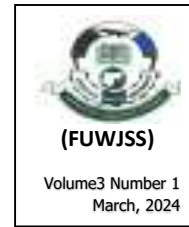


# **GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS OF RUSSIA- UKRAINE WAR AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN AFRICA**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the geopolitical dynamics in the Russia-Ukraine war and the impact of these on peace and political stability in the African continent. The paper argues that the peace, stability and prosperity of the African continent seem to be gravely threatened by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The paper relied on documentary methods to gather data and data were content analyzed. The theoretical framework for analyses in the paper is the Geopolitics Theory. Findings reveal that the expansionist tendencies of Russia portend attempts by Putin to recreate the Russian empire. Also, NATO and EU geopolitical ambitions have significantly contributed to the exacerbation of the conflict. The paper concludes that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine contributes to account for the escalating political unrest and instability in Africa through military coups. This is as sanctions imposed on Russia by Western countries have resulted to high inflation due to scarcity of fertilizer, decreased agricultural production, disruptions in the supply of wheat and other food commodities in the African continent. The paper recommends that African leaders should focus on good governance, securitization and reduce their reliance on food imports from external actors.

**Keywords:** Geopolitics, political stability, Russia-Ukraine war, territorial disputes

## **Introduction**

Historically, Russia has strong cultural, economic and political bonds with Ukraine, and in many ways Ukraine is central to Russia's identity

and vision for itself in the world. Russia and Ukraine have strong ancestral bonds that go back centuries. Kyiv, Ukraine's capital is sometimes referred to as "the mother of Russian cities," on par in terms of cultural influence with Moscow and St. Petersburg (Jonathan, 2022). Corroborating this argument, Bigg (2022) maintained that several Russians recognized Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital as the birthplace of their nation and mentioned the numerous cultural ties between the two countries. As a result, after the fall of the Soviet Union, a number of Russia's political elites saw the breakup with Ukraine as a mistake and a danger to their country's position as a global power. Many would consider it a serious setback to Russia's international standing if it lost control of Ukraine permanently and allowed it to enter the Western orbit (Jonathan, 2022). Ploky (2018, p.) made the good claim that in a speech given to commemorate the Russian invasion of Crimea in March 2014, Putin directly mentioned the Soviet collapse. Putin has never hidden his sadness and even resentment over the breakdown of the Soviet Union. "The Soviet Union disintegrated. Few people were aware of how really tragic those events and their repercussions would be because of how quickly things changed, said Putin in reference to the 1991 events. Russia did not realize it had been robbed but plundered until the Crimea ended up being a part of a different country (Ploky, 2018, p. 6; Ploky, 2018, p.6).

The goal of Putin's address was to dispel any remaining doubts regarding the hard times and the return of Russia, which was ready to make up for the injustice the fall of the USSR had caused it. Eight million ethnic Russians are estimated to reside in Ukraine, according to the 2001 census, and as a result, Moscow used its duty to defend these individuals as justification for its actions in the Crimea and the Donbas in 2014 (Jonathan, 2022). Onunaiju (2022), confirming this estimate, revealed that there are approximately 44 million people living in Ukraine, with between 15 and 17 million ethnic Russians residing in the Donbas region in the east and making up a sizeable minority in the western, central, and southern regions. The Black Sea Fleet's claim to the Crimean peninsula and the city of Sevastopol was the main source of conflict in this conflict. Russian government representatives have questioned Ukraine's control over Sevastopol and the Crimea (Kuzio and D'Amieri, 2018). Political leaders in Russia made it apparent that they had even less faith in Crimea breaking away from Russia than in the rest of Ukraine. Thus, President Yeltsin declared that "The Black Sea Fleet was, is, and will be Russia's" in January 1992 after signing the agreement that ended the Soviet Union. Nobody will be able to take it away from Russia—not even Kravchuk (Rettie and Meek, 1992).

According to Kuzio and D'Amieri (2018), the problem was not with the fleet but rather with the region in which Crimea was located.

Consequently, in line with Yeltsin's stance, the Russian Congress of People's Deputies voted a resolution contesting the 1954 agreement granting Ukraine sovereignty over Crimea in January 1992. Russia wants to rule the Crimea in order to have control over a significant naval base in Sevastopol. However, until May 1997, Ukraine maintained firm authority over the Crimea peninsula, and Russia refused to publicly acknowledge Ukraine's sovereignty (Stewart, 1997). By ratifying the Russian-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty in that year, Russia acknowledged Ukraine's independence. All of these incidents occurred before there was any serious consideration of NATO enlargement (Kuzio and D'Amieri, 2018). This treaty was viewed as resolving many outstanding concerns and providing the two governments' relations with a strong legal foundation. The pact was supposed to end that dispute, but that wasn't the case.

