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RECONSIDERING THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT AND SECURITY CONCERNS IN AFRICA

Obi Ndifon Neji[1*], Immaculata Ofu Obaji-Akpet[2], Michael Takim Otu[3], Joseph Ebegbulem[4], Samuel Edet[5], Ayuk Awunghe Achu[6], Nwosu Stanley Chigaemezu[7]

[1]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ ndifon.neji@unical.edu.ng
[2]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ obaji-akpet@unical.edu.ng
[3]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ barr.mikeotu@gmail.com
[4]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ jcebegbulem@yahoo.com
[5]University of Birmingham, England, United Kingdom ✉ see346@student.bham.ac.uk
[6]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ awunghe@unical.edu.ng
[7]University of Calabar, Nigeria ✉ stanwosunical@gmail.com

Abstract: *Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 triggered a conflict that has transformed international relations through drastic impacts on policymaking, energy politics, and alliances. Such impacts have produced severe multi-dimensional consequences for African countries that have yet to be sufficiently interrogated in the literature. In response to this gap, this paper examined the security implications of the conflict for African countries to offer a comprehensive analysis that considers the intersection of the conflict with contemporary economic, human, social, and political issues confronting Africa. In discourse using a qualitative approach and rooted in a theoretical perspective drawn from the Copenhagen School, the paper underlined the security implications as evident in the areas of food security and governance, buttressing that the proxy conflicts and power struggles associated with this war have exacerbated existing challenges related to food availability and interfered with the consolidation of democracy in Africa. The paper concluded that the war's multi-dimensional impact potentially compounds political instability vectors. It generates dynamics capable of eroding social cohesion and fomenting social unrest in Africa, meriting its designation as an issue of great concern to African policymakers.*

Keywords: *Russia-Ukraine War; African Security; Copenhagen School; Conflict; Human Security*

INTRODUCTION

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has resulted in destructive and protracted warfare, capturing global attention due to its implications for international peace and security. The conflict has sparked transformative shifts in thinking within both foreign and domestic policymaking circles, particularly concerning security provisions. Furthermore, it has triggered alterations in continental energy policies throughout Europe, paving the way for reconfigurations of alliances among European nations and non-European Union countries (Brighi and Guisti 2023). The consequences of the conflict have also reverberated in Asia, leading to the reconstruction of regional power dynamics and politics. More broadly, this conflict has emerged as a significant security threat with far-reaching implications, intersecting with global economic security (Diaconasu, Mehdian, and Stoica 2022) and global food security (Hall 2023). The globalized nature of this conflict bears ominous implications for African nations, encompassing a wide range of dimensions, from food security to economic stability.

Nevertheless, the literature on its connections to Africa still contains significant gaps in understanding, which result in limited comprehension of the conflict's impact or incomplete contextualization within the African context (Adibe 2022). This paper briefly expounds on the security implications of the Russian-Ukrainian War for Africa to address this gap. Specifically, the paper seeks to underscore the significance of the Russian-Ukrainian War as a security threat to Africa using the framework of the Copenhagen School. Furthermore, it aims to illuminate the various ways the Russian-Ukrainian War has intersected with multiple dimensions of security, from economic to political and human, and the potential means by which it has affected these aspects. Following engagements with these lines of inquiry, the paper supports the idea that the Russian-Ukrainian War constitutes a multi-dimensional threat to Africa's security, exacerbating existing security issues facing the continent, with food security ranking as one of the most prominent forms of women suffering disproportionately (Okoosi-Simbine and Obi 2021). These discussions contribute to the literature by offering a comprehensive, synthesized account that unpacks an intricate and multi-faceted array of security threats and dynamics posed by and associated with the Russian-Ukrainian War. This analysis broadens the perspective beyond the typical focus on military aspects, as the paper illustrates the diverse ways and potential means by which the conflict intersects with issues of economic, human, social, and political security confronting the African continent today.

