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# **The 2022 Russia-Ukraine War: Implications for Africa**

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MSc International Relations

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**Declaration**

I, Enoch Sablah, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....Date.....15-12-2023.....

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study seeks to examine the far-reaching implications of Russia's war with Ukraine for the African continent. The Russia-Ukraine crisis has not only reshaped the geopolitical landscape of Eastern Europe but also had far-reaching ramifications for Africa. This study examines African viewpoints regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and, delves into the ramifications of the Russia-Ukraine war on food security, energy, and climate, as well as on Africa's politics and security. The qualitative research approach was employed to gather, analyse, and interpret the data collected. A total of five interviews were carried out and the respondents were carefully selected for the study. Based on interviews and secondary data sources, the study revealed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was perceived as a result and a catalyst of great-power competition with African governments having varied responses to the war. From the study, the ongoing war in Ukraine has the potential to weaken democracy in Africa, increase political deadlock in regional security initiatives and worsen the climate change crisis. Amid great powers' struggle for influence in Africa, the study highlighted that the invasion presents both challenges and opportunities. The study finally suggests that African leaders must formulate foreign policies rooted in principles that allow for cooperation with these competing powers in a manner that aligns with their own national interests and simultaneously serves regional and continental interests. At the same time, African countries should strive to optimize their role in averting the escalation of major power competitors into a Cold War or a full-scale war.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABM	-	Anti-Ballistic missile
AFISMA	-	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AU	-	African Union
BBC	-	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRICS	-	Brazil, Russia, India, and China, South Africa
CAR	-	Central African Republic
CDC	-	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CMRAA	-	Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act
DCFTA	-	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DPR	-	Donetsk People’s Republic
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
ENH	-	Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos
EU	-	European Union
EUTM	-	European Union Training Mission
EPF	-	European Peace Facility
FDI	-	Foreign Direct Investment
HICs	-	High-Income Countries
LICs	-	Low-income Countries
IHL	-	International Humanitarian Law
LNG	-	Liquefied Natural gas
LPR	-	Luhansk People’s Republic
MSF	-	Médecins Sans Frontières
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
MNC	-	Multinational Corporation
FRELIMO	-	Mozambique Liberation Front
MNJTF-AI	-	Multinational Joint Task Force of the Accra Initiative
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NMGP	-	Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline
OHCHR	-	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	-	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PSC	-	Peace and Security Council
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goals
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council
SIKT	-	Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research
SAMIM	-	Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique
SWIFT	-	Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecom
TSGP	-	Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline
TRIPS	-	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UK	-	United Kingdom
UN	-	United Nations
MINUSMA	-	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	-	United Nations General Assembly
UNOWAS	-	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council
USA	-	United States of America
USSR	-	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	-	World Trade Organisation



## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.0 Background to Research Problem**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and its ongoing war (hereinafter the Russia-Ukraine war or conflict) beyond surprising the world, has also had significant ripple effects on the global economy. As the war continues to ensue, its impacts on the global community cannot be fully evaluated; evidently, its implications transcend countries and are multidimensional. The crisis in Ukraine has confined people all over the world between a rock and a hard place. The escalating energy cost may have domino effects that drive up transportation costs, increasing the costs of goods. The result of this is inflationary pressures (Wicaksana & Ramadhan, 2022). Given the relevance of both warring factions (countries) in global markets, the rock represents the extreme spikes in food prices, fertilisers and energy markets resulting from the war. The hard place represents the highly vulnerable contexts in which this conflict evolved; thus, a world besieged by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic (Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022).

According to Jackson (2021), COVID-19 triggered a decline in global economic growth in 2020 with an annualised rate of -3.2% with a further 5.3% estimated global trade decline in 2020. On the back of the global economy recovering from an economic crisis caused by the global health pandemic, the war in Ukraine has further aggravated the worrying global economic conditions alongside dimming hopes of recovery. In addition to the mounting challenges of insufficient levels of investment, rising food insecurity, trade and supply chain constraints as well as poor GDP growth projections/prospects, low-income and fragile economies like Africa have been vulnerable to the repercussions of the ensuing war. Russia and Ukraine are both significant global sources of agricultural products like maize, wheat, sunflower seeds and as well as phosphorus, potassium and nitrogen fertilizers (Mottaleb et al.,

2022). Russia and Ukraine remain a source of more than a quarter of wheat transactions that occur on the world market. About 50 countries spread between Asia and Africa depend on these two countries to meet 30% of their wheat food demands and 26 countries also rely on Russia and Ukraine imports to fulfil 50% of their wheat demands (Mottaleb et al., 2022). For instance, In Egypt, wheat is the most essential food item and accounts for about 39% of the total calorie consumption per individual with about 50 to 60% of its cereal imports from Russia and Ukraine (Abay et al., 2022). Thus, challenges with supply chains affect the production of bread; the top three widely consumed food in the country.

Furthermore, Russia remains one of the major exporters of nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus fertilisers (Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022). Many African countries including Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya and Senegal depend on these fertilisers and with the severe economic sanctions meted to Russia, its capacity to export fertiliser has plummeted resulting in a critical shortage. In addition, instability in parts of Africa particularly the Sahel is likely to be worsened by the crisis in Ukraine. This instability can be worsened by rising cost of living, insufficient foreign humanitarian assistance and deteriorating security situation. Again, with the expansion of Russian military power and the proliferation of Russian weapons, arms races may be heightened. Russia remains one of the major arms dealers in Africa. According to the UNDP (2022b), Russia provided 49% of weapons that were sold to Africa between 2014 and 2019 while responsible for 20% of arms sales throughout 2011 to 2020. Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria, Angola and Sudan constituted the major trade partners of Russian arms on the continent (UNDP, 2022b). Despite not directly resulting in adversity in the region, the Russian invasion has increased the severity of some challenges such as food security in the Sahel region. The ongoing war therefore poses significant threats to the gains made by African economies in the fight towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The conflict further threatens to derail development progress in African countries, pushing the 2030 Sustainable

Development Goals and the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 out of reach (UNDP, 2022b). It is against this background that the study seeks to examine some of the implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for Africa.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been ongoing for several years, with significant impacts on the regional and international levels. The Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022 has had far-reaching effects on global security and economic stability. This has resulted in increased tensions between Russia and the West and has further led to trade restrictions and sanctions meted out to Russia transcending multinational corporations (MNCs), oligarchs, members and relatives of President Putin to end the war and ensure de-escalation. Despite that, the conflict ensues having marked a year as at the time of writing this thesis.

Although not directly related to the conflict, Africa has suffered spill-over effects of the conflict. The interconnectedness of the international system means that even conflicts in one region can create a ripple effect in other regions. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has the potential to affect the political, economic and security landscape of Africa. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has primarily been viewed as a regional issue with scanty studies on its implications on Africa. Russia's deepening engagement with Africa over the past few decades suggests that Africa cannot be ignored in studies surrounding the effects of the conflict. However, extant literature on the topic has focused largely on the political and economic implications of the conflict on Africa with a focus on energy and food security challenges that have arisen due to the conflict.

There are inadequate studies that examine how the conflict in Ukraine can influence security architecture and geopolitical competition challenges in Africa. This thesis therefore seeks to

fill the gap in the literature and to add to existing studies by exploring the potential security implications of the 2022 Ukraine conflict for Africa.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the political, economic and security implications of the Russia-Ukraine War for Africa?
2. How have African countries responded to the Russia-Ukraine war and what factors have influenced their responses?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the political, economic and security implications of the Russian-Ukraine war for Africa.
2. To examine how African countries have responded to the conflict and identify the factors that have influenced their responses to the conflict.
3. To contribute to a deeper knowledge of the complex and dynamic interactions between global actors and how conflicts in one region can have impacts on other regions well beyond their immediate scope.

## **1.4 Scope of study**

The study will focus largely on the security implications of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Africa after the first year of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Although largely limited to the first year of invasion, the study will highlight significant events that are relevant for the study beyond the first year. The paper will analyse some of the pre-invasion contexts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the NATO-led Libya intervention in 2011. The study will further examine responses from African countries to the first United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution which sought to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and demanded withdrawal

of all Russian military forces from Ukraine. The study will also explore the potential security implications of the conflict for Africa varying from political, economic, security and environmental implications.

### **1.5 Rationale for the study**

The significance of the study stems from the fact that the effects of the conflict in Africa have received relatively little attention. Understanding the possible impacts of the conflict on the continent is crucial given that Africa is home to some of the fastest-growing economies globally and thus a significant player in international politics. The conflict could have substantial effects on African countries in areas of trade, and investment as well as potentially exacerbate the region's existing security challenges. The study will provide valuable insights into how the conflict might affect security in Africa. By further enhancing understanding of how conflicts in other parts of the world have effects on other regions, the study will contribute to academic literature in the field. The findings of the study could be used by civil society organisations to advocate initiatives and policies that prioritise African interests. The findings can also serve as a useful reference to governments and international organisations such as the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) to develop policies and programs that address security issues in African countries.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

#### **Realism**

This thesis is conducted within the theoretical framework of Realism. Realism is a school of thought that explains international relations in terms of power. Realists contend that power or self-interest is the fundamental driving force of the actions of states. As a theory of international relations, Realism has strong historical antecedents and draws on ancient traditions of political

thought. Classic authors often cited by realists are Thucydides, Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli, Max Weber and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Roots of Realism can be found in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C). In his account of the true causes of the war, he noted that "the growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon [Sparta], made the war inevitable" (Gilpin, 1988, p. 596). Consequently, the regional competition between Sparta and Athens created a security dilemma which led to warfare owing to the power of Athens and the subsequent Spartan security. The works of Niccolò Machiavelli in Renaissance Italy also attributed to the Realist thoughts. In his book *The Prince*, he asserted that the most honourable pursuit should be how to win and keep political power, even if that should mean eliminating your political foe/enemy. The Florentine philosopher urged Italian princes to focus on expedient efforts to stay in power and advocated for strong and efficient rulers who prioritised power and security (Walt, 2017). In his masterpiece *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes emphasized a seeming anarchy that engulfed human society with the strong dominating the weak. He described the state of nature to resemble a warlike condition with no law, order or central authority and concluded that "the state of nature is continual fear and danger of violent death and life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1996, p. 2). These earlier writers impacted proponents of the theory like Hans Morgenthau and E.H Carr.

Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations (1948)* developed political realism to develop a theoretical framework (Walt, 2017). International politics is a power struggle and statesmen think and act based on national interest defined as power (Walt, 2017; Waltz, 2000). Realists contend that states struggle for power in a state of anarchy, one that is devoid of central authority or an arbiter that could enforce international rules and regulations. This creates a system of states which depend on their capability or power for survival, hence a self-help system. Thus, the distribution of power among states is the best way to understand international



relations. Since realists also believe that power determines which country prevails, they hold that politics is aimed at increasing power, keeping power, or demonstrating power.

In “Theory of International Politics”, Kenneth Waltz constructed structural realism (neorealism). Waltz highlights the importance of analysing the structure of inter-state relations. The structure depicts how units are organised in a relationship. Structural realists argue that the international system is anarchic due to the absence of a sovereign authority to wield a monopoly of violence and to make and enforce laws (Asare, 2018). As a result of this condition of anarchy, states must strengthen their military to be ready to defend themselves against other states. Thus, states act to protect their interest since no one can assure them of survival. As states in their self-help attempts seek to acquire and maximise more power to ensure their survival and security, they become threats to other states who also seek to increase their power to defend themselves. In the endeavour to achieve their national interests or goals, states end up in conflict with others (Sheikh, 2023).

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine suitably falls within the tenets of Realism. When applied to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Realism guides us to see that states may resort to any measures including warfare, when they perceive that their core national interests are at stake. For realists, moral condemnation of warfare is not a sufficient deterrent for states to avoid warfare when their fundamental interest is threatened. Therefore, for Russia, it does not matter the count of countries that vote against it at the UN or reject its invasion, as long as it believes its “survival” is threatened, the solution lies on the battlefield. Again, the war also illustrates a quintessential classic realist concept: the security dilemma. This dilemma emerges when a state's actions to enhance its own security inadvertently causes other states to feel less secure. The other state in response also bolsters its own security. Such developments escalates mutual suspicion and ironically places both states in a worse position, being less secure. It made perfect sense that Eastern European countries sought NATO membership or affiliation given their long-term

apprehensions concerning Russia. Similarly, it should be easy to comprehend why Russian leaders, beyond just Putin, viewed that development as alarming.

The theory of Realism is not without criticism and has faced significant critique from many theorists. Constructivists argue that the realist assumption that anarchy is mainly responsible for power struggles due to states' focus on self-help and survival is completely unfounded and makes no logic. Wendt (1992, p. 395) asserts that "anarchy is what states make of it". To the constructivist theorist, "people act towards objects, including other actors on the basis of the meanings objects have for them" (Wendt, 1992, p. 396). In this view, Wendt postulates that the concept of anarchy is just a matter of opinion shaped by people and thus it is possible that it can be understood and defined differently by different people. Fierke and Wiener (2005) sum it up simply and argue that international relations can be understood from different perspectives by different states due to diversity in their values and norms.

Likewise, Copeland, a notable constructivist has challenged the realist assertion that states prioritise their interests over moral considerations when dealing with other states (Copeland, 2000). The author posits that adopting this perspective fosters fear and mistrust, outcomes which realists aim to prevent among states. Copeland further contends that the issues which realists attempt to address are not born from anarchy but from the relations among the actors within the system. In this, the author advocates that the best way to surmount these problems is to encourage interaction and cooperation among states in the international system.

Despite the limitations of realism, this theory is relevant for the study as it emphasizes the importance of power and security in international relations and remains useful for analysing the implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for Africa, as well as the responses of African states to the conflict.

## 1.7 Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature on Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2020. This literature is selected based on the relevance to the study and they highlight various impacts of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The review of works will be based on the following thematic areas: food security, Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and trade relations, fuel and energy, organised crimes, arms, and weapons proliferation, political instability and unrest, and how African countries voted after Russia annexed Crimea.

### *Food security*

According to Kemmerling et al. (2022), violent wars and conflicts are paramount drivers of food insecurity worldwide. An estimated 155 million individuals remain acutely food insecure with about 99 million of these people residing in 23 countries where war and instability were the primary drivers of food insecurity (Mottaleb et al., 2022; Smyth et al., 2021). The Ukraine crisis is not only resulting in the loss of human lives and wrecking livelihoods but also destabilizing the global food market and threatening food security. Commonly referred to as the world's breadbasket, both conflicting countries are significant global producers of wheat and fertiliser with both responsible for about 34 per cent of the global wheat trade (Abay et al., 2023). Food systems in Africa are vulnerable to the impacts of exogenous shocks like geopolitical crises and other global challenges with the majority of the countries already grappling with challenges of climate change and the COVID-19 disruptions in agricultural production and supplies. Some African countries rely on Russia and Ukraine for their food imports particularly wheat to fill the domestic market demand gaps. For example, over 90 per cent of wheat consumed in Somalia and Benin originate from Russia and Ukraine. In the same vein, Tanzania, Senegal, Sudan and Egypt's reliance on wheat imports from the conflicting countries in 2019 and 2020 were 64%, 66%, 75% and 82% respectively (Abu Hatab, 2022).