According to Moscow, the reestablishment of Russia as a major state and the reconstruction of a sphere of influence inside the former Soviet space both require Ukraine (Plokhly, 2018). Russia's relations with Ukraine and the West underwent a sea change after the Orange Revolution. Geopolitics has its beginnings at that time. The Orange Revolution was one of several colored uprisings that served as a cover for actual authoritarian ruler regime changes in post-communist nations. According to Shvangiradze (2022), who evaluated Russian foreign policy under the Putin administration, the goal of the policy is primarily to exert control over post-Soviet countries and thwart NATO's expansion into East Europe. Putin's determination to restore the Russian Empire is demonstrated by the conflict with Georgia, the acquisition of Crimea in 2014, the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the annexation of Ukrainian territory in 2022.

NATO top brass gathered in Bucharest in April 2008. The issue of whether to continue Membership Action Plans (MAPs), which would have allowed Georgia and Ukraine to join, was on the agenda. Russia was against this move, but the US and the West supported it. Russian officials' top priority changed to preventing Ukraine from joining NATO and, ideally, regaining the nation for the Eurasian integration project, whose key component is the reunion of what Moscow views as the "Russian world" (Trenin, 2014). In 2014, the Russian government announced the "New Russia" initiative, with the main objective of dividing Ukraine and establishing a Russian-controlled state in the south and east of the nation. According to Plokhly (2023), the major justification for Putin's invasion of Ukraine is based on the two countries' shared historical ties and is an aggression against NATO's growth strategy.

Putin's successful incursions into Ukraine in 2014 and 2022 are thus simply outward signs of his aspirations to restore the Soviet Union. Plokhly (2023) went on to say that Russia is using the history of the imperial era to justify the annexation of Ukrainian territory and the creation of the Novorussia fictitious state known as the "New Russia".

Russia is now susceptible to more than 9,000 distinct targeted sanctions from NATO and its allies, making it the most sanctioned nation in the world, claims Hatab (2022). By imposing massive countersanctions on the US, EU members, and NATO allies, Russia has retaliated and forced an end to the black sea grain agreement. Export restrictions, especially ones on agricultural commodities, are part of these counter-sanctions. On the import side, the disruption to global food trade brought on by these sanctions and countersanctions is expected to result in major shortages in the food supply in African markets, spur further price increases, and jeopardize consumer security in terms of their access to food and nutrition. Most Ukrainian ports, which were once utilized to distribute more than two thirds of the country's food and grain exports, have been closed as a result of the war, and many areas of the Black Sea are now dangerous or impassable. This has resulted in higher ocean shipping costs for food commodities and higher expenses for alternate forms of transportation through rail and air (Hatab, 2022).

As we turn our attention to the continent of Africa, we discover that in the connected world of today, bullets fired in one region of the world have an impact on other, seemingly remote areas. African nations located thousands of kilometers distant from the conflict in the far-off continent are still dealing with its effects one year after Russia invaded Ukraine. The conflict's actual and palpable impact on the lives of many ordinary Africans is equally distressing, despite the fact that there is much that can be said about the political and policy complexities surrounding it (Yohannes-Kassahun, 2023).

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, African states seem to be in a precarious position that could have an impact on food security and lead to a rise in oil prices, placing African people under financial strain. Large rich farmlands can be found in the Black Sea region, and a war in the "breadbasket of the world" could jeopardize supply of wheat and fertilizer. Increased social unrest and economic hardship, particularly in light of the recent wave of military coups, do not augur well for democratic administration in Africa (Aidi, 2022). Hatab (2022) argues that the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict could not only jeopardize food security but also exacerbate violence and weaken African political and governmental structures. Due to the intrinsic environmental, social, and institutional aspects of the agricultural and food sectors, Africa's food systems are

particularly vulnerable to the impact of external factors, including geopolitical violence (Hatab, 2022).

