate immediately. His announcement came after Russia’s missile and drone attacks on Ukraine’s energy and gas infrastructure. The threat of fresh sanctions against Russia sent the Moscow Stock Exchange (MOEX) down more than 1%, closing at 3,176 as of 6 p.m. Moscow time

## **Lavrov: US Seeks Normal Ties with Russia, is Open to Talks**

[TASS](#), 12 March 2025

In an interview with US bloggers Mario Nawfal, Larry Johnson, and Andrew Napolitano, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov shared that during talks in Riyadh, the US delegation expressed that Washington seeks normal relations with Moscow and is open to serious negotiations. Lavrov explained, “During our meeting in Riyadh with US officials, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz, and Special Envoy for the Middle East Steve Witkoff, they emphasised that they want normal relations based on the national interest of the United States, as outlined during the Trump administration.” He added that the US acknowledged the importance of other countries’ national interests as well.

## **Maduro: Russia-Venezuela Relations enter a stage of maturity**

[TASS](#), [TASS](#), 14 March 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin has congratulated Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between their nations, highlighting their shared interest in further strengthening bilateral ties based on friendship and mutual understanding. Putin emphasised the long history connecting Moscow and Caracas, noting that “there are many bright pages” in their relationship.

Venezuelan President Maduro remarked that relations between the two countries have reached a mature stage. He emphasised that politically, they share a common strategic vision and recognise the possibility of an alternative world, underlining the importance of building their relationship on mutual respect.





## About the Author

Anusua Ganguly is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, where her study focuses on Russia and Central Asia. With a Master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building, Anusua also has a keen interest in non-traditional security threats, the role of media in conflict and the role of gender in conflict and peacebuilding efforts. Their research explores the complexities of global security dynamics and emphasises the importance of inclusive approaches in fostering lasting peace.



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