Due to the reliance on food crops and oil imports from the warring countries, major price shocks and disruption of the supply chains of numerous commodities varying from sunflower oil, wheat and crude oil have been resultant effects throughout the continent. African nations have experienced the impacts of the closure of ports like the Black Sea which is a vital gateway for Russian and Ukrainian exports into the continent in the forms of an unparalleled surge in fuel and food crop prices (Mottaleb et al., 2022). With the underlying challenges of climate change, COVID-19, the war in Ukraine has skyrocketed food prices thus exacerbating the food security crisis. In addition, Russia is a significant exporter of nitrogen and potash fertilizers and was the global leading exporter of fertilizer in 2020 with an estimated \$7.6 billion in exports (Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022). Russia and Belarus also account for a combined 1/3 per cent of the world's exports of potash (Hellegers, 2022). Sanctions and trade restrictions imposed on Russia due to the war have impeded Russia's ability to export which has impacted the cost of fertilizers. As Arndt et al. (2023) noted, by April 2022; two months into the war, natural gas and fertilizers had more than doubled. In view of this Abay et al. (2023) reckoned that the Russia-Ukraine crisis and accompanying sanctions on Russia and Belarus have disrupted the supply of fertilizer thereby causing a surge in fertilizer prices. (Behnassi & El Haiba, 2022; Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022) alludes to this and observed that essential inputs like fertilizers are attaining record high levels. High fertilizer costs and shortages can severely affect usage in developing countries thereby leading to lower yields during high prices and reduced global supply (Arndt et al., 2023; Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022; Mottaleb et al., 2022). For global actors, the conflict in Ukraine has heightened the levels of uncertainty. This level of unpredictability has been reflected and caused by increasing price volatility in commodities globally traded and impacts global patterns of trade, production and consumption (Abay et al., 2023). This adverse blow to the commodities markets particularly energy and food creates anxiety about global food security and threatens food security (Abay et al., 2023). Rising food

prices and trade disruptions negatively impact the well-being of low-income families who spend a majority of their earnings on food and this further results in a decline in disposable income (Arndt et al., 2023; Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022). To add on, the diversion of resources and attention to Ukraine limits humanitarian assistance available to conflict-ridden and vulnerable groups in Asia and Africa which further exacerbates the food security crisis in these regions (Abay et al., 2023; Ben Hassen & El Bilali, 2022). In his assessment of the implication of the Russia-Ukraine invasion for African food security and food supply chains, Abu Hatab (2022) concluded that the war has disrupted the continent's food supply chain and has risked food security which can potentially ruin the attainment of SDGs 1 and 2 which seeks to end poverty and ensure zero hunger.

#### *FDIs and Trade relations*

Trade agreements and FDIs between several nations contribute to globalization and assist in the transfer of scarce resources to areas where they are urgently required. Russia and Ukraine have significant trade ties between themselves as well as with other countries globally, varying from African countries, Asian and countries in the European Union which have also suffered impacts of the ensuing war. Foreign investors are largely influenced by and drawn to a stable and healthy economy. Russia remains the world's biggest natural gas producer with the majority of Asian and European countries heavily reliant on Russian energy. In assessing the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the economy of South Asia, Singh (2022) highlighted that the trade restrictions and sanctions imposed on Russia by the USA, European Union and other Western countries have hampered trade and supply chain as well as bilateral and multilateral relations which have a major effect on many countries including South Asian countries. The author adds that this is because of Russia's substantial global market and vital trade relations channels that connect every continent thereby making the impacts of the world very pervasive. Similarly, Singh et al. (2022) in their empirical examination of the impact of

the Russia-Ukraine war on global trade development discovered that the Russian-Ukraine conflict and sanctions have disrupted supply and value chains as well as disturbed established trade ties. This war has thus undermined both bilateral and multilateral trade relations (Benson, 2023). Saridakis et al. (2022) anticipated the US to be a significant resource actor in substituting Russia's gas supply to Europe while China and Turkey who are primary trade partners with Russia and have desisted from meting out punitive sanctions may enjoy trade benefits and lower price of oil and gas imports from Russia although trade disruptions and food inflationary rates continue to soar higher.

According to Ratten (2023) the global economy has been profoundly affected by the crisis in Ukraine, notably regarding trade and investment. In examining the impacts of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the global economy, their research concluded that the war has resulted in international chain interruption and that the geopolitical conflict has caused trade shocks thereby leading to rising commodity prices and increased energy costs. In their review of the economic impact of the 2022 Russian-Ukraine war on key global economic actors, specifically, countries (Canada, UK, USA and EU) that have imposed financial sanctions on Russia as punishment Mbah and Wasum (2022) found out that both Russia and the global economy are suffering from the brunt of the invasion evident in significant inflation rise and commodities price risks and subsequent detrimental effects on economic growth and foreign investment inflows. In essence, trade relations and FDIs have suffered significantly because of the ongoing war.

#### *Fuel and energy*

As a result of Russia's massive oil and gas export contribution, the Russian invasion has resulted in shocks to the energy supply and a spike in energy prices. In investigating the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on macroeconomic conditions in Indonesia, Handayani and Purba (2022) discovered that in addition to affecting global and Indonesian economic growth and

development, the crisis has adversely influenced inflation and global oil prices. They opine that the Russian-Ukraine crisis represents a global catastrophe. When examining the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the crude oil market and the chain effect of the stock market in importing and exporting nations, Huang et al. (2023) discovered that the crude oil market's efficiency was lower than it had been before the conflict. Zhou et al. (2023) maintained that the majority of the world's significant energy importers were found in Europe and Asia and may be more susceptible to the effects of the war. While assessing the influence of the Russia-Ukraine war on global energy and food security, the authors further highlighted that compared to the lower limitation parameter of node load which has a minimal influence, the upper limitation of node load exerts significant impact on global energy. They further urged the need to bolster production capacity and energy types to stave off further risks associated with the war. This indicates how the crisis severely impacts on global energy with its pervasive impacts across other sectors particularly food security. With the warring countries playing vital roles in the oil and gas industry, Yousaf et al. (2022) maintain that the war has caused substantial increases in the price of oil and other commodities thereby heightening global inflation and resulting in economic downturns on a global scale.

#### *Organised crimes, arms, and weapons proliferation*

Wars can create opportunities for illegal groups to exploit and engage in criminal activities (Felbab-Brown, 2017; Kalyvas, 2015). Conflicts usually weaken state capacity, resulting in a conducive environment for organized criminal activities (Babajide et al., 2021; Besley & Persson, 2010; Kalyvas, 2015). Criminal groups may take advantage of the chaotic and unregulated circumstances to smuggle various commodities under the fog of war, and these activities may become protracted and permanent once the active phase of the conflict is over (Sinn & Iden, 2022).

The Ukraine conflict could facilitate the growth and expansion of organized criminal enterprises and power in the field of illegal trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives (WAE) due to the increased demand for WAE in the world (Samoilenko et al., 2022). Following the annexation of Crimea, organized criminal groups have exploited the instability of the region with a new network of black-market operations being established and this jeopardizes the future of Ukraine (Mulford, 2016). Hamilton (2022) noted that increases in transnational organized and regular crime constitute a major potential fallout of the Ukraine crisis. Hubanova et al. (2021) in agreement add to this while stressing that the southern portions of Ukraine continue to be vulnerable to threats from international terrorism and organized crime on a transnational, global scale. According to Bifulchi (2022, p. 43), Jihadist propaganda and terrorist groups might capitalize on the Ukraine war to spread their message while engaging a larger audience by encouraging them to join the ‘international legion’ which will facilitate the acquisition of Western weaponry and training.

In a similar vein, Hamilton (2022) raised concerns about the flow of arms and weapons following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Rutigliano (2022) expressed that the availability of weapons may potentially result in the spread and exacerbation of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in armed conflicts and the worsening of the conditions of civilians. According to Okoro et al. (2022), there remains high potential for the quantity of military assistance and weapons that Ukraine has received will eventually end up in the control/possession/custody of nefarious criminal groups operating in Europe and beyond. In the same vein, Hamilton (2022) alludes that a potential negative effect of the unprecedented levels of lethal military assistance given to Ukraine could be the risks of weapons falling within Russian custody or being rerouted to other non-allied actors like extremist and terrorist groups unfavourable to Western interests. The transfer of weapons to Ukraine may also create pathways for a black market or illicit arms trade on the global market. Okoro et al. (2022)



indicated that the extensive accessibility and availability of weapons in the current crisis could contribute to the proliferation of illicit arms which could drive up criminal activities, terrorism, and banditry within and beyond Eastern Europe thus raising the global insecurity index. The danger of illicit arms trafficking in the warring countries and the neighbouring countries threatens to undermine SDGs 16.4 (Pereira et al., 2022). In examining the war in Ukraine and the Global Nuclear Order, Bollfrass and Herzog (2022) emphasized that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has deteriorated the state of arms control and presents a detrimental challenge in the non-proliferation regime complex. Cheng (2022, p. 102) therefore maintained that the "actors involved in conflict should devise a more robust regional security architecture, establish an effective regional crisis management mechanism, and negotiate more stringent terms on arms control. Otherwise, the world might witness a coexistence of a "cold war" and a "hot war".

#### *Political instability and unrest*

In the recent past, conflicts have resulted in food security challenges that have had consequences for social and political order as evident during the Arab Spring protests. Food insecurity is a major cause of social unrest and geopolitical tensions. According to Abu Hatab (2022), food supply challenges and food price inflation resulting from the war in Ukraine could fuel conflict, destabilize governments, and spread violence across borders. Costs of food and fertilizer soared due to the Russian-Ukraine war in 2022 and into 2023 (Abay et al., 2023). Mottaleb et al. (2022) indicated that soaring wheat prices can contribute to social upheavals and riots notably in countries that largely depend on imported wheat. In this, Morcos and Simón (2022) raised concerns that countries in the Middle East and Africa like Syria and Ethiopia could see an escalation of ongoing crisis following the shortage of grain supply. The authors further expressed that the conflict in Ukraine could exacerbate instability in Lebanon and

Egypt. Hellegers (2022) emphasized that the likelihood of conflicts will be higher in countries with limited trade policy space to mitigate the consequences of the shocks of the Ukraine crisis. Given the significant contribution of both conflicting parties in grains supply as well as in the steel and gas global industry, Okoro et al. (2022) noted that the war has resulted in shortages of these critical goods which has increased global food prices, protests, and social upheavals capable of sparking insurrection and further insecurities across countries.

Bin-Nashwan et al. (2022) reckon that the most serious consequence of the war in Ukraine could be the worsening of the debt crisis as African countries would find challenges to meet their debt obligations with a widening inequality gap between the poor and rich as the food and fuel prices will increase. As Singh et al. (2022) opine, poorer countries are more vulnerable to the shocks of war as they tend to expend a larger percentage of their incomes on food, unlike wealthier countries which might have a significant impact on global political stability. In a similar vein, Bin-Nashwan et al. (2022) add that low-income families would as a result struggle to meet their needs which would inevitably plunge them into economic hardship and impoverished situations and lead to increased social unrest and tension in those places. To sum it up, Nweke et al. (2022) while examining the pattern of food inflation in Africa in the context of the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war disclosed that there the Ukraine war can potentially instigate social upheavals across Africa in the manner of peaceful protest, riots and spontaneous violence.

#### *Africa's Vote after the Crimea Annexation*

On 27 March 2014, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 68/262 entitled Territorial integrity of Ukraine after Russia's invasion and subsequent annexation of Crimea which constituted parts of Ukraine's territory. This resolution sought to reaffirm the UNGA's commitment to recognise Ukraine's territorial integrity within internationally

recognised borders (Van den Driest, 2015). The resolution was adopted by the UNGA with 100 countries voting in support and 11 voting against. Within the African region, 19 countries voted in favour of the resolution while 27 abstained from the voting process. While 6 African countries did not participate at all in the process, 2 countries (Sudan and Zimbabwe) voted against the resolution (Kifukwe & Lebovich, 2022).

## **1.8 Research Methodology and Source of Data**

The study employed a qualitative research approach to allow the researcher to gather information on the implications of the war in Ukraine for Africa. This research approach aided the researcher in making valid and meaningful conclusions without recourse to statistical tools. Creswell and Creswell (2017) mention that in qualitative research, the researcher often makes knowledge claims or assertions that are primarily based on diverse meanings of individuals' experiences, and historical and social constructions. The authors add that this research approach also employs phenomenology, ethnographies, or case studies to conduct investigations and make inquiries. The researcher in view of this conducted semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow for reciprocity between the interviewer and the participant. This interview approach is neither restrictive like close-ended questions nor is it too open for distractions like unstructured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). By employing this, participants or respondents had the opportunity to express their opinions in their own words and decide on what information to provide rather than being coerced to respond in certain specific directions. Semi-structured interview approach offers flexibility and this allowed the researcher to delve deeper into responses to gather detailed and comprehensive information from the respondents (Rabionet, 2011). This study adopted the qualitative research method since the nature of the research involved techniques like interpretations, perspectives, and inferences rather than mechanical numbers in quantitative data. A qualitative research design

was also adopted to gather insights from respondents with continuous engagement or knowledge of Russia-Africa relations.

The researcher utilised both primary and secondary data for the study. The primary data used in this study was collected from academic researchers, a security expert and a geopolitical analyst. The study also used first-hand research conducted by independent organisations. The study used audio recordings as the primary medium to gather the primary data. One interview was done in person and the other four were done over Zoom due to proximity issues. In addition to the primary data, the study also relied on secondary data from reports, journal articles, newspaper articles, books, and relevant internet sources as well as other existing literature on Russia-Africa relations. As such, all the sources address parts of the study under consideration. The researcher used a sample size of five respondents. The five persons interviewed were carefully selected for the research. A purposive sampling technique was adopted due to the respondents' continuous involvement and knowledge in the subject area. This sampling technique helped the researcher to gain valuable insights and relevant information on the study subject. After accumulating the data, the data collected were analysed qualitatively to establish their reliability and credibility. The primary data (interviews) was first transcribed, and the researcher drew pertinent deductions from the data to reach a valid conclusion and meaningful judgment. The researcher then used a descriptive approach to summarise the findings using quotes, extracts and texts for easier description and analysis. Similar themes were also grouped based on their relevance to the subject area and analysed.

### **1.10 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics are important elements of research that need to be adhered to. Creswell and Creswell (2017) suggest that ethical concerns should be anticipated before and throughout the entire research process. This will allow the researcher to identify them in each stage and manage them

to ensure the integrity and ethical soundness (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). With the study focusing on a sensitive topic involving political and security considerations, the researcher first sought approval from the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Sikt). This gave the researcher the permission for data collection. The researcher further obtained informed consent and approval from all officials interviewed before recording the interview sessions. The informed consent also ensured that the respondents were fully aware of the purpose of the study, how their information would be used and their right to confidentiality and to withdraw at any time. For some respondents, interview guidelines were given ahead of time at their request, and this helped to prevent any misconception about the purposes of the study. All perspectives, opinions, views, and information collected from the participants were not against their voluntary cooperation. Data collected was securely stored and only used for the intents of the study and per Sikt regulations. All data collected was treated with the strictest of confidentiality and the anonymity of the respondents was ensured. The author used their generic titles when referring to the respondents to further ensure anonymity.

## **1.9 Limitations of Study**

The study was faced with a few obstacles in the data and information-gathering process. The researcher's major limitation was getting access to some experts in the study area. This was because requests for interviews from these individuals were not honoured. The timing of the study coincided with their equally scheduled engagements on the subject area. In addition to that, getting access to certain government press releases, statements and relevant documents proved difficult and sometimes made it difficult to verify the information gathered from other online sources. Another challenge was the time allocated for the conduct of the research.

Despite the various constraints, proper research can still be conducted if the researcher is flexible and adapts to circumstances to achieve the objectives of the study. Hence the researcher

opted to utilise information from websites, journal articles, government documents, and newspaper articles alongside interviews with the various officials. In the face of all these challenges, the researcher leveraged the gathered information to strengthen the reliability and validity of the research.

### **1.10 Organisation of Study**

The study is organised into four chapters. Chapter One focuses on the introduction and constitutes the background of the study, the problem statement, research questions and objectives. The chapter also includes the scope of the study and the significance of the study. The chapter further presents the theoretical framework, literature review, study methodology and sources of data as well as the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two comprises an overview of the Ukraine crisis. The chapter begins with the background to 2022 Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as various agreements. The chapter also talks about Ukraine and Russia's ties with Africa and further includes a pre-invasion context which discusses COVID-19 and the 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya to provide some contexts for understanding African countries' positions and stance on the war in Ukraine. In Chapter Three, the researcher concentrated on the main research questions and included Africa's response to the Ukraine war as well as the implications of the war for Africa.