Increased social unrest and economic suffering, particularly in light of the recent wave of military coups, do not augur well for democratic administration in Africa. Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Niger, and Gabon have all had military coups in the past two years. Economic fallout from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as well as Russia's strong anti-liberal diplomacy may make the democratic recession worse (Aidi, 2022). Therefore, this paper examined the study examined the geopolitical dynamics in the Russia-Ukraine war and the implications for peace and political stability in the African continent

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on Geopolitics theory propounded by Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922). He invented the term geopolitics and made an elaborate and power theory upon which he intended to build a new field of International Relations. The term geopolitics is an intellectual conception, which derived its root from the combination of academic fields of Geography and Political Science. In other words, it is an academic marriage between geography and politics. Chanman (1943) reported that the inventor of the concept of geopolitics, Kjellen, defined it as the theory of the state as a geographical organism or phenomenon in space. According to Chanman (1943), geopolitics theory is used in the analysis of the geographic influences on power relationships in international relations. It aimed at explaining the effects of a country's position in her relations with other states of the world, taking into cognizance factors such as demography (population), natural resources, topography etc on its politics at the international arena. Moreover, Goodall (1987) defines geopolitics as the study of the effects of political actions on human geography, involving the spatial analysis of human phenomena. In other words, geopolitics is very important in understanding relationship among states. Geopolitics theory focuses on the study of states, their groupings and global relations and their morphological characteristics (Dappa, et al., 2021).

The theory is used to describe, explain and provide particular ways of seeing how territorial powers are formed and experienced (Kearn, 2003). Thus, the theory argues that there is a correlation between geography and historical events involving political processes in relations to states' resources that directly or indirectly influence their intercourse with others. The theory assumes that geographical settings and political processes are dynamic, and they influence each other. The theory emphasizes the relationship between politics and power on the one hand; and territory, location and environment on the other (Dappa, et al., 2021).

The justification for the use of the geopolitics theory in this study center on the fact that Russia is openly challenging the U.S.-dominated order having seen its own vital security interests challenged by U.S.-friendly forces in Ukraine. Moscow will not back off on issues of principle and Washington cannot be expected to recognize Russia's sphere of influence in Ukraine and elsewhere in Eurasia. The United States will also refuse to treat Russia as an equal (Trenin, 2014). The Russia/Ukraine crisis has ushered in a period of U.S.-Russian rivalry, even confrontation, reminiscent of the nineteenth-century Great Game, a fight for supremacy between the Russian and British Empires. The competition is asymmetrical and highly unequal. This conflict is being waged mainly in the political, economic, and information spheres, but it has military overtones as well. It differs from the Cold War in that human contact, trade, and information flows are not completely shut off, and there is a modicum of cooperation. Russia is focused on post-Soviet integration in Eurasia, while the United States has initiated a series of measures to restore a "holding line" against Russia in Europe (Trenin, 2014). Therefore, the recurring incidence of conflict between Russia and Ukraine is caused by politics and power on the one hand; and territory, location and environment on the other. Moscow has already changed Russia's borders by adding parts of neighboring Ukraine territories after holding successful referendums in 2014 for Crimea, and in 2022 for other regions like Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporzhzhia to the Russian Federation.

### **Research Methodology**

This study used documentary method to collect data. According to Aniche and Ofodum (2018, p.45), the "documentary method is an instrument for gathering in-depth information. Okpoko and Ezech (2020, p.79) defined documentary research as one in which one gets data from written sources of information. The documentary method relies on secondary sources of data; it involves the extraction of information or data from already existing works, and therefore, not generated in direct response to an investigator's stimulus. Secondary sources include journals, books, newspapers, magazines, drawings, maps, tracts, written agreements, letters, internet materials, and others.

### **Intrigues of Geopolitics and Political Stability**

The concept of geopolitics is the intersection of geography, politics, and international relations. It examines how geographic elements, such as a country or region's location, size, resources, and physical characteristics, affect their interactions with other nations and regions on the world stage. Control and ownership of land, borders, and territory are frequently

essential concepts in geopolitics. Flint (2022) defined geopolitics as the struggle over the control of geographical entities with an international and global dimension, and the use of such geographical entities for political advantage. Conflicts and diplomatic tensions can result from disagreements over territorial boundaries and access to key areas. Geopolitics heavily depends on the allocation of natural resources including oil, minerals, water, and arable land. A nation's economic and political power can be impacted by having access to and control over certain resources. The strategic placement of nations and areas, particularly their closeness to important commerce routes, military installations, and prospective friends or enemies, is examined through geopolitical analysis. This positioning may have an impact on a country's security and foreign policy choices.

Geopolitical thinking has much to contribute to our understanding of international relations (Scholvin, 2016). Geopolitics was initially understood as the realm of inter-state conflict, with the quiet assumption that the only states being discussed were the powerful Western countries. Geopolitics takes into account a country's interests, which might include ideological, security, and economic objectives. Understanding these interests clarifies a nation's affiliations and foreign policy decisions. Geopolitical discourses are frequently dominated by major world powers including the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union (Scholvin, 2016).. These strong actors have the potential to significantly alter the international system through their actions and policies. Conflicts and tensions between countries are intimately related to geopolitics. Trade wars, diplomatic disputes, and even armed battles can result from disagreements over control of land, resources, and influence. Due to the increased interconnection of countries and economies, globalization has given geopolitics a new dimension. Nowadays, geopolitical research frequently takes into account how globalization affects state sovereignty and the distribution of power.