The paper is structured as follows: After the introductory section, it articulates the study's methodology. In the subsequent section, the paper proceeds to define the concept of security through the lens of the Copenhagen School, followed by a brief overview of the Russian-Ukrainian War, emphasizing its globalized character and logical impact on Africa. After that, the paper extensively explores the subject matter, informing the article's focus. This forms the penultimate section of the paper, followed by the conclusion, summarizing its discourse.

METHODOLOGY

This paper relies on qualitative, non-numerical data to explore the security implications of the Russian-Ukrainian War for Africa. Qualitative data is sourced mainly through the examination of secondary data. To acquire pertinent secondary data for analysis, the paper employs a literature search strategy incorporating keywords and concepts central to this study, extracting relevant information from grey and academic literature sources. Ensuring the reliability of the data, this study primarily relies on information from peer-reviewed academic sources, and the gathered data undergoes cross-verification with multiple sources to ensure accuracy. The qualitative data collected through this process is subsequently subjected to content analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and themes relevant to the topic dependably and systematically (Haggarty 1996).

DEFINING "SECURITY"

When considering the security implications of the Russian-Ukrainian War for Africa, it is crucial to clarify the meaning of "security" due to the numerous definitions and reinterpretations surrounding this concept, along with its practical significance, which often underlies various

actions taken within and across political systems (Baldwin 1997). This paper's conception of security is rooted in the articulations of the Copenhagen School, a paradigm with various explanations that vary in simplicity and orientation. Essentially, it is widely acknowledged that the school's foundation lies in the work of Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde (1998), which extensively explains the school's perspective on security.

The Copenhagen School offers a multi-level and critical approach to security, challenging the traditional state-centric view of security, which primarily frames it in militaristic terms. Instead, it emphasizes a broader and more nuanced understanding, often called a "duality of security" (Hama 2017). This concept implies expanding what can be considered a security issue to include less obvious or unconventional threats. Notably, security is not seen as a fixed, predetermined reality that can be defined singularly within this framework. Instead, it requires a comprehensive definition that encompasses less apparent aspects. Consequently, the Copenhagen School encourages us to perceive security in various dimensions, including military, political, economic, environmental, and societal, leading to a "diversified security agenda" (Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998, 7). A thorough elaboration of these dimensions is presented in the following excerpt:

> Generally speaking, military security concerns the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states' perception of each other's intentions. Political security concerns the organizational stability of states, systems of government, and the ideologies that give them legitimacy. Economic access concerns access to the resources, finance, and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power. Societal security concerns the sustainability, within acceptable conditions, for the evolution of traditional patterns of language, culture and religious and national identity and custom. Environmental security concerns the maintenance of the local and planetary biosphere as the essential support system on which all human enterprises depend (Buzan 1991, 19-20).

In this sense, security transcends being merely "a military or police affair that can be handled by arms or ammunition" (Nweke 1988) and is fundamentally related to development and individual welfare. It encompasses various issues, ranging from governance to factors affecting an individual's ability to fulfill basic human needs. As documented in the literature, these concepts have been appropriately reflected in existing interpretations of African security. Most notably, the African Union, the continent's primary intergovernmental organization, has adopted an expanded definition of security, recognizing that security threats to African states often stem from internal and endogenous sources (Poku, Renwick, and Porto 2007). Consequently, African security has been defined to encompass:

> The protection of individuals with respect to the satisfaction of the basic needs of life; it also encompasses the creation of the social, political, economic, military, environmental, and cultural conditions necessary for survival, including the protection of fundamental freedoms, access to education, healthcare, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his/her potential (Poku, Renwick, and Porto 2007, 1158-1159).

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The framework provided by the Copenhagen School serves as the foundation for the discussion in this paper. This paradigm offers insights into the potential dimensions of threat dynamics arising from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the context of African countries. These threat dynamics represent areas of focus that require in-depth examination to fully comprehend the security implications of the conflict for Africa.

THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT: A WAR OF TWO STATES AND MANY NATIONALITIES

The Russian-Ukrainian War is an ongoing violent conflict that commenced on 20 February 2014, with the Russian military launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, ostensibly to produce significant reconfigurations of Ukraine's political and power structures. However, the origins of this conflict reach much further, deeply embedded in the fractured and strained relations between Russia and Ukraine and, by extension, Europe. These historical tensions have sparked polarizing discussions about the potential resurgence of a Cold War, often accompanied by catchy phrases like "Clash of Europes" (Monaghan 2015). Notably, this conflict has drawn diverse actors from the immediate region and far afield. For instance, more than 20,000 foreign fighters have participated in the conflict on the side of the Ukrainian military and its allied forces, hailing from countries including Canada, the United States, Finland, the United Kingdom, Poland, Georgia, Sweden, Nigeria, Israel, Spain, and South Korea (Makuch 2023). Foreign fighters of African descent have also participated in the war to support the Russian state and its allies, including citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic (Sauer 2022).

The globalized nature of this conflict is further underscored by its extensive implications for global economic and social systems. These effects encompass disruptions to international trade and supply chains, rises in commodity prices, and shocks to the global oil industry, all of which exert far-reaching impacts on countries worldwide, whether directly or indirectly (Kammer, Azour, Selassie, Goldfajn, and Rhee 2022).

RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR: AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The year-long conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been highly significant due to its profound political impact, particularly in the realm of global political systems and international relations. This conflict has led to polarization among major powers and international organizations, including the European Union, which plays a critical role in Africa, igniting an intense proxy competition. In light of this, it is essential to emphasize the following:

> The Russian invasion only strengthened the kind of camp politics or block politics that polarise international relations, escalate political and ideological tensions, and contribute to further militarization (...) Currently, it seems that the initial reaction to the War in Ukraine is a revival of Cold War-style camp politics in order to increase competition in the short run, first and foremost between the US and China (Kusa 2022, 11-12).

This polarisation of international relations is evident in the prevailing discourse, which frames the conflict as a clash between governance cultures, pitting liberal democracies against an illiberal regime. This narrative harkens back to Cold War terminology and has received extensive coverage (Al Jazeera 2023a). Consequently, this framing has triggered an arms race characterized by substantial transfers of military equipment and materials and discussions regarding the potential use of nuclear weapons. Major European powers such as France and Germany, Russia, and China have declared increased military spending (VOA 2022; Al Jazeera 2022). These actions align with the perspective expressed by the Secretary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), who characterized weapons as "the path to peace" (NATO 2023).

The implications of this arms race for African peace and security cannot be underestimated, particularly in light of the numerous ongoing conflicts across the African continent. According to the Geneva Academy, Africa has the second-highest number of non-international armed conflicts, with more than 35 armed conflicts (Today's Armed Conflicts - the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, n.d., para. 4).

The possibility of weapons from the conflict falling into the hands of non-state armed groups and actors is a genuine concern, creating a potentially alarming situation. The conflict can potentially exacerbate the supply and availability of weapons in the illicit weapons market (Galeotti and Arutunyan 2023). As has been asserted:

> Even before the War, Ukraine's illicit firearm market [could] be characterized as a relatively accessible environment for individuals with the opportunity and willingness to participate in the market. It is impossible to provide any accurate assessment of the volume of weapons currently held within Ukraine. The authorities of Kyiv themselves do not at present have an accurate tally of the legally held weapons distributed to government forces and licensed to civilians (Galeotti and Arutunyan 2023, 5).

Moreover:

> The number of guns circulating illegally, in the hands of Russian troops and mercenaries, and abandoned on the battlefield is even more difficult to account for. Very crude estimates - based on extrapolations of official figures before February 2022 and sporadic and limited data released since - suggest that illegal arms circulating in Ukraine is between 7 and 9 million, with another million or more in Russian hands (including militias in the DNR and LNR), and perhaps another 7 million illegally circulating (Galeotti and Arutunyan 2023, 5).

In response to global political dynamics spurred by its war efforts, Russia has increased its presence in Africa. It is guided by a pragmatic philosophy that prioritizes alliances based on mutual benefits rather than a commitment to rights-based regimes. This pattern of engagement predates the conflict and is exemplified in Mali and Burkina Faso, where Russia has entered into military agreements with these states and expanded its activities using mercenary groups (Barabanov 2022). This support for inherently illiberal regimes in these countries arguably exacerbates geopolitical divisions, fostering a culture of impunity, which has contributed to the

resurgence of coups within the African continent, as asserted by the United Nations Secretary-General (Mwai 2023). The current state of global instability can be attributed to the failure or reluctance of global leaders to engage in self-reflection and effectively manage their egos and negative energy (Obi 2020).

