

## **Abstract**

The goal of this work is to analyze the behavior of actors involved in the ceasefire set by the Minsk II protocols in the Donbas region of Ukraine. The study begins by explaining ceasefires from a theoretical perspective and are proven to be an integral form of state relations. Actors have options in ways to react to ceasefires, and act upon differing impulses when they are presented with a situation set by an existing ceasefire which is in effect. This decision-making process is highly convoluted, but because a ceasefire is often the difference between open conflict and a cessation of violence, it is crucial to understand each possible reaction, so as to give the parties involved the best chance at reducing violence. The Minsk II Protocols, signed on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, were designed to reduce violence and tensions in the Eastern Donbas region. The legitimacy of the ceasefire was acknowledged, and yet fighting continued after it took effectiveness. This study seeks to show that despite this seemingly incongruent behavior, the decision to violate the ceasefire was rational at the time of the violations themselves. Rationality is described, Sovereignty is defined, and the study attempts to prove that due to the economic situation that could be separatists were confronted with, it was highly unlikely they could maintain sovereignty under the economic conditions inherent to the territory they controlled. The study concludes with a section reviewing conclusions that can be made from the study, a discussion of the further development of the Ukrainian conflict, and possibilities for further academic research on the topic.