The concept of political stability is highly relevant within the remit of political science. The main reason is that it can serve to evaluate given political phenomena, while having at the same time a significant predictive power (Perlikowski, 2021). Political stability is the state of being able to preserve one's self and one's institutions without facing major internal or external upheavals. It is a vital component of government because it affects how well a nation can run, keep the peace, and achieve its economic, social, and foreign policy objectives. Political stability frequently depends on the caliber of government and leadership. Stability can be aided by strong leadership, open decision-making procedures, and respect for the law. On the other hand, instability can be damaged by corruption, nepotism, and poor leadership. Political stability requires robust institutions, including a

working judicial system, police force, and civil service. Instability may result when these institutions are frail or compromised. Political stability is significantly influenced by economic considerations. Economic disparity, high unemployment, and inflation can all contribute to social dissatisfaction and political upheaval. Effective economic management by governments increases the likelihood of stability.

According to Radu (2015), the dimension of political instability affects the level of economic growth in a country and across the continent. Political stability is significantly influenced by a nation's level of social cohesion. Instability can result from entrenched social differences, racial or religious tensions, or unresolved disputes. Stability can be improved by policies that support diversity and social cohesiveness. External forces may also have an impact on political stability. A nation's stability may be impacted by international conflicts, foreign interventions, and economic dependence on other nations. Additionally, regional stability may have a ripple effect. Political stability can be supported or threatened by the degree of public participation in politics. People are less prone to use violence or protest when they believe that their concerns are being heard through legal routes.

The stability of a political system can be affected by its nature. While democracies frequently have processes for peaceful changes in power, authoritarian governments may use force to repress opposition, which could eventually cause instability. Political stability can be influenced by historical occurrences including wars, uprisings, and colonial legacies. Analyzing a nation's current political position requires knowledge of its historical background. Political stability may be impacted by the media's and communication's role in forming public opinion and spreading information. Governments that exert influence over or manipulate the media may make the situation more unstable by restricting information flow. Politically fragile governments can be stabilized with the help or intervention of international entities, such as through foreign aid, diplomatic negotiations, and peacekeeping initiatives. Political instability can be defined as the tendency of government collapse that could happen because of civil conflicts or competition between political parties (Hussain, 2014). The high number of different types of conflicts reveals the image of political instability in Africa. Another way of illustrating the political stability of Africa is through coups d'etat -undemocratic regime changes. Currently, the number of military coups d'etat in the African continent has been on the increase since the last two years (Milasaite, A. and Micic, 2020). Additionally, Africa has been struggling with increasing numbers of unfair elections (Bakken & Rustad, 2018).

Geopolitics and political stability in Africa are intricately linked, with many different factors affecting the political climate of the continent.



Africa's diversified topography, resource riches, historical legacies, and the interests of outside actors all influence geopolitical issues. Natural resources abundant in Africa include oil, minerals, and arable land. Controlling and using these resources has frequently been a source of geopolitical rivalry, both within the continent and between foreign powers. International competition to secure Africa's critical and strategic minerals and energy products intensified in 2022 and, in the energy sector, European countries are seeking to diversify away from Russian oil and gas with alternative supplies, such as those from Africa (Alex, 2023). Conflicts fueled by resources might jeopardize the political stability of the afflicted nations. Territorial disputes and border clashes have occurred in many African nations, frequently as a result of colonial-era borders. Conflicts over these issues may result in tensions, military encounters, and political instability. There have been protracted hostilities and civil wars in a number of African nations.

Geopolitical competition in Africa has intensified in 2022, particularly among great powers such as China, Russia, the US, and the EU but also by middle powers such as Turkey, Japan, and the Gulf states (Alex, 2023). Political instability has occasionally been made worse by geopolitical interests and outside interventions that have prolonged or sparked new conflicts. Several African nations have seen the effects of geopolitical challenges, such as terrorism and the spread of extreme ideas. These dangers frequently necessitate serious security precautions, which can take resources away from other development goals. The political dynamics of African nations can be affected by external interventions, whether they are made for humanitarian goals, counterterrorism initiatives, or resource interests. Such interventions can have a wide range of effects on political stability. There are several ethnic and religious groupings in Africa. Instability can be made worse by geopolitical manipulation of these differences or rivalry for power inside ethnically or religiously split nations.