The support for illiberal regimes and the methods employed by the Russian state have raised significant concerns, potentially leading to negative implications for the welfare and safety of citizens across African states. These regimes increasingly prioritize self-sustenance over good governance, primarily focusing on mitigating their legitimacy dilemmas. The core norm governing such regimes revolves around regime security, defined as "the idiosyncratic set of dispositions, orientations, and strategies of a particular regime as it seeks to maintain its physical presence, establish and perpetuate legitimacy, and further its permanent and ad hoc interests" (Mohamedou 1998, 62). Invariably, this constitutes a setback for the construction of effective, sustainable institutions and state structures. By implication, it hinders productive engagement with the structural variables that have underpinned instability across Africa and deepened the denial of basic needs. This issue has been lamented by Njoku and Bondarenko when they observed:

> The lack of functional democracy has subverted socio-economic development and dashed the hopes for independence. In different states, Africans have yet to realize their full citizenship rights and inclusive governments that can accommodate group identities within a sovereign state (Njoku and Bondarenko 2018, 6).

The subsequent context of African states' weak developmental capacity and constrained ability continuously perpetuate negative human development index variables that contrive to hinder progress. This occurs regardless of these states' professed commitment to global development agendas.

Proxy Warfare, Regional Stability, and Resource Exploitation

One of the more adverse consequences of the war has been the rise of the Wagner Group as a conduit for Russian influence in Africa. The Wagner Group, serving as the primary tool for Russian influence on the continent, is notorious for its engagement in unscrupulous practices, aligning with its transactional approach to operations. These practices encompass establishing connections with embattled leaders and commanders of armed groups driven by financial incentives. It is well-documented that recipients of the group's services often compensate with valuable minerals or cash, and they are concurrently involved in disinformation campaigns (Edet and Aboh 2023).

Moreover, the group's activities have contributed to regional instability through a range of unethical practices, including mass killings and provocative actions that directly challenge the authority of various governments. Most recently, the group intervened in the Sudan Civil War by providing arms to the Rapid Support Forces and collaborating with rebels to overthrow the Chadian government (Walsh 2023; Rampe 2023). The Wagner Group's Mali and Central African Republic operations illustrate its reach and impact. Its actions in these countries have left behind

human rights abuses and troubling narratives. These narratives can potentially, and have indeed been, exploited as potent recruitment tools by various armed groups seeking to undermine state sovereignty. In the Central African Republic, the group's intrusion into the local mineral extraction industry has disrupted livelihood systems and exacerbated issues of structural injustice, inadvertently deepening poverty. This has been extensively documented by Patta and Carter (2023).

With increasing support from the Russian state, the Wagner Group has expanded its activities, establishing direct links with organized criminal networks and illicit economic ecosystems. These connections often involve implementing mafia-style tactics to safeguard its interests (Africa Defense Forum 2023; Stanyard, Vircoulon, and Rademeyer 2023). These tendencies have led to recent proscriptions by the American and British governments, with the former designating the group as a transnational criminal organization (Rampe 2023).

Undoubtedly, the group's operations and the broader dynamics associated with the Russian-Ukrainian conflict continue to have detrimental effects on African states' access to vital resources crucial for development, particularly in harnessing the continent's mineral wealth. Africa's mineral and resource reserves are already subject to global power struggles among external actors. Essentially serving as a proxy for Russia's foreign policy objectives, the Wagner Group has solidified its African mineral and resource trade presence. This is evidenced by its exploitation of rainforest resources in the Central African Republic and its engagement in diamond and gold extraction through concessionary agreements with various states (Komminoth 2022; Walsh 2022).

