**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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 **1263. Mr M Hlengwa (IFP) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

In light of the fact that the Republic has, for the second time, on 24 March 2022, chosen to abstain when the United Nations called for a vote on the situation in Ukraine (details furnished), at what point, such as the number of civilian casualties reached and type of weapons used, will the Republic consider re-evaluating the impact of the call for dialogue, mediation and diplomacy, which after more than a month into the conflict, has had little or no impact in stemming the humanitarian crisis that the Republic claims to be very concerned about?NW1519E

**REPLY:**

South Africa is not indifferent to the unfolding situation in Ukraine. South Africa has expressed deep concern about the continuing conflict, the loss of lives and the deteriorating humanitarian situation and consequently urged for the cessation of hostilities.

South Africa remains steadfast in its view that dialogue, mediation and diplomacy is the only path to de-escalate and ultimately resolve the current conflict. In this regard, we reiterate our call for the Good Offices of the United Nations to mediate in pursuit of finding a sustainable solution and for us as member states to facilitate an enabling environment for dialogue.

In its engagement on the matter of Ukraine, South Africa has maintained that international law needs to be respected and adhered to by all countries equally and that no country should be able to violate international law with impunity.

South Africa has always opposed violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, in keeping with the UN Charter. We have also decried the humanitarian disaster that has resulted from the ongoing use of force in Ukraine, and called for the urgent opening of humanitarian corridors and the provision of aid to the civilian population which, as usual, bears the brunt of the suffering when violent confrontation breaks out.

South Africa has also maintained that as we focus on the conflict in Ukraine, there also needs to be consistency in the manner in which we approach the rule of law and respect for the UN Charter as we address situations of conflict across the globe. International law needs to be respected and adhered to by all countries equally.

We need to reflect that despite the slew of resolutions that condemn the Russian Federation in the global community and in the UN, the conflict has escalated. In our engagements with some of the supporters of these resolutions, we have indicated that while we have some of the same goals, such as an agreement to an immediate ceasefire, the opening of humanitarian corridors and mediated negotiations towards a lasting peace, we have different strategies. Perhaps, if the strategies proposed by South Africa and other non-aligned countries were followed, the conflict may have de-escalated.