### **Interrogating the Geopolitical Dynamics of Russia-Ukraine War**

We are going to begin this section with this important question of why the war happened or how did things degenerate to this level in the Russia-Ukraine conflict? It is in the nature of man to flex his muscle, dominate and extend territorial boundaries. Ikhioya (2022) argued that it is in the nature of man to adjust, to maneuver in order to avoid traps set by enemy's interests. The strong man will try to dominate with brute strength while the weaker one will rely on his guile to survive. Also, Ikhioya (2022) alleged that the decision of Ukraine's leaders to allow themselves to be incited by the United State and its allies into an open confrontation with Russia implies that they have been sacrificed as pawns by the super powers.

Ikhioya went further to explain that in 1962, we came to a brink of nuclear war when the default Soviet Union placed missiles in Cuba 90 miles away from USA territory. The USA claimed it is unacceptable for a hostile country to have a significant military presence 90 miles away to their territory. With this policy in place one is forced to ask this pertinent question: what are USA and NATO partners doing in Ukraine? Ukraine is a border country of Russia with significant Russian population living there. The meddling of US and NATO partners is one of the fundamental reasons Russia is using to attack Ukraine. The European Union and NATO have long been approached by Ukraine, which has been vying for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Russia, on the other hand, has vehemently opposed this view, claiming that Ukraine's admission would inevitably result in the expansion of NATO to its borders. Russia has also emphasized that she cannot permit the presence of several European countries with military might on her doorstep (Omiunu et al., 2022). Will Russia be willing to permit Ukraine to exercise all of her rights as an independent state? is another crucial topic we need to think about.

The entire philosophy of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, appears to be founded on the dreams of a bigger Russia and a return to the previous power and geographical domination of the USSR (Babalola, 2022). It is impossible for any one player to decide because his decision will primarily depend on the decision or decisions of the other players. After the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, Omiunu et al. (2022) said that Russia's objectives and strategies for Ukraine were to maintain its influence over Ukraine. On the other side, Ukraine prefers to continue its economic partnership with Russia over political subordination to Russia. Russia has continued to hold the view that losing Ukraine to the US and its NATO allies would be detrimental to its national and security interests. In other words, it appears that Ukrainian independence is incompatible with Russian geopolitical development as a means of undoing some of the effects of 1991.

Scholars see the conflict as part of a broader geopolitical competition between Russia and the West. This perspective focuses on relations between the West and its institutions (NATO and the EU) on the one hand and Russia on the other, and tends to reduce Ukraine's role to that of a battleground in a competition between Russia and the West. This seems to be the fundamental cause of the conflict. For Charap and Colton, the driving force for the conflict was the collision between eastward-moving Western institutions and Russia's defence of its traditional sphere of influence. It was the contestation over the lands between Russia and the West that led to the invasion, attack and explosion in Ukraine and sent tensions spiraling out of control across the globe. According to this view, the extension of

'geopolitical', 'geoeconomic' and 'geoideational' tends to be the immediate cause of the conflicts.

Kuzio and D'Anieri (2018), on the other hand, asserted that states live in an unstable world and advised that the wise ones will always seek to expand their power. They didn't think that US actions and NATO expansion in any way contributed to Russia's increased aggression because, according to realist theory, nations are constantly looking for methods to increase their power. Realists would therefore anticipate Russia to seize the possibilities presented to it, regardless of how upset or betrayed by the West its leaders may feel. According to realism, state behavior is driven by interests rather than emotions. According to the theory, when a country like Ukraine takes efforts to increase its security by joining NATO, it appears to compromise the security of its neighbor, prompting a response from Russia. Realists believe that this is an unchangeable aspect of the system that it would be foolish to attempt to change. States that choose not to pursue power will probably find themselves in peril.

Ukraine became less of a bridge and more of a battleground as a result of the deteriorating relations between Russia and the West. The takeover of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, served as the catalyst for the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Russia successfully conducted a referendum to annex four areas of Ukraine on September 23, 2022. These areas are Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. After the annexation, Russian President Vladimir Putin responded by claiming that Russia was responsible for the development of modern-day Ukraine. He went further to make claims that:

I cannot help but recall how the Soviet Union was formed when Russia created modern-day Ukraine. It was Russia that created modern Ukraine by transferring there significant territories, historical territories of Russia itself together with the population.

From the foregoing, the Secretary General of NATO Stoltenberg mentioned that "if Russia stops fighting, there will be no war. If Ukraine stops fighting, there will be no Ukraine. Every democratic country has the right to apply to NATO, but the decision will be taken by consensus by all alliance members". The conflict in Ukraine appears now to be a conflict of pride and prestige and no one involved either directly or indirectly (the West) would like to lose.