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity remains a pressing issue for African countries today, affecting an estimated 280 million people (Food and Agricultural Organization, FAO 2021). This problem primarily arises from structural deficiencies that render African nations vulnerable to shocks from external events, such as geopolitical conflicts (Hatab 2022). As a prime example of such an external shock, it is clear that the conflict directly interferes with continental food security. This interference manifests as adverse supply-side effects or direct shocks to food availability, a critical component of food security measured by indicators like "food production levels, stock availability, and net trade" (FAO 2008, 1).

These disruptions have occurred because crucial players in the conflict hold significant roles in the global food and agricultural commodities markets, contributing as much as 12% of internationally traded calories through their exports. Furthermore, they serve as primary sources of wheat imports, upon which African countries heavily rely (Hatab 2022). Additionally, Russia substantially supplies a crucial component to the global fertilizer industry (Hatab 2022). Consequently, as projected by Human Rights Watch (2022), the consequences of the conflict have translated into food price inflation across Africa and worsening disparities in food access. In particular, the Northern region of Africa has borne the brunt of these impacts due to disruptions in global food supply chains caused by the conflict (FAO 2023). As various commentaries have noted, these disruptions stem from the politicization of commodity supply and distribution, with trade in wheat becoming deeply entangled with war politics. The interests of the conflict actors

essentially shape questions regarding grain trade. As succinctly pointed out by a German government official, the Russian government has effectively wielded wheat as a geopolitical weapon (Romashenko 2022). This assertion finds support in various instances where Russia has continued uninterrupted grain sales to major importers while simultaneously engaging in the plunder of Ukrainian grain stocks and the destruction of production, storage, and distribution infrastructure (Skorohod, Serbina, Sapsai, and Tsyrfa 2023).

AFRICAN RESPONSES TO THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: DIVISIONS, DIPLOMACY, AND THE PATH TO PEACE

The multitude of consequences and dynamics stemming from the Russia-Ukraine War undeniably carry devastating implications for African states, particularly concerning human security outcomes. This categorizes the conflict as a security threat and a significant topic of discussion among African leaders. As succinctly argued by the Chairperson of the African Union (AU), the war has disrupted the capacity of African states to fulfill their development commitments, as these states find themselves in a state of "collateral victimhood" in a conflict that initially seemed distant (Al Jazeera 2023b).

However, speaking of an African response does not equate to a joint, coherent response. Instead, it refers to the varied responses of different African states. Indeed, these responses to the war have ranged from ambivalence to neutrality. Consequently, the emergence of a unified stance on the conflict has been nearly non-existent, as countries have yet to come together in consensus. These divisions have become apparent in the voting patterns of African countries at the United Nations.

For the resolution dated 23 February 2023 (Figure 1), 47 African countries participated in the vote. Among these 47 states, 30 (68.3%) voted in favor, 15 (31.9%) abstained, and 2 (4.2%) voted against (UN News 2023).

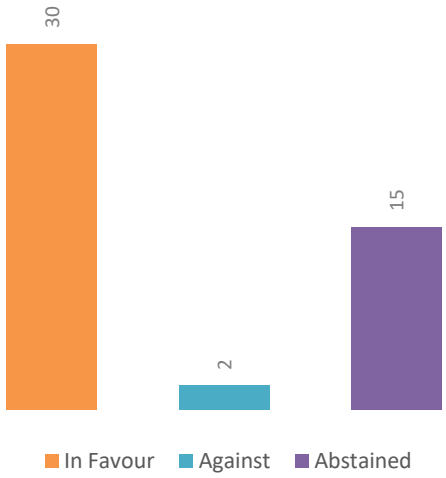


Figure 1: African States Voting Spread for United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Ukraine (A/ES-11/L.7) (Source: UN News 2023)

These vote figures represented 21% of the total General Assembly votes in favor of the resolution, 47% of total abstentions, and 29% of total votes against (UN News 2023).

