

Honors Day Abstract

Since war broke out between Ukraine and Russia in February 2022, allegations that Russia has been committing war crimes have been mounting, along with proof that these allegations are true. From bombing hospitals to the atrocities in Bucha, it is clear that Russia needs to be held accountable for its crimes. States have taken matters into their own hands to punish Russia through the use of sanctions. This study examines the response of the Biden Administration to the growing cases of war crimes inflicted upon Ukraine by Russia. Through analyzing the ways in which the Biden Administration has reacted to the atrocities perpetrated by Russia, this study aims to understand if world leaders are intentionally using violations of international human rights law by Russia as a mechanism to generate political support for sanctioning Russia and aiding Ukraine. This study details two large sets of human rights violations, namely what happened in Mariupol and Bucha Ukraine in 2022, and how Russia breached international law in these cases. This study was conducted by closely examining the statements and press releases disclosed by the Biden Administration to note what reasons were given after sanctions were imposed on Russia or an aid package to Ukraine was rolled out. In analyzing the language and actions of the Biden Administration in 2022, it can be deduced that the Administration intentionally used Russia's breaches of international human rights law to garner political support to not only punish Russia but also to give aid packages to Ukraine.