### **Impacts of Russia-Ukraine War on Political Stability in Africa**

Ukraine appears to be the child of circumstance that has fallen victim to the war of pride and prestige between the superpowers. The

Russia/Ukraine war is not only destructive for world peace but normatively terrible. This is why Charap and Colton's book captured "Everyone Loses". The world system is interdependence, interconnected and inter-related and as such what happens in one country can possible result to advance effects in another country. For Edward Cornish (1995), decisions made today will affect life for the next 30 to 40 years (in Sobowale, 2022). Thus, this conflict has wrought a number of implications on political stability in Africa.

The geopolitical and geoeconomic fallout from the conflict in Ukraine has had an immediate effect on the African continent by affecting the price of food and cooking oil and the distribution of humanitarian supplies (Alex, 2023). The Ukrainian conflict has erupted at a time when African nations are still attempting to recover from the destabilizing effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in severe economic decline, significant productivity losses, deteriorating inequalities, planetary pressures, and in some cases security issues. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of Agenda 2063 of the African Union are at risk of being derailed, further putting them out of reach.

In 2020, African countries imported USD 4 billion worth of agricultural products from Russia, 90% of which was wheat. Russia and Ukraine account for 30% of global wheat production and 80% of sunflower oil. African countries are particularly vulnerable due to their heavy reliance on imports from Russia and Ukraine (UNDP, 2022). Egypt is the world's largest importer of wheat, with 80% of its wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine. It also spends USD 955 million on wheat subsidies. Other countries that import significant amounts of wheat from Russia include Benin, Cabo Verde, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali, and Liberia (UNDP, 2022).

According to Hatab (2022), Africa's significant reliance on global food markets and the high proportion of household spending on food (e.g., 45% in Egypt and 54% in Nigeria) suggest that rising food prices globally and shortages of food supplies will cause an increase in domestic food prices. The first quarter of 2022 saw the FAO food price index at 200%, which will significantly lower the purchasing power of low-income households. Through inflationary expectations and employees' requests for greater salaries, food price inflation in Africa typically has long-term repercussions on overall inflation.

Evidence reveals that disruptions to food supply chains and increases in domestic food prices are seriously harming the social and economic health of vulnerable population groups, escalating the danger of food insecurity already present, and may even lead to dramatic "food riots" (Hatab, 2022). Food riots like these could lead to social and political turmoil

in several African nations. As a result, the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict could not only jeopardize food security but also escalate violence and weaken African political and governmental structures. This situation shouldn't be taken lightly: in 2014, eight years ago, violent conflict was to blame for the spike in food insecurity experienced by Sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, the "Arab Spring" in North Africa a decade ago was sparked by the increase of food prices (Hatab, 2022).

In the short term, rising food and energy prices could trigger violent protests if governments don't take action to protect the populace from their effects. Conflict is fed if we do not feed people. For instance, on March 14, 2022, protests against rising food and fuel costs were held in Sudan. A clear reminder of the issues at hand is the Arab Spring. Between 2010 and 2012, protests sparked by rises in food and fuel prices resulted in violent socio-political upheavals throughout North Africa (UNDP, 2022). If pricing dynamics and their effects are not addressed, the fragility of some African states may cause destabilizing fears. Trade disruption, increases in food and fuel prices, financial instability, and security issues are only a few of the immediate effects of the crisis in Africa. The issue seems to portend a return to the Cold War, which might thwart African democracy efforts and exacerbate political unrest. The adoption of economic ideas and policies that are not pro-poor, environmentally friendly, and egalitarian could also slow down economic progress as a result of a global geopolitical realignment. Indirectly, economic stress could trigger violent protests and unconstitutional transfers of political power. Russia's Wagner group already has a strong presence in Africa, and has been implicated in supporting the overthrow of Western-friendly governments. Soon after the coup, a small group of Nigeriens gathered in the capital Niamey, waving flags and chanting "long live Putin" and "down with France".

The French Embassy was one of the first structures that the demonstrators carrying the Russian flag in Niger attacked. Second, the Nigerian people and military government have chosen to rely on the Russian Wagner group for protection despite the presence of French forces in Niger, including members of the French Foreign Legion (Gadu, 2023). According to Aidi (2022), the recent wave of military coups in African politics has affected Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Niger, and Gabon. The economic fallout from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and Russia's strong anti-liberal diplomacy may worsen the democratic recession.