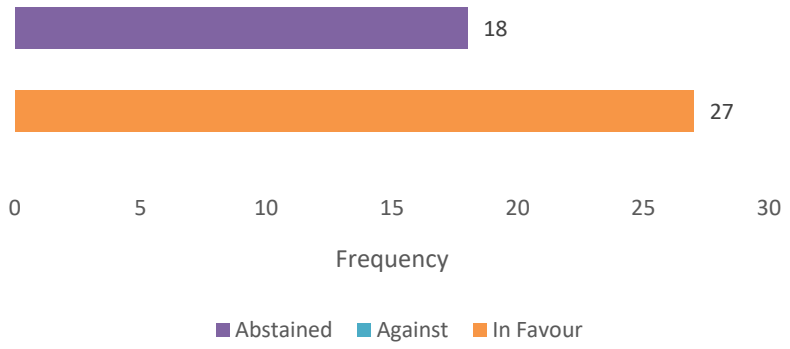


Figure 2: African States' Voting on United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/ES-11/L.5 - "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: Defending the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations" (Source: UN News 2022a)

For the October 2022 resolution (Figure 2), 45 African countries participated in the vote. Among these 45 countries, 27 (60%) voted in favor, while 18 (40%) chose to abstain, and there were no opposing votes. These figures accounted for 19% of the total General Assembly votes favoring the resolution and 51% of total abstentions (UN News 2022a).

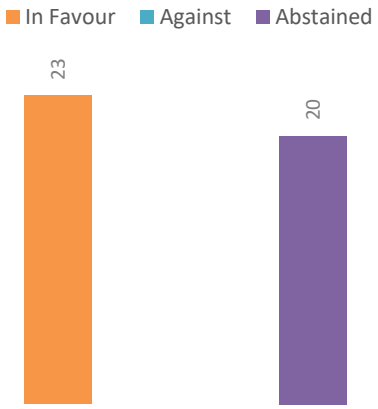


Figure 3: African States Voting Spread on Resolution A/ES-11/L.2 - "Humanitarian Consequences of the Aggression Against Ukraine" (Source: UN News 2022b)

For the March 2022 resolution aimed at condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine (A/ES-11/L.2: Humanitarian Consequences of the Aggression against Ukraine), 51% (23 out of 45) of the countries voted in favor of the resolution, while 44.4% (20 out of 45) abstained (Figure 3). These percentages ultimately constituted 14% of the total votes cast and 53% of the total abstentions.

Ambivalent attitudes were also evident in the speeches delivered by political representatives from various African states. The Kenyan representative to the United Nations drew parallels between Russia's actions and imperialism, referencing Africa's history of colonialism while simultaneously condemning the disparities in adherence to international norms by major global powers, which have historically shaped international relations (Chappell 2022). The Liberian representative to the United Nations took a more forceful stance, condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine and affirming Ukraine's rights to international support in retaining its sovereignty and political autonomy, echoing a similar opinion of the Ghanaian representative (United Nations 2022).

Political leaders across the continent responded by trying to strike a delicate balance of neutrality. In the initial phase of the War, African governments resisted Ukrainian state-sponsored attempts to mobilize citizens of African countries to join the international fighters against the Russian invasion. Notably, the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on the microblogging platform Twitter (now X), firmly expressing a commitment to uphold its international law obligations actively. Nigeria declared a stance with zero tolerance for "the recruitment in Nigeria of Nigerians as mercenaries to fight in Ukraine or anywhere else in the world" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nigeria 2023). This stance was echoed by other African governments like Senegal and Algeria, leading to policy shifts by the Ukrainian government (Ali 2022).

These African responses align with a pattern of what can be described as "limited emotion" and reveal several contradictions that expose weaknesses in African multilateralism and the inconsistency of principles (Handy and Djilo 2022). This may also be connected to long-standing discontent with the structure and practice of international law and inequities in global power politics. This perspective was exemplified by the Congolese representative to the United Nations, who asserted that his country's vote in support of the resolution condemning Russian aggression was cast irrespective of the "politics of double standards of the powerful in this world when it comes to Africa", a disposition that underpinned behavioral biases and selective sanction enforcement within the international community (United Nations 2022).