Chapter Four concludes the paper and provides a summary of the findings.

## **Chapter Two: Overview of The Ukraine Crisis, And Russia, Ukraine Relations with Africa**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the Russia-Ukraine war. This overview provides a background to the war that escalated in 2022 and discusses the relationship between Russia and Africa and Ukraine and Africa. This chapter also mentions some context that existed before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

### **2.1 Background to Russia-Ukraine War**

The Russia-Ukraine crisis is a complex issue influenced by historical, political, and geopolitical factors. The relations between the two independent states were from the very beginning difficult. Almost all issues have their roots in the imperial past (Kappeler, 2014). After being a Soviet Republic for 70 years, Ukraine gained independence and became independent following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

For almost a decade, the crisis in Ukraine has been raging with chaos, disorder and insurgency becoming political realities for Ukrainians. Following the establishment of the European Union in the 1990s and subsequent expansion, Ukraine has seen an array of events commencing with the Orange Revolution in 2004, the Euromaidan Revolution in 2013 culminating in the Crimea annexation and the Donbas insurgency (McFaul, 2007; Robinson, 2016). The cause of the crisis in Ukraine has been subjected to two dominant narratives. Scholars like Mearsheimer blame the West for the crisis in Ukraine arguing that the United States and its European allies share most of the responsibility following NATO's enlargement, the EU's expansion eastward and the West's backing of the pro-democracy movement in Ukraine (Mearsheimer, 2014). Thus, President Putin or Russia's 'response to events in Ukraine has been defensive, not offensive' (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 85). Similarly, Shleifer and Treisman (2011, p. 128) argue for Moscow's opposition to NATO's further enlargement to the east and maintain that Russia's

stance is “hardly surprising: no state would welcome the extension of a historically hostile military alliance up to its borders, no matter how often that alliance said its intentions were peaceable”. Essentially, these scholars argue that Russia has compelling justifications to counterbalance the encroachments of Western influence or eastward expansion of NATO.

Another dominant narrative is the ‘imperialist’ characterization/depiction of Russia by the US and the West (Desai et al., 2016). Kotoulas and Pusztai (2022) contend that Russia is a revisionist state. In this, Russia has engaged in numerous subversion forms against neighbouring Eastern Europe and the Caucasus varying from direct threats, influence on politics, economic warfare, backing of secessionist groups, insurrections, and full-scale invasions (Clunan, 2009; Piontkovsky, 2015). Kotoulas and Pusztai (2022) maintain that Russia’s invasion of Ukrainian territory and the commission of atrocities against the people of Ukraine exemplifies an imperial mindset.

In late 2013, the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, and his unexpected decision against a deal for greater economic integration with the European Union sparked the first friction between the people of Ukraine and political pressure from Russia which sparked protests in Kyiv (Mearsheimer, 2014). Ukraine desired to enter into a bilateral agreement with the EU under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich by signing the EU’s Association and Free Trade Agreement proposal at the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius, Lithuania on 28-29 November 2013. Nevertheless, President Yanukovich did not give assent to the EU in 2013 on Free Trade Agreement. Instead of the EU proposal, Yanukovich embraced an offer of an estimated \$15 billion aid package from Russia accompanied by an agreement to lower prices for Russian gas deliveries to Ukraine and greater access to the Russian market (Walker, 2013). President Yanukovich’s decision to have closer ties with Russia incited resentment among pro-Western Ukrainians and protests occurred in Kyiv’s Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti). In late 2013 and early 2014, massive protests from the strong resolve of



Ukrainian citizens and political movements against Russian influence were seen in reaction to Yanukovich's decision. These massive protests, known as the Euromaidan movement, consequently resulted in the ousting of President Yanukovich and the election of Petro Poroshenko as the successive president. As Antony (2022, p. 13) points out "the gathering at the Maidan was against Yanukovich's regime". On March 21, 2014, Poroshenko signed the EU Association Agreement and approved the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) on June 27, 2014 (BBC, 2014; Nilsson & Silander, 2016).

### *Annexation of Crimea*

The events in Kyiv that led to the overthrow of Yanukovich triggered pro-Russian demonstrations against the new government. Amid the Euromaidan protests and Ukraine's desire to have closer ties to the West, Russia seized the opportunity to incorporate Crimea in 2014. The annexation of Crimea happened through the creation of a pro-Russian government in the peninsula by the Sergey Aksyonov government which held a referendum in which most of the voters backed to re-join Russia (Bebler, 2017). According to BBC (2015) before, during and post the referendum, Russian troops occupied government facilities and Ukrainian army installations on the Crimea peninsula. Following an armed intervention by forces of the Russian Federation, a referendum and a declaration of independence in Crimea, the annexation was formalised in the Federal Constitutional Law of March 21, 2014, and was marked by gun salute in Moscow, Sevastopol and Simferopol (Thomas, 2015). The annexation of Crimea was widely condemned by the international community as a subversive breach of Ukraine's territorial integrity with numerous countries in the West responding with sanctions. The annexation of Crimea had implications ranging from regional to global. It demonstrated the complete failure of the EU, Russia and NATO to negotiate a new post-Cold War Euro-Atlantic security architecture that would have recognised Moscow's geostrategic and political economic

interests (Gardner, 2016). The incorporation of Crimea and the efforts to disintegrate Ukraine according to Allison (2017) poses a threat to Russia's surrounding countries and the broader European security order. In essence "the annexation of Crimea by Russia poisoned its relations with Ukraine, worsened its relations with the West and has been followed by a war of mutual sanctions between USA, EU and Russia" (Bebler, 2017, p. 7).

### *Conflict in Eastern Ukraine / Separatist movement in Donbas*

In March 2014, following the Maidan Revolution, the ousting of Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea, anti-revolution and pro-Russia protests erupted in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts against the government of Ukraine. The two regions collectively known as the Donbas lie in the Eastern region of Ukraine and a home to a vast number of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers constituting about 38.2 of the population in Donetsk province (Zhukov, 2016). The unrest later evolved into a civil war between Ukrainian government forces and secessionist rebel groups. Delcour and Wolczuk (2015, p. 469) reveal that the secessionist rebel groups had backing from Russia as part of a hybrid warfare which "deliberately blurs the boundaries between state-controlled regular armed forces and the rogue local and mercenary forces". Subsequently, the separatist groups in Donetsk and Luhansk following controversial referendums declared independence from Ukraine in 2014 and formed the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). This was not recognised by the Ukraine government and the international community. According to Antony (2022), Donbas remains a point of conflict where Russia, the United States and the European Union outline their scope of interests through Ukraine. The war in Donbas resulted in significant loss of lives. The downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 on July 17, 2014, in Eastern Ukraine which resulted in a tragic loss of all on board played a crucial role in drawing global attention and emphasizing the situation in Donbas (Jasiuk et al., 2019). The escalation of violence in the

region between the Ukrainian troops and the separatist groups prompted international actions resulting in peace agreements initiatives among Russia, Ukraine, and the international community.

### *Minsk agreements*

Since the outbreak of armed conflict in the east Ukrainian oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk in 2014, several initiatives have been made to establish a functional and sustainable ceasefire and approach towards political normalization. The Minsk agreements constitute a series of ceasefires and international agreements aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine which were made in the capital of Belarus.

### *Minsk-I*

The Minsk Protocol was the first of them made on September 5, 2014, by the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine which consisted of Ukraine, Russia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to establish a ceasefire between the separatist groups and the forces of the Ukrainian government. The provisions of the Minsk-I included an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire monitored by the OSCE, prisoners-of-war exchanges, withdrawal of heavy weaponry, the establishment of an OSCE-monitored security zone along the border and an economic reconstruction program for Donbas (Allan, 2020). Allan (2020, p. 10) further adds that Russia insisted that three clauses were inserted into the protocol; “(1) the adoption of a ‘law on special status’ that would temporarily decentralize power to occupied Donbas; (2) on this basis, the holding of local elections; and (3) ‘an inclusive nationwide dialogue’.” The declaration of the ceasefire had minimal impact as the agreement failed to end the fighting. This was therefore followed by a modified and updated agreement.

### *Minsk-II*

The Minsk II Agreement was negotiated and signed in February 2015 in Minsk, Belarus. The peace agreement aimed at initiating diplomatic arrangements to reinforce the ceasefire and laying out a framework to ensure a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to implement the Minsk-I protocol. This follows an escalation of violence which led to the DPR capturing the Donetsk International Airport after heavy clashes and the conflict in Debaltseve in January where the Ukrainian government forces suffered significant losses (Åtland, 2020). The then-French president Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel spearheaded efforts to end the hostilities and to resolve the Ukraine crisis peacefully. This was seen as a revival of the Minsk Protocol, and this was embraced by Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia to continue with the proposals of the Minsk Protocol or Minsk I agreement with a new package of measures. After long hours of negotiations, the conflicting parties reached an agreement on an updated 13-point package of peacekeeping measures and the document was signed by representatives from Russia, Ukraine, OSCE, the LNR and the DNR (Åtland, 2020). Certain key components of the Minsk II Agreement included; immediate and full cessation of hostilities, effective monitoring of ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy weaponry by OSCE, delivery of humanitarian needs, exchange of all hostages and unlawfully detained persons, amnesty for those involved in the fighting, elections in Donbas, political dialogue and decentralization to mention a few (Åtland, 2020).

Despite the signing of the Minsk II Agreement which sought to end armed hostilities and resolve underlying political issues, the conflict in eastern Ukraine remains with intermittent ceasefire violations. To Åtland (2020), ensuring peace, security and stability in the region of Donbas devastated by conflict appears to be a challenging and practically impossible task.

## **2.2 Russia-Africa Relations: Brief background**

Russian interactions with Africa have been numerous and diverse over a period dating back to the Tsarist era although the former never had a colony in Africa following many unsuccessful colonial attempts (Gerőcs, 2019). For example, Russian Orthodox pilgrims encountered other African Christians mainly from Ethiopia and Egypt in the Holy Land (Shubin, 2004). Similarly, Russian Muslims also met fellow African Muslims in the holy sites of Islam. Several Russian explorers and sailors also visited many countries in Africa and at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russian consulates were opened in Alexandria and Cairo with diplomatic relations established with the Transvaal Republic (South Africa) and Ethiopia in 1898 as well as the establishment of the Russian Consulate-general in Tangiers (Morocco) in the same year (Shubin, 2004).

After the 1917 revolution, Russia's engagement with Africa persisted although at a minimum capacity and mostly through the Comintern apparatus and political training of Africans in the USSR (Shubin, 2004). Relations between the USSR and African states remained insignificant until the demise of Josef Stalin as the African states were subjected to colonial rule and were deemed to be lackeys of the capitalist system and thus not suitable for permeation by Soviet influence (Besenyő, 2019; Giles, 2013). However, the assumption of power in the Soviet Union by Nikita Khrushchev coincided with the quests for independence in Africa sparking Soviet interest in the opportunities presented by interaction with newly liberated states and offer of support for anti-colonial movements across the African continent (Giles, 2013; Shubin, 2004). In 1955, Egypt became the first African country to receive a massive amount of Soviet arms (Bishop, 2020).

During the Cold War period, the Soviet Union sympathised with revolutionary Africa and pledged support to national liberation movements in Africa and provided military, economic, political, diplomatic, and educational support to several African countries fighting against colonial rule. For example, the Soviet Union supported the People's Movement for the

Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in their fight against imperialist Portugal which lasted from 1961 to 1975. In Mozambique, the Soviet Union also supported the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) against Portuguese colonialism in the 1960s (Witney, 1978).

Support on this scale throughout Africa was not without direct risk, and casualties were suffered, although never avowed at the time -as, in one example, when 11 Soviet secret police (KGB) officers were captured and shortly afterwards shot during an insurgent attack on President Kwame Nkrumah's residence in Accra, Ghana, in 1966. (Giles, 2013, p. 4)

By the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union had signed several agreements with different countries in Africa (Shubin, 2004). By the time the Soviet Union collapsed, about 53,000 Africans received education and training in Soviet universities with about another 200,000 specialists being trained by the Soviets on the soils of Africa (Shubin, 2004) Some of the notable alumni serving as presidents in Mali, Cape Verde, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa (Geröcs, 2019; Shubin, 2004).

Russia's engagement in Africa however reduced drastically in the years immediately following the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. The disintegration of the Soviet Union saw a shift in the foreign policy of the new "independent" Russian Federation as the state became focused on new and domestic challenges as well as the struggle to establish a position in the post-Cold War world (Giles, 2013). The neglect of Africa was almost inevitable, and this led to the closure of nine embassies, three consulates and several cultural centres in Africa. Amid extreme economic difficulties, then-President Boris Yeltsin halted foreign assistance and persistently demanded African states to settle debts owed to the Soviet Union despite their pleas for loan reductions and payment plans (Shubin, 2004). Again, several aid projects launched in the Soviet period were terminated. A notable example is the abolition of the multi-million-dollar

steel factory in Ajaokuta (Nigeria) which was about 98% completed (Besenyő, 2019; Gerőcs, 2019; Shubin, 2004).

As a result of Russia's policy reversal, several African governments felt neglected by Russia with African press in the 1990s describing Russia as "the land that turned its back on the continent" (Fidan & Aras, 2010, p. 49).

### *Return to Africa*

Towards the end of the 1990s, Fidan and Aras (2010) argue that relations between Russia and the African continent began to rekindle with the emergence of new attitudes towards developing nations and the West (Shubin, 2004). A shift towards realism in Russian Foreign policy was evidenced in January 1996 when pro-Western foreign affairs minister, Andrey Kozyrev was replaced with Yevgeny Primakov who had exceptional expertise in the Third World countries. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt paid a visit to Moscow in 1997. Namibian president Sam Nujoma, Angolan president Eduardo dos Santos and South African presidents Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela followed suit (Shubin, 2004). Following the Kremlin's changes, the Russia-Africa summits intensified significantly and in 2001, Vladimir Putin who succeeded Yeltsin met with the presidents from Gabon, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Guinea, and the Ethiopian Prime Minister (Shubin, 2004). In 2006, Vladimir Putin travelled to South Africa, the first by a Russian leader to sub-Saharan Africa and visited Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Morocco in North Africa. Putin's visit to the continent was a clear message to the world that Russia is returning to a region where it historically had geopolitical interests. With Morocco and South Africa situated at opposite ends of the African continent, Putin was delivering a message that Russia valued the whole African continent (Fidan & Aras, 2010). In the aftermath of that visit, Russia forgave US\$16 billion in debt accumulated by African countries since the Soviet era in a framework of a G8 summit (Gerőcs, 2019). By 2012, Russia had written off

US\$20 billion of African debt (Gerócs, 2019; Giles, 2013). This was a significant development in the Russia-Africa rapprochement and signalled a rejuvenated relationship.

The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation published by the Russian government in 2007 mentioned that “Russia will enhance its multi-pronged interaction with African States at the multilateral and bilateral levels, including through the dialogue and cooperation within the G8” (Russian Federation, 2008, p. 20). Contained in the report was an advocacy for participation in the resolution of conflicts in Africa, debt relief, humanitarian assistance and assisting in human resource development (Russian Federation, 2008).

In 2009, the next presidential visit occurred when Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Egypt, Angola, Nigeria and Namibia along with 300 business persons (Gerócs, 2019). In June of that year, Ekaterinburg held the inaugural BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) summit, to which delegates from African countries were also invited. Later in 2013, the first African-Russian economic forum was held in Ekaterinburg, and this saw participation of about 100 persons from over 40 African countries. Also, the BRICS (the additional ‘S’ since South Africa had become part of the bloc) summit was held in Durban, South Africa in 2013 which Vladimir Putin attended (Gerócs, 2019).