Long-term effects of the conflict could lead to the development of uncontrolled secondary markets across Africa for the resale of small arms, which would provide terrorists and separatist movements with significant sources of arms and weapons. Increased demand for oil and gas production

in vulnerable regions or nations could compromise peace and security through the recurrence of militarized local protests, such as those in the Niger Delta. As prices and demand rise, border confrontations over gas reserves, such as those between Kenya and Somalia, Kenya and Uganda, and Nigeria and Cameroon, might also flare up again (UNDP, 2022). Reduced agricultural production in Africa due to higher fertilizer prices globally would increase pressure on the food supply. The cost of fertilizers has increased by 21% as a result of the war. With 24% of global ammonia exports and 40% of global ammonium nitrate exports, Russia is a significant supplier of the materials used to make fertilizers. As a result, several African countries are finding it difficult to acquire the supplies of fertilizers due to the rising price of fertilizers. Since the commencement of the conflict in Ukraine, imports have fallen far short of the two years before. The agricultural yields this year will be far below average.

A significant concern to Africa's food security was the disruption of the supply chain for primary agricultural inputs, especially imports of fertilizer from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. The World Food Programme (WFP) revealed that since May 2020, fertilizer prices had increased by 199% globally, with prices in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania expected to more than double by 2022. In 2023 and beyond, according to Yohannes-Kassahun (2023), the continued disruption of fertilizer supplies from major African suppliers, especially Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, will have an influence on Africa's food production and exacerbate food security.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), sanctions imposed on Russia will have a substantial impact on the global economy and financial markets as well as spillovers to other African continent (Nweze, 2022). The IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva disclosed that:

In many countries the crisis is creating an adverse shock to both inflation and activity, amid already elevated price pressures. The sanctions announced against the Central Bank of the Russia Federation will severely restrict its access to international reserves to support its currency and financial system. The sanctions Russia's banking system and exclusion of a number of banks from SWIFT have significantly disrupted Russia's ability to receive payments for exports, pay for imports and engage in cross-border financial transactions ((Nweze, 2022).

The economy consequences tend to be very serious as energy and commodity prices including wheat and other grains have surged. Europe is facing energy shortage because of the sanctions imposed on Russia's

energy supply. Indeed, everyone is a loser in this war between Russia and Ukraine. This war will likely not solve any problem rather it will create new ones. There seems to be high cost of living across Africa as food insecurity continues to increase as long as the war prolong. The Russia/Ukraine conflict by implication has added 70 million hungry people to the world population going through starvation according to United Nations Report (2022). The overall effect of this war is that leads to increased global inflation and rising living costs across many nations.

### **International Responses to the Russia-Ukraine War**

Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war. This war began in 2014 in which the invasion resulted in thousands of deaths on both sides and caused Europe's largest refugee crisis since the World War II. The invasion has attracted widespread international condemnation leading to new sanctions being imposed on Russia, thereby triggering a Russian financial crisis (Anna, 2022). Reactions among governments worldwide have generally been negative, with criticism and condemnation made by many leading nations such as the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Spain, Australia and others. International organizations such as the United Nations, European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have also voiced significant criticism of the invasion over not having justifiable precedent. From the early phases of the invasion, the UN General Assembly voted to condemn Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. According to the European Council (2022), "the EU has adopted a number of sanctions in response to Russia's unprecedented and malicious military attack on Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions. The measures are designed to weaken Russia's economic base, depriving it of critical technologies and markets, and significantly curtailing its ability to wage war".

On 2 March 2022, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) convened in a special session and adopted resolutions, with a broad majority (141 votes in favour, to 5 against, with 35 abstentions and 12 absentees). This resolution reaffirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine (Parry & Zamfir, 2022). Parry and Zamfir, (2022) mentioned that several countries have since then coordinated their restrictive measures against Russia.

In four rounds of sanctions, adopted on 23 February after Russia's recognition of the two so-called 'People's Republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk, and on 25 February, 28 February and 2 March after the start of the war, the EU

imposed restrictions on individuals, including Vladimir Putin and senior Russian ministers; on financial transactions with all state-controlled banks; and on trade with the energy and aviation sectors, among others. Russian aeroplanes are banned from EU airspace and EU airports. US sanctions imposed from 21 February to 3 March include restrictions on Russian state banks; full blocking sanctions on numerous Russian financial institutions and businesses, including the parent company of Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project and senior Russian and Belarussian political and business figures; and export controls on US technology (Parry & Zamfir, 2022).

Additionally, the US, EU nations, and others resolved to exclude a number of Russian institutions from the SWIFT financial transactions service. A number of nations have issued further sanctions on top of already-existing ones in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and subsequent activities (Justin-Damien et al., 2022). A comprehensive embargo on Russian oil and gas imports has been agreed by the US and the EU. Additionally, the annexation of Ukraine's four regions was fiercely denounced by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. The annexation of a state territory by another by the use of force or threats is unacceptable and in violation of the UN Charter, and it also lacks legal standing under international law, according to Antonio Guterres.

