

Nadir Khan,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Ukraine (2023–25)

85 YEARS OF PAKISTAN: strengthening bilateral ties in challenging times

Pakistan and Ukraine are maintaining good diplomatic relations as two friendly countries. Pakistan recognised Ukraine immediately after its independence on 31 December 1991, and diplomatic relations were formally established in March 1992. In the following years, institutional mechanisms for engagement were put in place, including Bilateral Political Consultations and forums for economic and defence cooperation. Several agreements have been signed, while others remain pending due to prevailing challenges in both countries. Nonetheless, the bilateral relationship has remained resilient, and the continuation of defence cooperation during wartime underscores the strength and strategic depth of this partnership.

The senior political leadership of both countries engaged sparingly over the years; however, recent developments have marked a renewed momentum in bilateral engagement. Notably, the visit of Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba to Pakistan on 20 July 2023 and the participation of Pakistan's First Lady Samina Alvi in the Third Summit of First Ladies and Gentlemen in Ukraine on 23 September 2023 represented a significant step forward in political dialogue. Other interactions included exchange of defence delegations, including participation of the Ukrainian delegations in the 8th Pakistan Industrial Expo 2024 and the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS).

Pakistan has consistently upheld a principled policy of neutrality in the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict, emphasising dialogue and diplomacy as the only sustainable path to peace. In alignment with this stance, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has remained operational in Kyiv throughout the war, demonstrating resilience and a steadfast dedication to promoting mutual understanding, cooperation, and solidarity.



Зустріч із ректором Ніжинського державного університету імені Миколи Гоголя Олександром Самойленком
Meeting with Oleksandr Samoilenko, Rector of the Nizhyn Mykola Hohol State University

Among the various areas of cooperation, academic engagement has emerged as one of the key pillars of the bilateral relationship. At the onset of the war in February 2022, more than 2,100 Pakistani students were studying in Ukraine, with over 1,200 enrolled in universities across the country. The conflict forced many students to leave, though some remained to complete their studies under difficult circumstances. Pakistan's efforts to maintain its educational presence in Ukraine — and to support the student community — became a central focus of its diplomatic mission. Throughout the last three years, the Embassy has worked diligently to support students, reconnect with universities in key cities such as Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Uzhhorod, and maintain academic engagement despite the ongoing war.

In a significant development, the Embassy facilitated the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding: one between the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Pakistan, and the National Technical University of Ukraine 'Igor Sikorskyi Kyiv Polytechnic Institute'; and another between the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Pakistan, and Kyiv National Linguistic University. These agreements reflect the shared commitment of both nations to advancing educational excellence and international academic collaboration.

Although cultural activities were suspended at the outset of the conflict, the Embassy gradually resumed key Pakistani events. These included Pakistan's Independence Day, National Day, educational initiatives such as 'Tell Me About Pakistan' Day at the Islamic Cultural Center School, Iftar gatherings during Ramadan, and commemorations of the suffering in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Held in a scaled-down format, these events were attended by select members of the diplomatic corps, Ukrainian dignitaries, and members of the Pakistani community.

The highlight of the Embassy's diplomatic calendar was the celebration of Pakistan's 85th National Day. Traditionally held on 23 March, the reception was moved to 11 April 2025, out of respect for the holy month of Ramadan. It was also the first formal event hosted at the Ramada Encore Kyiv Hotel since the beginning of the war, which re-invigorated a venue that had remained unused during the conflict, symbolising a hopeful step forward.

The reception welcomed a distinguished gathering of Ukrainian and international guests, including the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr Yevhen Perebyinis, who graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Ambassadors, Chargés d'Affaires, Defence Attachés, senior Ukrainian officials, academia and civil society representatives, and selected members of the Pakistani diaspora were present. The evening began with a recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by the national anthems of Pakistan and Ukraine, which set the tone for a gathering rooted in friendship and shared values.

In his keynote address, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Ukraine H.E. Major General (Retired) Nadir Khan expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the guests, acknowledging their support despite the challenges posed by the war. Reflecting on Pakistan's National Day, he paid tribute to the founding fathers, especially Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and highlighted the struggle that led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947. The Ambassador also spoke of the nation's resilience in overcoming regional tensions, natural disasters, and economic hurdles, underlining that Pakistan's endurance was a testament to the unity and strength of its people.