In 2019, the inaugural Russia-Africa summit occurred in Sochi and this forum seeks to create favourable conditions for strengthening traditionally cordial relations between Russia and African countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who was then chairperson of the African Union (AU) co-chaired the occasion (African Union, 2019). The Russia-Africa Forum constitutes a component of Russia’s broader efforts to enhance its footprint on the African continent. It further underscores Russia’s goal to expand its political and economic influence on the continent and its desire to counterbalance the presence of other major players in the continent. African countries also tend to benefit from



prospective partnerships in sectors like trade and commerce, education, transfer of technology and investments (African Union, 2019).

### **2.3 Ukraine-Africa Relations**

Ukraine-Africa relations on the other hand have been historically by its Soviet past (Gopaldas, 2023). During the Soviet era in the 1960s, Moscow aimed at establishing a global network opposed to US interests with particular emphasis on Africa (Veselovsky, 2021). The Soviet Union enjoyed the credits for its decisive role in the decolonization process and was commended for its contribution of tractors, food and tanks as well as for educating significant African students in the Soviet Union. Following directives from Moscow, Ukraine transported food supplies like sugar, grain, vegetable, metal, oil, and heavy industry products to Africa alongside educating youth from Nigeria, Morocco, Guinea, Uganda, Mali, and Angola in fields like medicine, military skills and engineering (Veselovsky, 2021). In addition, significant Ukrainian experts in metallurgy, military advisory roles and irrigation also worked in African countries that were pro-Soviet (Veselovsky, 2021). Following its independence in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, ties with Africa have not been significant. As noted by a career Ukrainian diplomat Andri Veselovsky “ In 30 years of independence, there has not been a single visit from a Ukrainian president to Sub-Saharan Africa” (Veselovsky, 2021). Nonetheless, Ukraine has maintained trade ties with the continent. Ukrainian exports to Africa have seen significant growth from \$210 million in 1996 to \$ 4 billion (Veselovsky, 2021). Ukraine remains a major food exporter to low- and middle-income countries. Ukraine’s trade relations with Africa predominantly involve dairy items, flour, poultry, canned meats, military-technical cooperation and a variety of mechanical and equipment and steel products (Veselovsky, 2021). Ukraine exported an estimated 40.7% of wheat to African countries in 2021 with Egypt being the leading importer (Maciejewska & Skrzypek, 2022). Continuing

from the Soviet era, Ukraine has also been a destination for African countries. As reported by the BBC, Ukraine was home to over 76000 foreign students with nearly a quarter of the students originating from Africa with about 8000 students from Morocco and an estimated 3500 students from Egypt (Ali, 2022; Fröhlich, 2022). Africa makes up more than 20% of Ukraine's international students (Fröhlich, 2022).

#### **2.4 Context Before the 2022 Invasion**

The ongoing war in Ukraine, which is a momentous event in contemporary geopolitics, has evoked varied responses from African countries. To understand some of these responses, it is also very relevant to consider certain profound events; the controversial 2011 NATO-led military intervention in Libya and the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### *2011 Libya intervention*

Before the Libyan crisis, Africans had a growing belief in the prospect of “African solutions to African problems”. The AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) expressed solidarity with Libya and rejected “any foreign military intervention, whatever its form” (Brosig, 2013, p. 64). Nonetheless, the AU faced marginalization from key initiatives that aimed at resolving the conflict in Libya without external intervention with its role in the region undermined in favour of other actors (Chothia, 2020; Sithole, 2012). As Brockmeier et al. (2016, p. 117) noted “an attempt by representatives of the African Union to travel to Libya to a ceasefire with the Gaddafi government on 19 March was cancelled because the coalition forces (France, UK, USA) were unwilling to stop their airstrikes”. This indicated an affront to mediation efforts proposed by African leaders on an African territory. While expressing his frustration over the continent's marginalisation, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni told the BBC that the AU point-man on Libya, Congo-Brazzaville's President Denis Sassou Nguesso, was invited at the "last minute" to the 20 January Berlin summit hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel as

"tokenism to show that Africa was also involved" (Chothia, 2020, para. 5). This again confirmed that certain African leaders had not yet come to terms with the NATO-led intervention that saw the ousting and subsequent demise of Gaddafi. NATO's actions in Libya were viewed as a disregard for African-led efforts in global security and the consequent turmoil of political instability and unrest in Libya have influenced Africa's perspectives of the bloc. Given that NATO's expansion is viewed as a major contributing factor in Ukraine as argued by Mearsheimer (2014), it is important to factor Libya's intervention in shaping responses from countries. Echoing this sentiment, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa blamed NATO for the war in Ukraine noting that the war in Ukraine could have been averted had it not been the security bloc's eastward expansionism. In his March 2022 speech to the South African parliament, he said "The war could have been avoided if NATO had heeded the warnings from amongst its leaders and officials over the years that its eastward expansion would lead to greater, not less, instability in the region" (Cocks, 2022, para. 2).

### *The COVID-19 pandemic*

The actions and inactions of global superpowers in the deadly Coronavirus also represents an important departure point that sought to demonstrate how the West could address global challenges. The pandemic exposed weak health systems, particularly in Global South countries. With African countries largely grappling with their challenges in public health systems, the global politicisation of the virus also impeded essential multilateral cooperation to reduce the spread of the virus. The rapid spread of the virus led to an unprecedented swift development of COVID-19 vaccines. However, the global distribution of these vaccines highlighted the contrast between high-income countries (HICs) and low-income countries (LICs) with the former securing most of the vaccine supplied. For example, as of mid-August 2020, the US had secured 800 million doses of a minimum 6 vaccines in development, the United Kingdom

(UK) had obtained 340 million doses and the EU and Japan had placed orders for hundreds of millions of doses (Zhou, 2022). This stockpiling by the wealthiest countries also meant limited and delayed access of LICs to this vital healthcare product (Zhou, 2022). This inequity of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution was further seen at the UNGA where African leaders expressed their frustrations and concerns. South Africa's president Cyril Ramaphosa lamented that "It is an indictment on humanity that more than 82 per cent of the world's vaccine doses have been acquired by wealthy countries, while less than 1 per cent has gone to low-income countries." (Aljazeera, 2021, para. 5). Namibia's President Hage Geingob slammed what he referred to as 'vaccine apartheid' stating that it was a pity that while individuals in certain countries were preparing for booster jabs, others in different countries had not even had first dosage (Aljazeera, 2021, para. 7). Similar views were expressed by Angola's President Joao Lourenco. In a pre-recorded address, Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa said "Vaccine nationalism is self-defeating and contrary to the mantra that no one is safe until everyone is safe" (Aljazeera, 2021, para. 13). This vaccine nationalism by wealthy countries saw the lower-income countries aligning with China's 'vaccine diplomacy' (Zhou, 2022). In May 2020, Chinese President XI Jinping announced that Chinese COVID-19 vaccines are a 'global public good' to ensure the affordability and accessibility of this critical health resource in developing countries (Zhou, 2022). Important to note however is that African countries still benefited substantially from the West including the EU, US, and other European countries but the Western aid and solidarity with Africa were outpaced by China's action-oriented approach manifested in the global public good supply (Eguegu, 2023). Furthermore, China although neither a proponent nor a cosponsor supported India and South Africa's request to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to temporarily suspend intellectual property (IP) rights to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines and other new technologies could be accessible to lower-income countries for the duration of the pandemic. Worthy to note was that the proposal was rejected

by the wealthy countries (USA, UK, Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the EU (Yu, 2023; Zhou, 2022). In mid-June 2022, in almost two years, the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver came to pass after the wealthy countries agreed to it. This was however met with disappointment and criticisms.

Dr Christos Christou, International President of Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) noted that

we are disappointed that a true intellectual property waiver, proposed in October 2020 covering all COVID-19 medical tools and including all countries, could not be agreed upon, even during a pandemic that has claimed more than 15 million people's lives. (MSF, 2022, para. 3)

The Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) in disappointment noted the outcome was a little too late and an EU betrayal of the global south on vaccine access (CEO, 2022). Amid discussions of the TRIPS, Africa witnessed the completion of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), a flagship project under the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to enhance Africa's disease prevention and monitoring competence as well as fortify its public health system (Xuanmin, 2023).

## **Chapter Three: Implications of Russia-Ukraine War for Africa**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 for African countries. The chapter begins with how African countries have responded to the war that broke out in 2022 and further discusses the political, security, and economic implications of the war and concludes with a theme on emerging dynamics following the war in Africa.

### **3.1 Africa's Response to the 2022 Russia-Ukraine Conflict**

#### *Voting patterns*

Africa's response to the conflict in Ukraine has been diverse. The continent constitutes an estimated 28% of the United Nation's total membership (54 out of 193 members) and represents the largest regional group by number of member states. Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the actions and inactions of African countries have received close monitoring and scrutiny by the US and the European governments. The way individual countries in Africa take a position on the Russia-Ukraine war can be seen in the voting patterns on various UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions proposed since the inception of the war. Historically, significant contemporary issues have influenced the voting behaviour of countries (Tawat, 2022). Colonialism for instance pitted European nations against countries in Asia and Africa during the 1950s. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the Cold War also accounted for the split between Western bloc and Eastern bloc (Tawat, 2022). In recent times, voting patterns have also been shaped by developing countries' desire to secure aid from developed countries and increasingly the divide between authoritarian regimes and democratic governments (Tawat, 2022). Furthermore, a country's ties with the West or Russia may shape its voting behaviour. All these factors were present at the emergency General Assembly

meeting on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and they may have impacted the voting patterns of respective countries.

The UN has been instrumental in trying to bring a stop to the conflict either by introducing motions to condemn Russia's actions or by utilising its mechanisms to demand that hostilities end. Countries use this opportunity to state their position on global issues through voting in the General Assembly. Also, direct statements and proclamations made by African country representatives or diplomats can occasionally be used to explain and understand the voting patterns of countries. Most African countries' leaders and representatives through parliamentary discussions or interviews have explicitly or subtly expressed their stance on the ongoing conflict. Individual states voting behaviour on the UNGA resolution demonstrates their views on the invasion and the crisis and this has been very nuanced from African countries.

The initial perspective of the stance taken by African countries emerged a day after Russia's invasion of Ukraine through voting on a draft resolution in the Security Council intended to end Russia's military offensive against Ukraine. The draft Security Council resolution-SC/14808 was submitted by the United States and Albania and received support from 11 members of the Security Council but was vetoed by Russia. India, China, and the United Arab Emirates however all abstained. The non-permanent Security Council members from Africa; Ghana, Gabon and Kenya all voted however in support of the resolution (UN, 2022e). Kenya's ambassador to the UN Martin Kimani speaking after the vote clarified that his country voted in favour of the resolution to affirm Article 2 of the UN Charter which opposes the violation of the sovereignty of a member state. While sympathising with the people of Ukraine, the ambassador drew a comparison to the 2011 'hasty, ill-considered intervention in Libya' highlighting that the intervention did not yield lasting peace, instead "unleashed terror" even

affecting countries located in the southern part of Libya (UN, 2022e, para. 38). Although he voted in support of the resolution, his choice of words “hasty” and “ill-considered” suggest a critique of the NATO-led intervention in Libya and the West.

Table 3.1: African countries Voting on UN resolutions since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

UN RESOLUTIONS	VOTES BY AFRICAN COUNTRIES			
	COUNTRIES WHO VOTED IN SUPPORT	COUNTRIES WHO ABSTAINED	COUNTRIES WHO VOTED AGAINST	COUNTRIES THAT WERE ABSENT /NON-VOTING
SC/14808 25-02-2022	Gabon, Ghana, Kenya	N/A	N/A	N/A
S/C 14809 27-02-2022	Gabon, Ghana, Kenya	N/A	N/A	N/A
SC/14838 23-03-2022	N/A	Gabon, Ghana, Kenya	N/A	N/A
A/RES/ES-11/1 02-03-2022	Benin,Botswana,Cabo Verde, Chad,Comoros, Côte D’ivoire, DR Congo(DRC),Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia, Zambia	Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe	Eritrea	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Togo
A/RES/ES-11/2 24-03-2022	Benin, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte D’ivoire,DRC, Djibouti, Egypt,	Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, CAR,	Eritrea	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros,



	Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia	Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe		Guinea, Morocco, Somalia,
A/RES/ES-11/3 07-04-2022	Chad, Comoros, Côte D'ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Sierra Leone,	Angola, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Egypt, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda	Algeria, Burundi, CAR, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Mali, Zimbabwe	Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Zambia
A/RES/ES-11/4 12-10-2022	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Côte D'ivoire, DRC, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tunisia, Zambia	Algeria, Burundi, CAR, Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe	N/A	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe

A/RES/ES-11/5 15-11-2022	Benin, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Côte D'ivoire, Djibouti, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia, Togo, Zambia	Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda	CAR, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Zimbabwe	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DRC, Morocco, Sao tome and Principe, Senegal, Tanzania
A/RES/ES-11/6 23-02-2023	Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Côte D'ivoire, DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia	Algeria, Angola, Burundi, CAR, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe	Eritrea, Mali	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Tanzania

Source: (UN, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d, 2022e, 2022f, 2022g, 2023a)

### **Table 3: Votes of African countries in the UN resolutions since Russia's invasion of Ukraine**

The table above presents the voting patterns of countries in the African bloc in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Human Rights Council of the UN. In the first draft

resolution, SC/14808 submitted by Albania and the United States a day after the invasion called for an end to Russia's military offensive against Ukraine, Kenya, Ghana, and Gabon who constituted the non-permanent members of the Security Council from the African bloc unanimously approved the resolution although Russia vetoed it. The same voting pattern by the three non-permanent security members from Africa was observed in Security Council resolution SC/14809 which called for an emergency special session of the General Assembly to examine the situation in Ukraine. In resolution SC/14838 tabled by Russia which demanded civilian protection in Ukraine and called for unhindered access to humanitarian assistance, all three African countries abstained.

Although the African bloc on the UN Security Council displayed the same voting behaviour, the General Assembly votes were diverse. On March 2, 2022, the UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1 with the subject *Aggression against Ukraine* was adopted to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and demanded the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Russian military forces from Ukraine and abide by international law. An overwhelming majority of 141 members of the United Nations supported the resolution with 35 abstentions and 5 against the resolution. Eritrea remained the only African country to vote against the resolution. About 52% of African countries (28) supported the resolution with about 31% (17) abstaining from the vote while 8 African countries altogether did not participate at all in the voting process. Despite many African governments supporting the resolution in the General Assembly, the variation in their votes demonstrated a split in their voting and less agreement on the African continent in contrast to the Security Council resolutions. In a follow-up to Resolution ES-11/1, the UNGA adopted Ukraine-drafted Resolution ES-11/2 entitled *Humanitarian Consequences of the aggression against Ukraine* on March 24, 2022, which demanded civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine. 27 African countries supported the resolution with 20 abstentions and Eritrea again being the only African country

to vote against the resolution. Rather intriguing on that day is that South Africa's drafted resolution *Humanitarian situation emanating out of the conflict in Ukraine* which did not refer to Russia or its role in originating the conflict did not garner enough support with 67 states voting not to take action (UN, 2022h).

Another UNGA resolution was adopted on April 7, 2022 and called for the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council (HRC) on grounds of gross and systematic violations of human rights. Resolution ES-11/3 had the subject "*Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council*" and the vote occurred coincidentally with the 28<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide. Important to note is that Libya remains the only other country that was suspended from the Human Rights Council in 2011 following repression of protests by then-ruler Muammar Gaddafi (The Guardian, 2011). The votes of African countries' representatives in this resolution were very interesting as it caused more division among African countries compared to the previous resolutions. The resolution which passed with 93 countries in support, 58 abstentions, 24 against and 18 absences garnered the least backing from African countries. 24 African countries abstained, 9 voted against, 11 did not vote and only 10 African countries voted in support of the resolution. Notably, compared to the previous ones which only Eritrea voted against, this resolution saw 9 African countries voting against it. Also, to note is that Egypt and Nigeria who had backed earlier resolutions decided to abstain. Although Ghana and Kenya who constituted part of the non-permanent members of the Security Council abstained from this vote their counterpart on the Security Council Gabon voted against the decision. The voting patterns are in resemblance of the resolutions put forth by the UN Human Rights Council on March 4 and May 12 when 5 of the 13 African countries present on the council abstained or voted against the resolutions that were approved (UN OHCHR, 2022).