Following the 2022 Russia invasion of Ukraine, China's position has been described as ambiguous, refraining from endorsing Russia invasion and does not acknowledge its own assistance to Russia. Scholars like Austin (2022) and Snetkov (2022) have questioned China alleged neutrality. China tends to deliberately refused to condemn neither the invasion nor the annexation of Ukraine territories by Russia. Also, China refusal to impose large scale economic sanction on Russia or provide direct assistance to Russia portrays that indeed, China is pursuing a policy of neutrality. Beside this, China has abstained in UN votes on the war in Ukraine rather suggested for the use of dialogue and negotiation for peaceful resolution.

Many nations in the Middle East such as Turkey, Israel, Qatar, Syria, Yemen, Iran, United Arab Emirates, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Tunisia, Kuwait, Algeria, Bahrain, and Palestinian are keen on balancing their relationships with the United States and Russia (Dene, et al., 2022). They seem to avoid being caught in the middle as the Ukraine conflict unfolds. Thus, Iran and Syria have alleged that NATO enlargement is a serious threat to the stability of Independence



countries in different regions and as such claimed that repelling NATO expansion is Russia's right. Moreover, the Middle East nations have appealed to both parties in the conflict to reconsider de-escalation of the conflict through dialogue, diplomacy, peaceful resolution and negotiation (Dene, et al., 2022). The conflict has already affected several sectors critical to their economics, from oil and gas to agricultural imports and tourism.

For Africa, the Russia/Ukraine seems to be getting muted response from the continent. Some Africa countries have hesitated in speaking out against Russia/Ukraine crisis because they want to keep their options open if they face existential threats in the future. According to Nelson Mandela, it would be a mistake to think that their enemies should be our enemies. Hence, African leaders tend to find Non-Alignment Policy as the best option to adopt and emphasize that integration by force or policy of expansionism by the great powers is generally unacceptable. They also called on both parties to find a common ground for peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and other acceptable mechanisms. The continent leaders went further to call on UN to immediately intervene in the conflict before things degenerate into third World War.

The conflict has created ideological blocs and united the world particularly along the Western ally and Left ally. It has also painted the picture of non-involvement of many nations claiming to be neutral in the conflict however; all nations across the globe are being affected in one way or the other by the conflict and by the decisions of the players in the conflict. The true position of things is that the UN appeared to be unwilling to nip this conflict in the bud or perhaps has not done much to stop the conflict. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is still begging for solutions and this has exposed how weak and divided the organization appeared to be. The UN's Security Council is fundamentally made up of the great powers ordinarily rather than solving this problem they are aiding the crisis with the shipment of advanced missiles, satellite images, war tanks, air defences and other weapons to Ukraine. The argument is that if Ukraine stop fighting there will be no Ukraine and if Russia stop fighting there will be no war. This is why they have resolved to stand united and in their unwavering support for Ukraine until the war ends. From this point of view, one can argue further that this is a war of pride and prestige and no party involved would like to lose out.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This war will not solve any problem; most likely will create new ones. It is the wrong war, in the wrong place and wrong time; as well as wrong reason. Mankind search for peace cannot be achieved through this war. It was

discovered that conflicts related to territorial disputes appear more often among neighbouring states. It also revealed that parties involved in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine are essentially motivated by self-interests thereby leaving the citizens of Russia, Ukraine and others all over the world to suffer the implications of the war. Thus, this paper argues and finds out that NATO's and EU's objectives of enlargement and expansionist nature of Russia appeared to have strongly complicated the conflict. From the conclusion, this paper recommended that African leaders should focus on good governance, securitization and reduce their reliance on food imports from external actors, and instead build a resilient food system that can meet the needs of the growing population in the coming years.

Secondly, if the super powers are ready and willing to observe international laws and live on the premise of interdependence of nations, this world will be a peaceful place for all. The world should prevail on Russia to withdraw its troops to allow the United Nations and the Security Council to organize a referendum among those regions in Eastern Ukraine who seem more sympathetic to the Russian cause, in the interest of self-determination and to avoid further bloodshed, destructions and unintended consequences.

There is a need to re-examine UN Charter on veto powers given to few countries and come up with something that can guarantee the world peace. For us to avert the looming third world war, everything possible must be done in order to stop territorial expansion by force among super powers. Therefore, there is an immediate need for nations of the world to establish a War Committee that will commence to pay constant attention to the war in Ukraine and report weekly to the Executive Council on the direction of the war and likely impacts on their nations. Hence, this committee should recommend possible measures to take in the interests of their nations.

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