However, recent actions taken by African leaders, such as the dispatch of a mediation team in June 2023, indicate an acknowledgment of the negative implications of the war. This mission primarily addresses the food security dimension of the conflict's threat and outlines various plans, including humanitarian provisions and considerations (Jones 2023). While these efforts have faced initial setbacks and opposition from one of the conflict parties, the potential for a more concerted push with tangible outcomes remains within reach, especially in light of indications of a deepening commitment from the Russian president. According to a report from the Russian state media, "the leaders have agreed to continue their dialogue on the African Peace Initiative to pave the way for peace" (The Russian News Agency 2023).

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THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR, GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

The persistence of the Russian-Ukrainian War undoubtedly poses a significant concern for Africa, particularly in governance and state-building. Notably, this conflict has both accentuated existing dynamics and given rise to new ones that have affected the continent's political and economic structures. This impact is especially pertinent concerning African states' ability to advance their post-independence commitments, which encompass the expansion of fundamental rights and liberties, long suppressed during colonial rule, and the pursuit of social progress leading to an improved standard of living (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006, 73-74).

However, it is essential to recognize that the war also presents several opportunities that African states can leverage. Primarily, these opportunities revolve around the imperatives of self-reliance and regional integration. These strategies can reduce the influence of external actors as central components of indigenous political and economic systems. Moreover, they can facilitate a re-evaluation of the guiding principles governing the conduct of public office holders, emphasizing the promotion of inclusive economic and social rights. To achieve these objectives, concrete and demonstrably concerted investments in regionally integrative infrastructure can play a crucial role. Such investments would help bridge the gaps in food demand and supply chains within the continent, representing one of the primary causes of food insecurity (Lusigi 2022).

CONCLUSION

The Russia-Ukraine War is a conflict that has global implications, affecting numerous social and political systems around the world. As African countries become more involved in the consequences of this situation, it has led to the continuation and spread of severe social and economic conditions. This has hindered the ability of African states to fulfill their responsibilities in providing social welfare and governance, particularly in ensuring decent living standards and promoting development. Further highlighting the conflict's significance as an existential threat to Africa, these conflicts have spawned concerns such as the proliferation of arms and the growth of illicit economies. The impact of conflicts on food security is especially concerning, as Antonio Guterres, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, has observed that governments' failure to fulfill their citizens' food requirements is an acknowledged driver for conflict (Yohannes-Kassahun 2023).

As a result of these situations, regional economic organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) developed immediate and long-term strategies to address systemic disruptions and prepare for potential future consequences arising from the war. This will safeguard endeavors aimed at constructing peace. National governments must cooperate with regional economic groups to guarantee a synchronized reaction to the imminent food security crisis. Through collaboration, they can devise strategies to tackle pressing necessities and establish enduring remedies for the future. These endeavors will alleviate the consequences of violence on food security and positively contribute to broader peacebuilding endeavors in the region. It is imperative to implement proactive steps to avert the worsening of the crisis and safeguard the welfare of those at risk.

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An essential element of this cooperative approach involves the exchange of resources and information across governments and regional economic organizations. Through the collective pooling of their resources, individuals can enhance their ability to solve food shortages more efficiently and comprehensively, ensuring that no one is overlooked or excluded. Moreover, by exchanging information regarding effective techniques and exemplary methods, they can mutually acquire knowledge and enhance their ability to address the issue. Furthermore, this interchange of information and resources will not only assist those individuals who are most directly affected by food insecurity, but it will also foster regional stability and collaboration. Collaboration between national governments and regional business entities is crucial in tackling the food security challenge and promoting peace in the region.

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CRediT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Obi Ndifon Neji: conceptualization, methodology, resources, writing - original draft, writing - review and editing, supervision, project administration. **Immaculata Ofu Obaji-Akpet:** methodology, resources, writing - review and editing. **Michael Takim Otu:** resources, writing - review and editing. **Joseph Ebegbulem:** resources, writing - review and editing. **Samuel Edet:** conceptualization, methodology, resources, writing - original draft, writing - review and editing. **Ayuk Awunghe Achu:** resources, writing - review and editing. **Nwosu Stanley Chigaemezu:** Resources, writing - review and editing.

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