On October 12, 2022, with 143 UN member states in favour, 5 against, 35 abstentions, and 10 members not voting the UN General Assembly adopted the ES-11/4 entitled *Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations*. The vote reaffirmed the UN's commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and condemned the illegal annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine. In contrast with the previous resolutions about suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council and compared to previous resolutions, this resolution was highly favoured by African countries with 30 countries voting in support of the resolution. It's noteworthy that none of the countries on the African continent voted against the resolution although 19 countries abstained.

On November 14, 2022, the UNGA again adopted a resolution on Russian reparations for Ukraine to establish a global framework for compensation for loss, damage and injury coupled with documenting records of evidence and claims. Like the resolution on the suspension of Russia on the Human Rights Council, this resolution garnered little support from African governments with only 15 countries supporting the resolution with 5 voting against it and a further 27 abstaining.

At the time of writing this paper, the *Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine* was the latest resolution (ES-11/6) which was adopted in February 2023. The resolution emphasised the territorial independence of Ukraine and underscored the need to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine. 30 African countries supported the resolution while 15 abstained from voting with only Mali and Eritrea voting against the resolution.

Votes from African countries in the UN General Assembly have exposed stark differences and positions amongst countries on the war. That notwithstanding, certain trends have become

apparent after a year. These voting patterns can be a vital way to understand some of the perspectives of African countries and their positions on the war. To start with, it can be observed that African countries are more inclined to condemn Russia in accordance with the principles of the UN charter. Their votes in favour of resolutions ES-11/1, ES-11/2, ES-11/4 and ES-11/6 are indicative of this. Nonetheless, the resolutions that call for austere or severe measures against Russia like the ES-11/3 and ES-11/5 resolutions have not really been welcomed or gained popularity by the African governments.

African countries' position on the various resolutions remains nuanced and many Western countries were either astonished or disappointed by the voting patterns displayed by some African countries like Senegal, South Africa, and Namibia. While Senegal remains a key ally of the West, particularly the US and is regarded as one of the most stable democracies which shares fundamental values with the US, Namibia and South Africa have also been regarded as allies of most Western states and the US. With abstention perceived in certain circles as subdued support for Russia's intervention, western governments have either criticised or dismissed the posture of these African nations. South Africa has clarified its stance and expressed dissatisfaction with the failure of the resolutions to provide a favourable atmosphere for enhanced mediation and peaceful negotiations. The country has rejected demands to adopt a firm position against Russia, maintaining that increased dialogue and peace negotiations are the most effective means of resolving the dispute. While objecting to the phrasing of the first resolution, South Africa's Ambassador to the UN Mathu Joyini noted that it "does not create an environment conducive for diplomacy, dialogue and mediation" (Stark, 2022, para .3). In the more recent resolution in February 2023, Mathu Joyini questions the resolution in her statement "As we have asked this Assembly before, are our ways and actions focused on the maintenance of peace, or creating further divisions that make the attainment of immediate peace less likely?" and further adds that the resolution "brings us brings us no closer to laying

the foundations for a durable peace and bringing an end to the devastation and destruction," and further argued that "what we need is a firm, unequivocal commitment to peace from all parties" (DW, 2023, para. 27). In an interview with Researcher 1, he noted that it is important to consider two factors when understanding the stance of South Africa. First their core foreign policy principles on non-alignment play a role and the essence of maintaining solidarity with long-standing friends. While reflecting on a survey he did in South Africa he said that

there are deep personal links because you chat with the people and you will realise a surprising number of them had done their degrees in the Soviet Union, and for them the Soviet Union is Russia...and after their education, they rise through the ranks into government positions. (Personal Communication, 2023).

In a similar vein, a Policy Analyst added that the historical Soviet legacy in the country cannot be overlooked. He highlighted that

the Soviet legacy is there for South Africa which really had a lot of support from Russia while fighting apartheid. Even the current Minister of Defence, Thandi Modise was an intelligent officer in the ANC and trained in Russia and some of the people she interfaces with in the Russian Foreign Ministry today, she knew them while she was still a rebel fighting in the apartheid regime. (Personal Communication, 2023)

He further emphasized that "to think those relationships don't matter would be very naive and that is trying to ask Africans to forget their history" (Personal Communication, 2023). This indicates that South Africa's historical ties with Russia have impacted the country's voting. South Africa's neutral position on the war has placed the country at odds with several Western allies, especially the US. The US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in July 2022 made a trip to the country to secure the country's backing in the war (Associated Press, 2022). Later in September, President Joe Biden hosted his counterpart from South Africa President Cyril

Ramaphosa where he acknowledged the vital voice of South Africa. The African country is considered a leader of other African countries that have refrained from condemning Russia and thus the US sought to convince the African country to change its position. As noted by President Joe Biden, South Africa has a vital voice on the global stage (Magome & Madhani, 2022).

Senegal's decision to abstain from the resolutions also shocked many Western allies, particularly in Europe. The stance of Senegal was very crucial as the incumbent chairman of the African Union is the president of Senegal, President Macky Sall and as such it raised queries whether the West African nation's stance reflected the "voice of Africa". Nonetheless, an insight into history reveals that the country adopted a similar position during the voting on the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia where it refused to condemn Russia. In essence, this posture of neutrality appears to be consistent in the country's foreign policy over the years. As expressed by Ndiaye (2022), neutrality is a key component of Senegal's diplomacy and the country is recognised for fostering dialogue. This tradition of neutrality allows the country to maintain a channel of communication with all conflicting parties in a crisis. In clarifying Senegal's decision to abstain, a government official noted that

the natural role of our country in the world is to work for peace and the rapprochement of societies. That is why we abstain. It is a prudent posture but also a wise one. If you want to play the mediator between two conflicting parties, you can't condemn one over the other. In order to be credible, you have to be neutral (Boko, 2022).

When asked why Namibia had abstained from a UN resolution that saw Russia's declaration of various regions in Ukraine illegal in an important security meeting in Munich in February 2023, Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila said that Namibia was focused on "resolving the problem, not on shifting blame" (Pitel & Chazan, 2023, para. 12). She added:



“the bottom line is that money used to buy weapons would be better used to promote development in Ukraine, in Africa, in Asia, in the EU itself where many people are facing hardships” (Pitel & Chazan, 2023, para. 12). Namibia’s stance of abstinence stems from its foreign policy shaped by the slogan “a friend to all and enemy to none” and emphasizes that the southern African country maintains friendly relations that ultimately promote the country’s interests. Moreover, the foreign policy of Namibia is enshrined in the democratic constitution of the country. Article 96 of the Constitution emphasizes that the state should adopt and maintain a policy of non-alignment in its International Relations (Remmert, 2018, p. 21). In a response to the resolution on the suspension of Russia on the HRC where Namibia abstained, the Deputy Prime Minister of Namibia who doubles as the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah said “Why not abstain? I am saying we are monitoring and evaluating the situation, and I want to draw your attention to Article 96 of the Namibian Constitution. That is what is guiding us in handling issues such as this” (Ngatjiheue & Tendane, 2022, para. 5).

Eritrea remains the only African country that has consistently stood out as an ally of Russia in the UN voting patterns. The country in the Horn of Africa traces its independence back to 1993 following a prolonged war with Ethiopia. The eastern African nation is led by Issaias Afewerki, former leader of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) who championed the course of independence. President Afewerki has been very explicit and never disguised his contempt for the West, particularly the US. According to the Eritrean historian, Gaim Kibreab, the EPLF always regarded the Soviet Union as a strategic ally against imperialism and considered the US as a primary adversary (Ajala, 2022). Eritrea, often regarded as a pariah nation and ostracized in the global arena, has suffered sanctions from the US. In November 2021, the US imposed sanctions on Eritrea’s Defense Force, the ruling political party, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), to mention a few in response to gross human rights violations

in neighbouring northern Ethiopia. According to Researcher 1 and the Security Expert, Eritrea's voting pattern can be rationalised to be influenced by it being under Western sanctions coupled with the country's lack of interest. In essence, the Policy Analyst opined in agreement that "the country's stance against the resolution was intended to express solidarity and sympathy with Russia as well as challenging the status quo" (Personal Communication, 2023). While commenting on Ethiopia's position, the Policy Analyst highlighted that although Ethiopia had long-term political, military, and economic relations with Russia, Ethiopia could be categorised as a country that understood Russia's security concerns; concerns which the UN resolutions failed to address. As a border country with Eritrea, Ethiopia also has positive historical relations with Russia which dates back to the Battle of Adwa in the late 1800s between the Ethiopian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy where Russian volunteer soldiers were committed to support the former (Matusevich, 2008). According to Ryder and Kebret (2022), the unwavering military assistance given to Ethiopia during President Siad Barre's against Ethiopia's territorial integrity coupled with Russia's contemporary backing against the US and other pressure from the UN Security Council regarding the Tigray civil war undoubtedly had an impact on Ethiopia's decision to not participate in the vote.

To the Policy Analyst and the Geopolitical Analyst, countries like Uganda, Algeria and Sudan have strong connections with Russia but chose to abstain rather than vote against the resolution because they adhered to the fundamental principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which includes non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state, self-determination and refraining from the use of force. The Geopolitical Analyst added that "Countries in this group believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is in contrast with the core principles and therefore abstained for neutrality and these principles constitute drivers of abstention to demonstrate neutrality" (Personal Communication, 2023). In essence, abstaining permits the vote to occur without actively obstructing the process, and it is seen as a sign of this principled

neutrality. For example, Uganda opted to abstain in the vote stating that ‘neutrality’ was a crucial element as the country welcomed the position of the NAM chair (Africanews, 2022; Kazibwe, 2023). These positions indicate that for leaders in these countries, this war is not just about Ukraine, but rather a proxy war and an extension of broader geopolitical rivalries between the Euro-Atlantic axis and Russia and therefore abstention in the context of this war by this group is a statement of their resolve to remain neutral amidst escalating global tensions. Other countries in Africa like Congo, Mozambique and Angola that have taken a neutral stance also have long-term relationships with Russia since the Soviet period with some firmly committed to a non-alignment (Desfosses, 1987; Roy, 1978; Somerville, 1984).

Largely, most African countries have maintained the same voting patterns in the various UN resolutions on Russia. That notwithstanding, a few notable changes are worthy of mentioning regarding the last vote in February 2023. For instance, Mali changed from abstaining or not participating to voting against the resolution in February thereby making it two countries on the African continent opposing the resolution, alongside Eritrea which had been consistent. This change in stance and cling towards Russia can be explained by growing bilateral relations between both countries. With Mali’s relationship with its former colonial power France deteriorating, the country has shifted towards Russia for the provision of security and other operational assistance. Russia has given Mali military assistance ranging from aircraft, heavy weapons, and personnel training. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in February 2023 announced increased military assistance for the military junta in Mali to combat jihadist groups while on a visit to the West African state which was recognised by the junta, as it was the first time a head of the Russian Foreign Ministry had visited the country (Aljazeera, 2023d; Mugabi, 2023).

Despite the absence of a unified African position on the war, the Security Expert viewed that taking a neutral position can be translated as support for Russia. He added that “the anti-Western sentiments are there. And most of these countries perceive Putin as being anti-Western. There is a certain degree of justified anger towards Western countries when it comes to what happened in Libya” (Personal Communication, 2023). To him “it’s not necessarily in the African position to pursue this position but it's this negative cloud around the West and the historical legacy” (Personal Communication, 2023).

African governments have had varied positions on the war and avoided largely recency bias. Simultaneously, their stance can be understood by foreign policy and comprehension of geopolitical undercurrents. Largely most of these votes did not represent a moral test to the countries. As the Policy Analyst stated “a country’s vote does not reflect its moral opinion but what its vote is seen to mean for its own interests- it is a geopolitical calculation and not a moral test” (Personal Communication, 2023). This indicates that countries in their voting patterns have their subtle interest and not necessarily for the moral condemnation of the war. That may be the reason why many African countries abstained in various resolutions.

### ***Peace and mediation efforts***

African countries have exhibited a divided stance on the war in Ukraine with some maintaining a policy of strategic non-alignment while others have supported UN resolutions against the actions of Russia. On February 22, 2022, the chair of the AU, Senegal’s president Macky Sall and the Chadian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the chairman of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat urged the Russian Federation to “respect international law, [and] the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine” (African Union, 2022b, p. 1). This stance is consistent with the AU charter which has safeguarded and upheld the member states colonial borders since its formation in May 1963 (previously called the

Organisation of African Unity). On March 9, 2022, in his capacity as chair of the African Union, Senegal's president Macky Sall held a phone conversation with the Russian leader where he called for a lasting ceasefire (Ndiaye, 2022). Later in May that year at a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President Sall revealed his visit plans to Moscow and Kyiv. In a joint news conference, Reuters reported that Sall noted that "we do not want to be aligned on this conflict, very clearly, we want peace. Even though we condemn the invasion, we're working for a de-escalation, we're working for a ceasefire, for dialogue...that is the African position" (Reuters, 2022, para. 2). Nonetheless, rather than focusing just on comments and statements, it is also very critical to analyse the actions of African leaders to assess their stance on neutrality in the crisis and whether their efforts could aim at fostering dialogue and peace.

On April 12 2022, the Ukrainian President in a conversation with the AU chairman, Sall called and asked for a conference with the various political leaders of the union but this action was futile with the meeting pushed back (Aljazeera, 2022c). Subsequently, on June 20, 2022, via video conference, the Ukrainian president addressed the union after it had been delayed for so long. This was met with limited attendance with only four heads of state following it live (Hochet-Bodin, 2022). While explaining the reason for the low attendance, the Policy Analyst asserted that "only a few presidents showed up for the virtual meeting because nobody really knows him (Zelensky) and there is no relationship" (Personal Communication, 2023). These responses and actions from the African leaders however cast doubt on the true neutrality stance of the continental organisation as they contrast with the objectives of the AU to promote peace from a position of neutrality.