Looking towards the future, Ambassador Khan outlined Pakistan's developmental vision under the URAAN Pakistan transformation plan, which aspires to position the country among the top 20 global economies. He emphasised the vital role of youth, innovation, and strategic partnerships in driving progress. The Ambassador reaffirmed Pakistan's principled support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, noting that Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic presence in Kyiv and humanitarian aid during Ukraine's hour of need stand as strong expressions of solidarity. He also highlighted opportunities for enhanced cooperation in trade, education, and post-war reconstruction, envisioning a durable and mutually beneficial partnership.

The chief guest, Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Yevhen Perebyinis, congratulated Pakistan on its 85th National Day and thanked the



Зустріч із президентом Торгово-промислової палати України Геннадієм Чижиковим

Meeting with President of the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hennadii Chyzhykov

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Ukraine, H.E. Major General (Retired) Nadir Khan, and the team at the Embassy for their contributions during these challenging times and for organising meaningful and inclusive events despite the war.

The Deputy Foreign Minister reflected on the long-standing relationship between Ukraine and Pakistan, which has remained strong since diplomatic ties were established in 1992. Mr Perebyinis also noted the cultural and historical connections between both nations. He highlighted the fascinating parallels between the ancient civilisations of Mohenjo-Daro in present-day Pakistan and

Trypillia in Ukraine, which flourished thousands of years ago.

Mr Perebyinis noted symbolic similarities in traditional crafts, particularly the embroidery patterns found in both Mohenjo-Daro and Trypillia. The intricate and geometric patterns of embroidery, often seen in the textiles of these regions, symbolise a shared cultural heritage. These motifs suggest a deep connection between the two ancient cultures, offering a visual link to a past where art and design played an essential role in daily life. Such shared cultural artefacts reinforce the idea that, despite their separation by centuries and geography, these two civilisations were part of a larger human story of creativity and connectivity.

Mr Perebyinis expressed sincere gratitude for Pakistan's humanitarian aid in 2022 and reiterated Ukraine's support for Pakistan, including its endorsement of Pakistan's successful candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the 2025–26 term. His remarks reflected a spirit of solidarity, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to peace and international cooperation.

As Pakistan celebrates 85 years of independence, its diplomatic relationship with Ukraine reflects a story of consistency, solidarity, and purposeful engagement. From Pakistan's early recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty in 1991 to the Embassy's continued presence

in Kyiv during wartime, the partnership has endured through challenging times. The commitment to educational collaboration, cultural exchange, and humanitarian support has reinforced the depth and resilience of this relationship.

Both nations share significant similarities and face similar challenges. Pakistan and Ukraine are both predominantly agricultural countries strategically located in regions of immense geopolitical importance. Both have navigated complex relationships with their eastern neighbours, grappling with issues related to illegally occupied territories. These territorial disputes, deeply rooted in history, continue to be unresolved, and this shared experience adds a layer of empathy to the partnership.

The recent celebration of Pakistan's National Day in Kyiv, attended by senior Ukrainian leadership and the diplomatic community, served as both a symbol of shared values and a reaffirmation of Pakistan's principled foreign policy rooted in peace and cooperation.

Looking ahead, there is significant scope for further cooperation between Pakistan and Ukraine. The continuity of defence cooperation and training on post-conflict management — drawing from Pakistan's extensive experience in counter-terrorism and post-conflict reconstruction during the Global War on Terror — presents an opportunity for mutual growth. This shared expertise can be a valuable asset as both countries aim to enhance their security frameworks and collaborate on rebuilding efforts in a post-conflict context. Furthermore, there is vast potential for collaboration in trade, innovation, higher education, and post-conflict reconstruction. The spirit of mutual respect and historical connection, highlighted through cultural parallels and shared aspirations, offers a strong foundation for future partnership.

In an increasingly complex global environment, the Pakistan-Ukraine relationship stands as a model of diplomatic perseverance and mutual benefit. With a shared vision for peace and development, both nations are well-positioned to deepen their ties and shape a more connected, stable, and forward-looking partnership in the years to come.