In June 2023 however, an African delegation consisting of leaders and representatives from Congo-Brazzaville (envoy), South Africa (president), Egypt (prime minister), Comoros (president), Senegal (president), Uganda (envoy) and Zambia (president) met with the

presidents of the warring states; Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russia's President Vladimir Putin. The African contingent presented a 10-point proposal which included recognition of the sovereignty of the warring countries, calls for unimpeded grain and fertiliser exports, de-escalation of fighting, the release of prisoners of war, and more humanitarian support, to mention a few requests (Jones, 2023). However, both Russia and Ukraine rejected the peace plan to be unworkable with neither party agreeing to peace talks (Jones, 2023). Ultimately the mission failed in achieving its goal. While not surprised by the outcome of the mediation efforts, the Security Expert maintained that

negotiating a peace deal was always going to be tough because the problem is that even if you come with the best of intentions, you have two parties that exist in different realities so how do you negotiate with them? And, when it comes to Ukraine, Ukraine can show you the UN Charter (territorial integrity and sovereignty) which Russia violated and Russia will tell you well, look, we amended our Constitution and these territories are now part of Russia. Do you want us to give up part of Russia to Ukraine?. (Personal Communication, 2023)

He argued that the war would be prolonged due to these irreconcilable differences. Researcher 1 highlighted two reasons for this failure. According to him, African states were limited in their capacities to mediate from a position of power, unlike global powers like the US and China. He said “there is a mediation from a position of power where you use carrots and sticks to influence the positions of the warring parties to ensure some make concessions. African states are not in a position to do that”. Researcher 2 alluded to this saying that “they (African countries) need to have some kind of leverage over Russia for Russia to stop acting the way it's acting, and they don't have that kind of leverage on Russia” (Personal Communication, 2023). Similarly, the Geopolitical Analyst viewed that “you need to have the capacity and

financial independence to be able to propose anything on the international stage” (Personal Communication, 2023). To him African countries extensive reliance on external aids undermines their ability to hold a vital global voice. This indicates that Africa’s lack of agency and capacity influenced the failed mediation initiative. Another reason for the failure according to Researcher 1 was the timing of the negotiation. The concept of “ripeness” is crucial in peace negotiations he added. He explained the concept as “a stage in the conflict where both sides think that yeah, OK we need to have a peace agreement” (Personal Communication, 2023). He asserted that the reason for the failure of the African mission to negotiate a peace deal was that it was too soon as “they picked an inopportune moment to pursue a truce and not because of where they came from” (Personal Communication, 2023). This portrays timing and capacity building as relevant criteria for pursuing peace. Despite the failure of the peace mission to achieve its predetermined objective, the Security Expert saw some positives indicating that it showed proactiveness from African leaders in the pursuit of greater African agency on the global stage. While admitting to the failure he contended that

beyond the failure, what the peace initiative did was it establish a channel of communication between African states and separately, Ukraine and Russia, where African countries now have a chance to voice their concerns and discuss their concerns directly with the parties involved, which means that the next time there is a gridlock or some sort of a break-off communication between Russia and Ukraine that may affect African states there, it's much easier for African states to get themselves involved into the negotiations and perhaps facilitate support or negotiate to represent the African interests. (Personal Communication, 2023)

In essence, while Africa may lack the immediate capacity to influence the war, there is a potential for African states to advocate their interests and potentially contribute to future peace

processes, but this would require an increased continental front and greater independence from external influences. The peace initiative contributes to Africa's continued and increasing efforts to have a significant global voice.

### **3.2 Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War for Africa**

#### **3.2.1 Diplomatic Engagements and Influence Rivalry:**

Following the war in Ukraine, increased diplomatic engagements, and deepened political ties by the West, Ukraine and Russia underscored the continent's strategic significance in the global geopolitical environment and the continuous struggle for influence in Africa among great powers. The Ukraine crisis has transformed the continent into a geopolitical battleground for major powers, resulting in increased diplomatic activities and raising concerns about Africa being caught in the middle of global power competition. As the Policy Analyst noted, "after the war, there's only been an increase in relationship with Africa in terms of Russian engagement and also Ukraine's engagement" (Personal Communication, 2023). Between 2022 and the first half of 2023, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov travelled to 14 countries in Africa. In a four-nation African tour in July 2022, Lavrov who had never visited previously, visited Uganda, Egypt, Republic of Congo and wrapped up in Ethiopia to rally for more support for Moscow during a period of confrontation with Western powers over the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Aljazeera, 2022b; Hamilton, 2023). The Russian diplomat promoted Russia's narrative of the West's responsibility for triggering of food and energy crisis due to severely imposed sanctions (Czerep, 2022). He returned to the continent six months in a second tour where he paid visits to Angola, Eritrea, Eswatini and South Africa (Novozhenina, 2023). Beyond advancing the Russian narratives, the visits timely served as a prelude to the second Russia-Africa Summit which was held at the Expo Forum in St. Petersburg on July 27 and 28 of 2023 after it was postponed, having been originally scheduled for October in Ethiopia. It appears that Moscow prioritises Africa as the continent remains the single largest audience for



Putin's campaign against diplomatic isolation and African states are central to Moscow's periodic appeals for nations' votes, or at least abstentions, against UN resolutions condemning the brutal assault on Ukraine. Given this, the Policy Analyst argued that "Russia needs Africa in order not to lose the political warfare or the political component of the war" and therefore views the continent as a critical vector of its global strategy, and even more so following the invasion of Ukraine (Personal Communication, 2023). In his speeches, Lavrov frequently invoked themes of sovereignty, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. For instance, in a policy article written by Lavrov to news outlets in Egypt, Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia, he wrote

Russia-Africa ties are based on the time-tested bonds of friendship and cooperation. Our country who has not stained itself with the bloody crimes of colonialism, has always sincerely supported Africans in their struggle for liberation from colonial oppression, provided practical and often gratuitous assistance to the peoples of the continent in the formation of their statehood, creation of foundations of national economies, defense capabilities build up, and training of qualified personnel. Today we stand in solidarity with the African demands to complete the process of decolonialization and support relevant initiatives on the UN platform. (Russian Federation, 2022, para. 4)

This rhetorical strategy is understandable due to the limited economic involvement with Africa with total FDI inflow from Russia less than 1% of overall FDI inflows to the continent (UNCTAD, 2022). With Russia-Africa trade-based economic engagements valued modestly at \$14 billion with a mere 4 countries constituting 70% of this (Egypt, South Africa, Algeria and Morocco), this is so small compared to African trade with the EU, China and the US which is \$295 billion, \$254 billion and \$65 billion respectively (Siegle, 2023) As Researcher 1 puts it, "when it comes to putting money on the table, Russia cannot match the great powers" (Personal

Communication, 2023). It therefore comes as no surprise that Russia often relies on sentimentalism when communicating with and about Africa. Russia's emphasis on historical feelings seems to be a calculated move to deflect attention from its part in causing the food and energy challenges that followed after it invaded Ukraine. Lavrov's messaging may find resonance with some African leaders who view the war in Ukraine as a continuation of Russia's long-standing rivalry with Western imperialism. Russia views it as advantageous to portray its invasion as a resurgence or continuation of Cold War dynamics, as this perspective might incentivise African nations to (re)adopt a position of non-alignment and neutrality which will result in African states' abstention from endorsing UN resolutions that seeks to condemn Moscow proposed by Western nations. Successful in this strategy, Moscow could then show that the Western narrative of the invasion is not widely believed outside its traditional zone of influence. This is likely the reason behind Lavrov's support and commendation of countries that have maintained neutrality. For instance, as he drummed support for the Kremlin in Angola, Lavrov slammed the West and praised Angola's "balanced position" on global affairs (France 24, 2023; VOA, 2023a, para .11).

In a similar vein, Ukraine has been trying to rally for support in Africa following Russia's invasion. In October 2022, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba visited Kenya, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Important to note is that this was the Ukrainian government's first diplomatic tour in Africa (Ashby, 2022). The choice of these countries appears to be very strategic due to their relevance on the continent, their voting behaviour in the UNGA and security council which condemned Russia's invasion (Ghana, Kenya) and especially Kenya with the outspoken and generally lauded public critique of the actions of Russia by Martin Kimani, Kenyan's UN Ambassador within the context of European imperialism when he warned Russia to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine citing Africa's colonial past to emphasize the dangers of stoking the "embers of dead

empires.” (Chappell, 2022, p. 1). With the current chairman of the continental body AU being the president of Senegal, that choice also was strategic. While on this tour, Kuleba also sought to counteract Russian disinformation tactics on the continent, which have been ‘wrongly’ framing the Ukrainian conflict as a response against NATO and Western aggression. During a conference with Senegalese Foreign Minister Aissata Tall Sall, Kuleba directly addressed and challenged Russia’s claims like the assertion that the war was triggered by Ukraine’s desire to join NATO- a pretext that did not apply to Finland which also expressed a desire to join the NATO. As Kuleba pointed out “Russia wanted to make believe that [the war is because] Ukraine wants to be a member of NATO. Finland wants to be a member. And yet Russia did not attack it” (Ashby, 2022, para. 6). Kuleba further highlighted the unique identities of Russia and Ukraine emphasizing their distinct culture, language and histories as he challenged what he viewed as Russia’s propaganda efforts to conflate the two countries (Ashby, 2022). In May 2023, Kuleba embarked on a second Africa trip where he visited Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique and Nigeria intending to significantly boost contacts with African countries and to bolster global coalitions in support of his country against the backdrop of Russia's aggression (Khoza, 2023; MFA Ukraine, 2023). As a continuation of the Ukraine’s African strategy which sought to deepen contacts with African countries, Kuleba embarked on a third African tour where he visited countries like Equatorial Guinea and Liberia (MFA Ukraine, 2023). These trips have sought to accumulate support for Ukraine in the ongoing war with the top diplomat urging African nations to end their neutral stance on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine (VOA, 2023b). While highlighting the importance of connections with Africa and other parts of the Global South, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky announced plans to increase the country’s presence in Africa by opening 10 new businesses and strengthening trade ties.

He said

Ten countries have already been determined where new embassies of Ukraine in Africa will be opened. We also developed the concept of the "Ukraine - Africa" trading house with the opening of its offices in the capitals of the most promising countries of the African continent. (Government of Ukraine, 2022, para. 26)

Ukraine's attempt to deepen ties with Africa has been however met with queries. In an interview with DW, Dr Boni Yao Gebe a senior research fellow at the University of Ghana's Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy questioned the timing of this enhanced engagement asking why Ukraine is now interested in opening these embassies. As Researcher 1 and the Geopolitical Analyst maintained, the suddenly enhanced diplomacy will not easily woo African governments who have histories with Russia (Personal Communication, 2023). Nonetheless, Ukraine has an uphill to climb to compete with Russia's influence on the continent as Russia's engagement with Africa goes as far as the decolonization process, to say the least.

Beyond the warring countries' increased engagement with Africa, the geopolitical competition has further triggered other great powers into intensifying diplomatic efforts with African countries. For example, the United States has continued its involvement in Africa and more so embarked on strategic top-level tours in Africa since the invasion of Ukraine. In this, the Security Expert and the Policy Analyst pointed out that the US diplomatic officials appear to understand the reasons for Africa's reception of Russia's communication tactics. Nonetheless, conflicting commentaries from the US put African countries into a state of confusion over intentions. Prior to her tour dubbed "listening tour" to Uganda and Ghana in early August 2022, the U.S ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield emphasized her intent to find answers rather than placing blame for the escalating food crisis in Africa that has been aggravated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, upon her arrival in Uganda, she

cautioned African countries stressing that certain boundaries are not to be crossed exhibiting contrast in messages. Speaking at Uganda's capital, Kampala she mentioned that countries could purchase agricultural commodities such as wheat and fertilizers from Russia but clarified that “if a country decides to engage with Russia, where there are sanctions, then they are breaking those sanctions” suggesting countries not to conduct transactions with Russia in sanctioned-transactions (Muhumuza, 2022, para. 2). To Researcher 1, this will constitute a major challenge for African countries arguing that a country in a neutral stance may have to take a position in the future to avoid punitive measures.

In response to her statement after their meeting, the President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni indicated on his Twitter page now called “X” that “if they really want to help Africa, they should consider separating us from the sanctions in a war where we are not participating” (Dandessa, 2022, para. 10). Further engagements were observed by the US Secretary of State between August 7 and 12 of 2022 as they toured three sub-Saharan countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Rwanda. These visits came on the back of Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's tour to Ethiopia, Egypt, the Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia in the month before. This visit sought to launch the US Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa which reinforces the US view that African countries are geostrategic players and critical partners (Price, 2022). In a speech delivered in Pretoria, the top US diplomat said, “Our strategy is rooted in the recognition that Sub-Saharan Africa is a major geopolitical force – one that shaped our past, is shaping our present, and will shape our future” (Hansler, 2022, para. 3). While highlighting that the intent of the visit was not to counter Russia’s influence on Africa, his speech highlighted the detrimental influence of Russia on the continent. Along with the address, the 17-page strategy document released by the White House also explicitly acknowledges Russia’s involvement in Africa. The document reveals that

Russia views the region as a permissive environment for parastatals and private military companies, often fomenting instability for strategic and financial benefit. Russia uses its security and economic ties, as well as disinformation, to undercut Africans' principled opposition to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine and related human rights abuses. (Hansler, 2022, para. 7)

While criticising the Wagner Group in his address, Secretary Blinken further said

History shows that strong democracies tend to be more stable and less prone to conflict, but that poor governance, exclusion, and corruption inherent in weak democracies makes them more vulnerable to extremist movements as well as to foreign interference. That includes the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group, which exploits instability to pillage resources and commit abuses with impunity, as we've seen in Mali and the Central African Republic. (Hansler, 2022, para. 9)

He added that with the continent facing challenges of terrorism and violent extremisms, Wagner's mercenary group was not the ideal solution to the problem (Hansler, 2022).

In April 2022, the US Congress in a near-unanimous bipartisan vote passed the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act (CMRAA). This bill was a clear response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and will oblige Washington to punish African governments that abet Russian 'malign' activities or undermine US foreign policy objectives and interests on Russia or proxies of Russia (Fabricius, 2022). To Fabricius (2022), Russia's invasion seems to have sparked a new Cold War and that all other considerations will henceforth be subordinated to the imperatives of that conflict which will be dangerous as Africa will get caught in the crossfire. This bill was vehemently opposed by the SADC during its 42<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in August 2022 and received condemnation across the continent for disrespecting the sovereignty of African nations. Naledi Pandor, the South

African Foreign Minister for instance called it ‘absolutely disgraceful’ (Annor, 2023; Prashad, 2022, para. 7). Arguably, US hostility toward Russia's expanding influence on the African continent has political undertones. However, it would be irresponsible of African leaders to disregard the US's protests and the actions of Wagner.

### **3.2.2 Geopolitical Dynamics and Security Challenges Amidst External Influences**

The Sahel region remains one of the most fragile regions in Africa. Countries in the Sahel (consisting of Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger) along with the neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) are confronted with a plethora of development challenges (Sempijja & Eyita-Okon, 2022). The challenges in the Sahel are complex and multi-faceted. Persistent economic instability, drought, climate change and resource scarcity, poor governance, irregular migration and organised crimes as well as violent extremism and increasing threats of terrorism constitute some of the challenges in the region (Çonkar, 2020). These constitute what Çonkar (2020) referred to as a perfect storm where insecurity and poverty become mutually reinforcing. The dire security situation in the region has prompted initiatives from both the continent and outside the continent to reinforce security as well as social and political order. Some of the African regional initiatives like the Nouakchott Process and the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) have been undermined by a lack of sufficient financial support, logistical challenges, resources, and political commitment. The G5 Sahel Joint Force was formed in 2017 and is composed of about 5000 military personnel from Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso to combat extremist groups. Several countries through bilateral and organizational platforms contribute significantly to the G5 Sahel initiative. Outside the African regional initiatives include the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (Çonkar, 2020). Generally, African countries rely on financial support from Western allies to fund these operations.

In 2020, a military junta seized power in Mali. Since assuming power, the military junta has turned towards Russia even as its relations with Western nations particularly France deteriorate (Mehta, 2023). The military regime has received support from Russia in the form of training, equipment, and military support and the junta's decision to work with Russian mercenaries to combat Islamist insurgency has been viewed as undermining the efforts of MINUSMA (Dziedzic, 2023; Mugabi, 2023; UK Parliament, 2022). In 2023, the UNSC following a request from the military junta ended its decade-long peacekeeping mission in the country (Mohammed, 2023). Prior to this, the military junta announced withdrawal from the regional G5 Sahel force in 2022 and this further isolates the West African country which has been slapped by the regional political group ECOWAS (Tessier, 2022). Burkina Faso also suffered two military coups in 2022 with the first in January and the second after eight months. In evolving security dynamics in the Sahel and increased anti-French sentiments, many external factors such as Russia and the influence of Russian private military contractors, particularly the Wagner Group have become a worrying concern for multinational joint task forces funded by the West. As Eguegu (2023) expressed the foreign policy decisions made by the two countries; Burkina Faso and Mali are even threatening continental-led efforts like the Accra Initiative, a cooperative and collaborative security mechanism established by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo in 2017 as a response to the growing regional extremist threat. Niger and Mali were admitted as observers before becoming members after two years. The initiative focuses on three core areas: training, cross-border military operations, and information and intelligence sharing (Mensah, 2022). The Accra Initiative so far has yielded little tangible action and the menace of jihadism continues to grow in West Africa. In the first half of 2023, the region recorded 1,814 incidents of terrorist attacks which caused 4,593 recorded fatalities (UN, 2023b). One obstacle has been the delay in the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Accra Initiative (MNJTF-AI) which was presented at



the Accra Initiative Summit in November 2022 and sought to deploy about 2000 military troops to Burkina Faso to combat a variety of extremist organisations that have wrecked devastation in the country. Due to the exacerbating security issues in the region, the delayed deployment has been a cause for alarm. As indicated by the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) Leonardo Santos Simaõ, sustained political and financial engagement will be required to ensure that activities under the initiative are operationalized. (UN, 2023b). The Accra Initiative Summit in 2022 concluded with member states leaders advocating for action-oriented measures, particularly in fundraising to assist nations that are heavily impacted by terrorism. They also reiterated their dedication to leveraging requisite indigenous resources to make the MNJTF-AI operational within a month. The United Kingdom and the EU have shown significant interest in the Accra Initiative.

At the Accra Initiative Summit in 2022, the president of the EU said

We are already providing substantial support. For the period 2021-2024, EUR 135 million has been earmarked for the security and stabilisation of the northern regions of coastal states (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin): border controls, enhanced intelligence capacity, conflict prevention, infrastructure protection. (European Council, 2022, para. 9)

Nonetheless, recent developments in Burkina Faso and Mali which have resulted in the expulsion of European and French military forces with noticeable gravitation towards Russia may result in the West's hesitance in financially backing any regional security initiatives that include these two nations. The Political Analyst and the Security Expert raised concerns regarding possible funding challenges. Should there be a withdrawal or lack of future commitments from the West, the Security Expert stressed that it would create additional insecurity in the region since a funding gap will be created, one that Russia cannot fill. The

Policy Analyst on the other hand added that “what Russia can do is to offer regime security” but questioned the capacity of Russia to ensure overall national security or even regional security (Personal Communication, 2023). It is therefore hardly shocking that not much progress has been made following the November Accra Initiative Summit. Essentially, the geopolitical competition can threaten peace and security in the subregion and the larger continent and the actions of these two countries, internal political instability in the countries in addition to upsetting European allies, will make it more difficult to build a functional regional security and crisis framework from political, financial, and operational positions. It is thus relevant for African governments and leadership to be very tactful in their decision-making and navigate a web of challenging political dynamics and competing imperatives as foreign policies are not formulated in a vacuum.

### **3.2.3 Bifurcation of African countries**

The war in Ukraine has the potential to exacerbate existing divisions or create new ones in Africa. In the context of broader global affairs, the Policy Analyst indicated that the war in Ukraine has been a real geopolitical test for African countries. The conflict “is not just a clash point in great power competition but one of the defining ones and the second flashpoint will be South China Sea and Taiwan” he added, and it is within this context of great power competition that people and leaders of the continent are viewing the Ukraine war (Personal Communication, 2023). The war has shown that certain countries may ‘align’ with Russia due to historical ties, security partnerships or economic advantages while others might gravitate towards Western countries that seek to promote democratic values and provide democratic aid. Russia’s expansion and increasing influence in Africa particularly through arms sales and private military contracts such as the Wagner Group can affect the continent’s security architecture, especially in how countries approach their defence and security policies. Political deadlocks in regional security initiatives may rise because of contesting foreign alignments.

According to the Policy Analyst,

there will be political hurdles on the continent, in terms of addressing conflicts. Look at the issue of Niger, for instance. On one hand, you could say those countries are all putsches, and that's why they're supporting each other. But it's not just that, they can say if you invade Niger, we (Burkina Faso and Mali) would step in because they are confident that they will get at least support of even if just weapons from somewhere and you could see a close connection between Mali and Russia in the heat of the talk about the intervention from ECOWAS. They had a call with Putin, they talked about how they were going to strengthen military cooperation. So that was signalling if you go into Niger, we're going to step in and we are not stepping in alone, when we step in we'll be getting weapons from our ally that is going to provide them to us. (Personal Communication, 2023)

Following economic and travel sanctions meted to Niger after the coup and a threat of military intervention from regional bloc ECOWAS to restore democracy, the military governments in Mali and Burkina Faso issued a statement that "any military intervention against Niger will be considered as a declaration of war against Burkina Faso and Mali." (Crawford et al., 2023, para. 20). In September 2023, the Sahel nations Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger signed a mutual defence pact *Alliance of Sahel States* aimed to help each other against possible threats of armed rebellion or external aggression (Aljazeera, 2023b). Pro-junta supporters in Niger took to the streets in Niamey, denouncing France, waving Russian flags along with signs reading "Down with France" and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin. Both Mali and Burkina Faso have undergone two coups each since 2020 which is a worrying development in the subregion. There seems to be a long-term realignment in countries like Mali and Niger which will have repercussions for the subregion and the wider continent in terms of designing political and

security architecture to ensure security in the region. While factoring in the domestic tensions that exist in the countries and the anti-French sentiments, one can conclude that the military officers are bold to make such decisions at least because of the promise of support from Russia.

In sum, the war in Ukraine coupled with a gravitating alliance with Russia by countries like Mali and Burkina Faso may increase the tendencies of stalemate in crucial political decision-making that affects the fragile Sahel.

### **3.2.4 Weakening Support of Democracies?**

The voting patterns exhibited by African countries in the UN resolution on the Russian invasion of Ukraine raise concerns about a potential resurgence of authoritarianism and the erosion of the democratic principles of the country (UNDP, 2022a). Over the period from 2000 to 2021, there were 21 instances of military coups in 14 different countries in Africa (UNDP, 2022a). Additionally, there is a notable trend of constitutional amendments where 16 African countries have either removed, modified or circumvented presidential term limits with 13 occurring within the last decade (UNDP, 2022a). With several elections upcoming, the crisis in Ukraine could precipitate abrupt political transitions, and potentially destabilise electoral processes.

### **3.2.5 Human Security and Food Security**

Countries in Africa have not been left unscathed by the war. Africa is largely dependent on Russian and Ukrainian grain and fertilizer exports. In 2020, African countries imported agricultural goods valued at an estimated \$ 4 billion and wheat constituted 90% of these imports (UNDP, 2022a). Both Ukraine and Russia collectively contribute to, around 30% of the world's wheat production and a significant 80% of sunflower oil (UNDP, 2022a). Heavy dependence on imports from the warring countries meant African countries faced heightened vulnerability. Additionally, Russia is a major exporter of nitrogen fertilizers and a top exporter of phosphorus and potassium fertilizers. Following the invasion in 2022, particularly between February and

August 2022, wheat from Ukraine was trapped in various ports in the Black Sea due to Russian naval blockades. Despite Russian wheat not being placed under sanctions, the exclusion of key Russian banks from the SWIFT system; the world's dominant financial messaging system made it challenging to conduct financial transactions for wheat efficiently. Consequently, this caused disruptions in the global wheat market. This added to the severe food crisis in the Horn of Africa which has been grappling with severe and catastrophic droughts, conflicts and poor climatic conditions which have put about 46 million people in the region at risk of food insecurity (Nzuki, 2023). The spike in wheat prices and subsequent reduction in supplies was very devastating for Egypt. The North African country is the global largest importer of wheat valued at \$4.5 billion in 2021 (Nzuki, 2023). Additionally, Egypt spends \$955 million on wheat subsidies (UNDP, 2022a). With the costs of basic food items like bread, rice, chicken and other meat doubling, Egypt's struggling economy was further hurt (Nzuki, 2023). Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Guinea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone are amongst other African countries that purchase substantial quantities of wheat from Russia. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the West African region is largely less reliant on food imports from Ukraine and Russia making up 1.7% of the total calories consumed in the sub-region (UNDP, 2022a). The spike in the food crisis could also have consequential spillover effects on some landlocked African countries that depend on neighbouring countries that are connected to Ukraine and Russian markets. South Sudan is a relevant example that is reliant on food imports from Kenya and Uganda with about \$253m constituting 48% of total imports from Uganda and \$30 million (30% of total imports from Kenya (UNDP, 2022a). In essence, increased food inflation with respect to maize and wheat in the source markets will have detrimental impacts on local prices in South Sudan, thereby triggering food insecurity.

Following the mounting food crisis and grain supply challenges that occurred following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Senegal's President, and the chair of the AU Macky Sall

accompanied by the chairman of the African Union Commission, Chadian Moussa Faki Mahamat visited Russia in June 2022 to discuss and negotiate the release of grain supplies. Coupled with the peace delegation led by the South African president, this trip was consistent with the desire of the African continent to play a more significant role in international affairs (African Union,2022a; Personal Communication, 2023). In July 2022, the Black Sea Grain Initiative was brokered by Turkey and the UN to ensure the unhindered export of commercial food and fertilizer via the Black Sea from three key ports in Ukraine- Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi also called Yuzhny (Ay & Söylemez, 2023). This agreement eased shortages and allowed about 32.9 million metric tonnes of food to be exported from Ukraine between August 2022 and July 2023 (Aljazeera, 2023c). By October 2022, wheat prices saw about 30% reduction from its peak in May and were about 10% above pre-invasion levels (Girard, 2023). Although the prices remained relatively high, Researcher 1 indicated that “the food prices may have declined if it hadn’t been for the invasion, instead we got a huge spike and then back to where we were” (Personal Communication, 2023). Notable to note was the fragility of the initiative as the agreement was to be renewed every 120 days. To the Policy Analyst, the desire of African countries to become proactive and play significant roles in international events is consistent with changing foreign policy attitudes (Personal Communication, 2023). This is relevant in examining the evolving African viewpoints and includes a resurgence of realpolitik in foreign policy decision-making, coupled with the decline of confidence in multilateral organisations and leadership by the West and a preference for the newly developing multipolar world order. Regardless, the Security Expert warned that African countries should be tactful in their foreign policy choices as a multipolar world order may not necessarily translate into African countries playing prominent roles but instead being under another sphere of influence which may not be the West (Personal Communication, 2023).

Following Russia’s invasion, there have been a lot of blame games regarding who should be held accountable for the food crisis. While Western countries hold Russia’s blockade of key ports in Ukraine and deployment of limited food shipments as a pressure tactic, Russia blames the crisis on the sanctions that it has suffered (Lopes, 2022). This brings a reminder of the blame game that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic with ventilators, masks and vaccines coupled with promises that did not materialise but exposed the reluctance of Western countries to help African countries in the context of pandemic-related debt relief (Lopes, 2022). The disruption caused by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has some resemblance to the COVID-19 pandemic from an African viewpoint. In both situations, the international community was heavily concerned about the humanitarian crises in Africa because of food shortages and the energy crisis precipitated by the war in Ukraine as it was during the COVID-19 crisis. Nevertheless, the image often projected across various media platforms of African countries being extremely reliant on wheat imports from the warring countries does not fully correspond with realities. Thus, African countries would not be totally helpless without these imports despite the myth of “food insecurity” propagated by the media. This is because available data reveals that despite wheat contributing a significant portion of Africa’s agricultural imports, only 3 African countries constitute the top 16 consumers of wheat globally (Shahbandeh, 2023) Egypt however is the leading importer of wheat (Shahbandeh, 2023).

**Table 3.2: Global wheat consumption in 2021/2022 (in 1,000 metric tons)**

Country/Region	Consumption in ‘000 metric tons
China	148,000
India	109,878
European Union	108,250
Russia	42,750
United States	30,403

Pakistan	27,700
Egypt	20,500
Turkey	20,200
Iran	18,200
United Kingdom	15,400
Brazil	11,750
Algeria	11,370
Morocco	10,600

Source: (Shahbandeh, 2023).

The first shipment of humanitarian food assistance under the Black Sea Grain Initiative was in mid-August 2022 with the food bound for Ethiopia. Prior to that seventeen other vessels had already departed Ukraine, transporting over 475,000 tons of agricultural products to other parts of the world (Adams, 2022; DW, 2022). Despite no expectation of priority, the delay in delivering humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia deserved some criticism as global leaders contended that the timely implementation of the grain deal was desperately crucial to forestalling a humanitarian crisis on the African continent (DW, 2022). However, this delay suggested that Africa was being leveraged as a political bargaining tool, similar to what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic (Personal Communication, 2023). In November 2022, when the Black Sea Grain agreement was renewed, a significant portion of Ukraine's grain exports had already been transported to Europe and Asia and it seemed that Africa's reliance on grains from Ukraine was overestimated. Thus, the global food crisis and energy shortages can be attributed to a mix of Western-imposed sanctions and Russia's operations and not just the diplomatic arguments from Russia, the US and other Western countries (Ross, 2022).



### **3.2.6 Economic Implications: Shifting Geo-Economic Landscape of Europe's Energy**

#### **Sources**

Russia is a prominent actor in the global energy supply chain and a dominant producer and exporter of oil and natural gas. Russia's energy exports play a crucial role in European energy markets and the EU is largely reliant on cheap Russian gas. Russia is responsible, for providing most of the gas that the EU consumes. The EU imports, around 155 billion meters of gas which makes up approximately 45% of its total natural gas imports and about 40% of its overall consumption (Aliiev, 2022; Obisie-Orlu, 2022). Despite this, the EU and the US have shown their support, for Ukraine in the war by aiding and imposing sanctions on Russian leaders and institutions in a bid to weaken Russia's capabilities to finance the war. In response, Russia has strategically utilized its energy exports as a weapon creating obstacles for EU nations in making payments for exports and going as far as shutting down the Nord Stream 1 pipeline which is crucial for gas supply, to the EU (Baločkaitė, 2012; Daggash, 2023). These incidents have propelled energy security to the forefront of geopolitics causing the EU to urgently seek alternative gas sources. One significant advantage that arises from the war, in Africa is the potential for a boost in investments, towards oil and gas infrastructure. The EU must find alternatives to replace 155 billion meters of gas imports. Africa which is home to gas producers like Algeria, Nigeria and Angola well as recent gas discoveries in Senegal, Mozambique and Equatorial Guinea have caught the attention of EU leaders as a potential future hub, for imports. Certain oil and gas producers, in Africa are already increasing their production levels to capitalise on the events.

In April 2022, Mozambique's Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos (ENH), a state entity that represents the government in petroleum operations chose Société Générale SA to provide financial advice to refinance their ownership in a natural gas project led by Eni SpA, an Italian oil and gas giant. As reported by Bloomberg, the company is capitalising on record gas prices

following Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Burkhardt & Yadoo, 2022). The developing oil and gas sector in Mozambique has the capacity to produce more than 30 million mt of Liquefied Natural gas (LNG) annually which is significant to meet some of Europe's energy sourcing needs (AfricanBusiness, 2022). In the same period, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi announced signed agreements with Algeria aimed at enhancing energy cooperation and expanding North Africa's energy exports to Italy as the European country sought steps to reduce its dependency on the Russian gas (Aljazeera, 2022a). In September 2022, Nigeria and Morocco signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a gas pipeline project which was conceived in December 2016. The Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline (NMGP) with a length of around 7,000 kilometres will supply gas to Morocco alongside 13 countries in the ECOWAS and Europe (Ajala, 2023; Daggash, 2023). Although the project will take decades to complete, the signing of the MoU shows that the pace is being expedited and will provide a new energy-supply route for both West Africa and Europe.

In July 2022, the energy ministers of Algeria, Niger and Nigeria signed a MoU after discussions a month before to revive the \$13 billion Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP) alternatively called NIGAL which had seen a stall in progress even though it was first mooted over 4 decades ago (Schwikowski, 2022). As Europe seeks to wean itself off Russian gas, this initiative to pipe gas across the Sahara to Europe now has prospects amid economic sanctions meted to Russia and the retaliatory measures imposed back. Once complete, this pipeline can transport up to 30 billion cubic meters of gas annually from Nigeria.

The war in Ukraine has also brought to the forefront the strategic importance of Africa's mineral wealth to develop low-carbon technologies. Russia is a dominant producer in critical minerals and accounts for a sizeable share of EU sourcing of aluminium (17%), nickel (17%), for which it represents the largest EU supplier, palladium (41%), platinum (16%), cobalt (5%)

and lithium (4%) (Cherepovitsyn & Solovyova, 2022; Levine et al., 2001). Thus, a diversification of supply chains away from Russia presents Africa with an opportunity to grow the mining sector and to create new industries that will aid in the shift towards sustainable clean energy. African countries endowed with significant reserves of these critical minerals stand to gain a lot as investments are being encouraged in the mining industry. In January, European Commissioner Thierry Breton urged European banks to provide more funding to mineral suppliers essential for the energy transition (Reuters, 2023). Highlighted by shortages in the aftermath of COVID-19 and the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the president of the European Commission after the unveiling of the Critical Raw Materials in March 2023 emphasized the need to reduce dependencies on a few countries and to diversify imports while building partnerships with emerging markets (European Council, 2023). African countries, particularly those in Central Africa and Southern Africa can further leverage their resource base and transform from extractive developments to value-addition operations (refining and active material production) in-country and localising the supply chain for some of these essential minerals and technologies and these investments are arriving at a transformative period for African countries as there is concerted effort to shift to localised processing. This can be evidenced by recent policy changes, like Zimbabwe's ban in December 2022 on the export of unprocessed raw lithium as part of efforts to have the key raw material in electric vehicle batteries processed locally (Marawanyika & Ndlovu, 2022). Namibia has also followed suit. Not only that, but an estimated 42.1% of Sub-Saharan African countries have also used export restriction bans to support domestic economic goals and to increase domestic value addition (Cust & Zeufack, 2023). For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo which accounts for two-thirds of the world's cobalt mined banned exports of copper and cobalt concentrate in 2013 to encourage local processing and in 2018 declared cobalt and coltan used in electric vehicles and renewable energy technology as "strategic" minerals which

increased royalties paid to government from 2% to 10% to incentivize domestic refinement and production (Harrisberg et al., 2023; Reuters, 2018). With the country being the world's biggest source of cobalt coupled with substantial reserves of lithium, DRC is well situated to become a dominant supplier in the world. As Europe continues its investment in the energy sector to address its energy needs, Africa's development demands will also be considered in a comprehensive energy framework.

Despite the positive outlooks for Africa in the energy and critical raw material sector for green energy transition, they are not devoid of challenges. The NMGP and the NIGAL are both encountering similar obstacles with experts raising various concerns including security challenges, funding issues, lack of timeline and regional instability (Ajala, 2023; Mitchell, 2023). The deterioration of security in Nigeria and the Sahel has questioned the viability and full progress of the pipeline projects. The more recent military take-over in Niger further threatens the TSGP and with most countries along the Nigeria-Morocco pipeline experiencing heightened terrorist operations, security challenges cannot be overlooked. In a similar vein, terrorism in Mozambique remains a challenge for the energy prospect of the country. In April 2021, French energy giant Total announced its suspension of a \$20 billion LNG project by declaring a force majeure in the country following attacks in resource-rich northern Cabo Delgado province (BBC, 2021). In a visit to Mozambique in September 2022, Joseph Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission announced a decision to provide € 15 million to the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) in addition to the € 89 million of European Peace Facility (EPF) support to the Mozambican Armed Forces in conjunction with the EU Training Mission (EUTM) which was launched in 2021 to help Mozambique's fight against terrorism (Borell, 2022). Fighting terrorism in Mozambique has been immensely supported by Rwandan troops and the European Union in December provided

€20 million to support its peacekeeping mission in the Cabo Delgado province of Mozambique (Borell, 2022). Since its establishment in March 2021, the EPF has become the primary source of funding for EU external initiatives on crisis management and conflict prevention with defence and military implications (Maletta & Héau, 2022). Amongst other initiatives, the EPF provides assistance to strengthen third state's military capacities and thus can provide bilateral financial support for military training and equipment for African armies.

However, while the EPF may be effective in Mozambique, it may encounter certain obstacles when replicated in West Africa in the current geopolitical environment where the EU has more extensive energy interests and security concerns. While the EU and its member countries play vital security roles in the sub-region by working closely with individual countries and the subregional bloc ECOWAS to combat terrorism, illegal migration, piracy and other cross-border crimes, recent developments such as the military coups in Niger, Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso have complicated the political rapport between these countries and Europe. Additionally, the military regimes of Burkina Faso and Mali have increasingly postured towards Russia for security collaboration which Russia has capitalised on to provide security assistance, diplomatic backing and information operations support to both military juntas (Aljazeera, 2023a; Stronski, 2023). Russia's increasing presence and influence in the subregion has been perceived as a contributing factor to the breakdown of various European-led security initiatives.

Mensah and Aning (2022, p. 55) encapsulate this in their paper by saying

What seems to irk several observers about the Malian geopolitical chess game is the apparent victory of Russia in the interim in getting the military junta in Mali to expulse the French forces and replace them with the Wagner Group. The subsequent actions of the Malian junta in pushing out Danish troops, a reduction in the European Union

presence, and withdrawal from the G5 Sahel initiative all point to a loss of Western influence in Mali. (Mensah & Aning, 2022, p. 55)

Consequently, the type of bilateral and multilateral support through the EPF extended to Mozambique and the SADC may not be viable in the West African sub-region. While worried about the broader implications for regional security, Researcher 1 lamented that “there's been talk, at least within some European states, of linking sort of aid spending to the state's overall alignment. Why should we[the West] send millions of euros to a country which is supporting our enemy?” (Personal Communication, 2023). This region remains very critical for the development of the NIGAL and NMGP projects and thus must be favourable and safe.

To conclude, the war in Ukraine has catalysed energy relations between Africa and Europe. As Europe shifts away from Russian energy supplies, Africa is poised to increase its oil and natural gas exports to Europe. The EU's need for alternative gas and critical minerals supplies away from Russia as it gears towards an energy transition presents a vast opportunity for strengthening ties. This could spur Africa's industrial growth by promoting local refineries of minerals. Nonetheless, leadership particularly African leaders need to have energy frameworks that address the immediate and future needs of both sides. Beyond the energy partnerships, security frameworks to address critical security challenges in hotspot areas like the Sahel and other terrorist-ridden areas should be reviewed.

### **3.2.7 Implications for Climate Change**

The Ukraine war has implications for climate change in Africa as a result of its effects on geopolitics, environmental policies and economics. The war has led to shifts in global energy sources with Europe seeking to reduce dependence on Russian natural gas by finding alternative energy sources, including fossil fuels.

Researcher 1 expressed worry about this development when he said

the war has been really not good for attempts to mitigate climate change. One reason is that European energy policies switched from Russian gas to a large extent and that has been replaced with coal which is producing far more carbon. Hopefully in the long term that will be reduced. (Personal Communication, 2023)

The urgent quest to replace Russian energy from alternative sources is opening up new fossil fuel energy sources worldwide while the world is striving to meet the Paris target of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming. The increased focus on African energy resources may translate into expansion of trade and investment in the region which could also exacerbate climate-security risks. Also, wars lead to economic reprioritisation and the financial costs of the Ukraine war may leave little or see a reduction of commitment of resources for climate actions (Naidoo, 2023).

In this Researcher 1 further highlighted that

another effect of this war is the dilution of money or attention. Particularly in Europe, to a lesser extent the US, you know, climate change, reducing carbon emissions should be up their number one priority, and it isn't. It's a secondary priority. Yeah, and that's an issue both for spending. You know, if we're looking at major increases in military spending, so there's less money to spend on decarbonizing other parts of both in Europe and Africa. But also just the attention of the government. You know governments have difficulty focusing on more than one thing at once. And if Ukraine is taking all the attention then climate change gets put behind. (Personal Communication, 2023)

As Naidoo (2023) summarises wars lead to a diversion of political attention and investment focus. This indicates that the developing African countries already facing financial obstacles to combat climate impacts may find it more difficult to secure international funding for climate-related initiatives as donor countries will focus on immediate geopolitical and energy security

concerns. With climate change being a contributing factor to increased risk of conflict this raises concern for fragile regions like the Sahel (Benjaminsen et al., 2021).

### **3.3 Emerging Geopolitical Dynamics**

The feedback and responses from the interviewees indicate that the current global climate, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine is resulting in dynamic relations that bear resemblance to the traditional Cold War yet have distinctions from the Cold War era. These dynamics are noticeable in Africa and suggest a shift in geopolitical alignments and strategic competition. As the Policy Analyst remarked, the war in Ukraine has heightened great-power politics and driven the world into the Cold War.

The Policy Analyst further said

You have misinformation and propaganda being the order of the day, you have all the arms control treaties; ABM, Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty all collapsing. I mean, if you look at the current international system, you would think already we're back in the Cold War, you don't even need to do much really, like going back 70s and there are coups again in the African continent. This is essentially what the Cold War was. So on one hand you could say we are back in the Cold War. But what I'm trying to say is it's going to be a different type of Cold War because we now have new domains of competition that did not exist before. Now the approaches and the tools of competition of foreign policy have changed. (Personal Communication, 2023)

The Geopolitical Analyst alluded to this argument saying that a form of “Cold War 2.0” is already in effect arguing that “We are in some kind of Cold War, which is not going to lead to duo-polarisation, but it is going to be about multi-polarisation.” (Personal Communication, 2023). This indicates a more complex and varied set of international alignments, actors, and rivalries. The introduction of multi-polarisation is also seen in the response of Researcher 1



who expressed concern about the growing rivalry between China and the US. It is therefore very important for African governments to factor the intense power competitions in their geopolitical calculations and how they engage with the world as this context is embedded with abundant intricacies and many risks. Like the Cold War period, African countries appear to be gravitating towards readopting a position of non-alignment. Nonetheless, African countries need to proceed with caution. During the Cold War, numerous NAM countries were in practice not non-aligned but out of necessity or coercion (Osisoma, 2020). Similarly, the stance of neutrality or non-alignment chosen by certain African countries has been far off from practice. For instance, South Africa's decision to conduct joint naval exercises with China and Russia was met with criticisms and raised questions about the country's neutrality stance. The timing of the exercises which coincided with the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine has been viewed as politically sensitive and drew criticisms from the EU and US (Steinhauser, 2023). With a stance on neutrality, Hartley (2022) asserted that "multitudes of Africans" are not only neutral but support Putin because he is an enemy of the West citing the imperialist nature of Europe, Britain and the US to be responsible for that.

The reliance of African countries on external alliances for essential security, economic and development objectives make them susceptible to influence.

In her argument, Researcher 2 maintained that

if ideological arguments were effective in influencing them [African countries] in the Cold War then the allure of significant investments can be equally persuasive in the current context and that's why "we can see the major powers competing for influence on the continent through initiatives like; China's Belt and Road initiative, the G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, among others. (Personal Communication, 2023)

For the Security Expert, African countries should not necessarily take a stance but should look out for their own interest. As such the reluctance to condemn Russia could be attributed to national interests given that Russia is a critical security ally and major arms supplier for various African countries like Algeria, CAR, and Mali. Although abstaining from taking positions does not necessarily imply alignment it is crucial to acknowledge the influence of national interests.

In attempts to seize opportunities from the war, African countries in their foreign policies must be pragmatic and seek to attain two main objectives. African leaders must ensure that their relationships with external actors or countries competing for geopolitical influence do not disrupt regional stability both covertly and overtly. Also, African governments must show tact in cultivating relationships with all major powers simultaneously to deepen multilateral partnerships, bolster security and advance economic growth and development while tackling existential challenges like climate change. To navigate this context with tact, the Policy Analyst contended that countries like CAR, Mali and Burkina Faso should not enhance their domestic security at the expense of the region or the wider continent. This corresponds to the concept of indivisible security that emerged during the Cold War and was later included in the Helsinki Accords as the “indivisibility of security in Europe” (Kvartalnov, 2021). The principle contends that the security of one nation is inseparable from other countries in its region. With an underpinning aspect being collective security, the concept of indivisible security emphasizes the interconnectedness of the security of individual states and the relevance of regional cooperation to ensure regional stability. Another relevant principle of the concept was highlighted at the OSCE Ministerial Declaration on the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of World War II where it was reiterated as part of the indivisible security that “no State or group of States can consider any part of the OSCE area as its sphere of influence” (OSCE, 2009, p. 1). The application of these principles could prevent Africa from turning into a war theatre for great powers (Personal Communication, 2023). For example, Mali, CAR, and Burkina Faso’s

employment of Wagner Group illustrates how national security decisions can negatively impact regional security dynamics and inadvertently align these nations with Russia, consequently attracting scrutiny from Western competitors. In essence, this indicates that by embracing both non-alignment and indivisible security, African countries could effectively manage and mitigate these disruptions.

## **Chapter Four: Summary of Findings and Conclusion**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on a summary of the findings and conclusion of the study.

### **4.1 Conclusion**

This study sought to present the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 on Africa and to examine the responses from African countries. The researcher employed extensive secondary data interspersed with primary data in the form of interview transcripts from research professionals and security experts in the field. It was noted from the study that the war in Ukraine has had several implications for Africa ranging from economic, political, and security to the environment.

The current global context marks a very pivotal time. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had significant global impacts and implications and Africa has not been spared the brunt of it. The war has tested the continent's commitment to nonalignment and has further highlighted the complexities of the continent's foreign policy in a rapidly evolving global landscape. The UNGA vote which sought to condemn Russia's invasion and how Africa voted highlighted the commitment to the principles of non-alignment and aimed at securing their national interests. The invasion has significantly impacted security in Africa, including human security in terms of food security, and political as well as environmental security. With the continent suffering from the surge in wheat prices, the war has highlighted the need for African governments to develop resilient food systems to be able to sustain other global shocks. Beyond that, the study has exposed the security vulnerabilities facing Africa ranging from the crisis in the Sahel and the possible bifurcation of West Africa. In terms of energy, the study has highlighted the potential Africa has to become a major supplier to Europe both in natural gas and critical minerals to facilitate the green energy transition. Thus, effective partnerships, both bilateral

and multilateral, are crucial for African governments to achieve wider economic, security and development objectives across the continent.

The continent has garnered renewed global attention across world powers. African governments can seize this opportunity to strengthen and advance current partnerships. As President Sall, the AU chairman articulated at the UNGA in 2022, the continent is open to collaboration with various partners. This approach requires skilful and adept diplomatic navigation by African leaders, who must strike a balance between core principles and pragmatic interests while incorporating the tenets of indivisible security and non-alignment into their foreign policy strategies. For competing major powers to realise their foreign policy goals in Africa, a thorough comprehension of the viewpoints and strategies that shape the foreign policies of African governments. Simultaneously, African leaders must carefully adapt their foreign policies navigating with caution to avoid any missteps in their geopolitical manoeuvres as missteps or errors would have impactful repercussions for both their respective countries and the wider region.

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## **Appendix**

### **Interview Guide**

1. What is your opinion on the Russian-Ukraine war?
2. What relations exist between Russia and Africa and Ukraine and Africa and what is the current state of that relations and influence?
3. How do you perceive the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on Africa? In what ways could the conflict affect the political, economic, and security situation in Africa?
4. Are there any African countries that have been directly affected by the Russian-Ukraine crisis? If so, how?
5. What are some potential threats and benefits that could arise from the conflict for African countries
6. How have African countries and regional organisations responded to the Russian-Ukraine conflict?
7. Do you think African countries have the capacity to influence the outcome of the war in Ukraine? If so, how?
8. What factors do you think have influenced African countries' responses to the Russian-Ukraine conflict?
9. In your view, what could be some of the implications of the Russian-Ukraine crisis on Africa?
10. Do you think new relations or dynamics can emerge from the current state of the crisis?
11. In your opinion, what should African countries and regional organizations do to mitigate the impact of the Russian-Ukraine crisis on Africa?