

# The Effects of Russia and Ukraine War on Food Security in Africa: The Nigerian Experience

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## ABSTRACT

Nigeria's significant dependence on Russia and Ukraine for certain essential food items leaves the country vulnerable. Given Africa's strong trade and diplomatic connections with both Russia and Ukraine, the disruption in the food supply chain has resulted in significant socio-economic challenges. In providing solution to this predicament, three objectives were raised to guide the study. Relevant literatures were consulted, and the Conflict theory was adopted as theoretical framework for the study. The research is qualitative and as such the historical research design which relies on secondary data was used. The secondary data was analyzed using content analytical technique. Based on the analysis of data, it was revealed that the war is a result of a multifaceted interplay involving power dynamics, national interests, and geopolitical calculations.

The study also revealed that Nigeria heavily depends on the importation of crucial commodities from Russia and Ukraine. Consequently, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has heightened food insecurity in Nigeria. The study examined the adverse socioeconomic impacts of the war on the Nigerian populace. As part of its recommendations, the study suggests that the Nigerian government should actively promote and support the domestic production of these essential commodities that are typically imported from Russia and Ukraine.

**Keywords:** War, Conflict, Security, Food security, Africa

## I. INTRODUCTION

The advent of nuclear advancements, the conclusion of the Cold War, the emergence of ethno-national disputes, and the expansion of global capitalism and democracy have sparked considerable discussions regarding a pivotal moment in the history of international warfare. Significantly, the pursuit of power and economic

well-being has prompted major powers in the global community to shape their foreign policy goals in accordance with their national interests.

These interests sometimes have a conflictual dimension with the interests of other nations and the lack of appropriate measures to curtail such disagreement always comes with potential consequences for nations. One of such devastating situations in recent times is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine were both part of the former Soviet Republic and shared deep cultural, economic, and political bonds.

As a result of changes implemented by the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in domestic politics and the economy, the Soviet Union experienced a misfire that led to its disintegration. This event marked the dissolution of the once-powerful Soviet Union into independent sovereign states in the early 1990s, thereby giving rise to a new geopolitical landscape in central Europe. This transformation resulted in the emergence of fifteen new countries, including Russia and Ukraine. The post-communist states that emerged faced ongoing challenges, particularly concerning Russia's efforts to reclaim lost territory and protect what it perceives as the interests of ethnic Russian populations stranded on what it considers the wrong side of the new borders.

Russia spent weeks building up a huge military force along its borders with Ukraine and in neighboring Belarus until the Russian president Vladimir Putin launched an invasion on Ukraine on the 24 of February 2022; and the latter had to defend itself thereby marking the start of the Russian – Ukraine conflict, that is still on-going.

President Vladimir Putin of Russia unilaterally acknowledged the independence of two breakaway regions in Donbas, specifically the self-proclaimed 'People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk,' three days before the invasion (Reals &

Sundby, 2022). Subsequently, the United States, Europe, and numerous other Western nations, including Canada and Australia, have implemented increasingly extensive sanctions. These sanctions target individuals, banks, corporations, large state-owned companies, and exports (Ikenga, Edo & Ighoshemu, 2022). The most profound repercussions of the conflict are the loss of lives and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, marked by a substantial number of besieged and displaced individuals.

At the same time, the conflict has dealt a substantial setback to commodity markets, particularly in the realms of food and energy. This impact is influencing worldwide trade, production, and consumption patterns, with the consequence of sustaining prices at historically elevated levels until the conclusion of 2024. Consequently, there is a looming threat to global food security, as highlighted by the OECD (2022). The ongoing war, involving major players in the global food and fertilizer industries, is generating widespread concerns within the context of interconnected agricultural markets, intensifying anxieties about the stability of global food security (Berkhout et al., 2022; Welsh, 2022).

Despite their relatively modest share in the global economy, accounting for approximately 2% of the global GDP, both Russia and Ukraine are recognized as crucial contributors to the global food supply. They serve as 'global breadbaskets' and play significant roles in the production and exportation of essential agricultural commodities, minerals, fertilizers, and energy. Importantly, these exportable resources often exhibit concentration in a small number of countries, as noted by the OECD (2022).

This concentration makes these markets more susceptible to shocks and volatility, as highlighted by the FAO (2022). Concurrently, the timing of the war is unfavorable for global food markets. Pre-existing high food prices, attributed to disruptions in the supply chain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ikenga, Agah, & Obi, 2019), robust global demand, drought, and poor harvests in South America the previous year, were already prevalent. The interplay of these factors was already driving up food prices, as indicated by Rice et al. (2022). The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine is expected to exacerbate these challenges.

The conflict has also impacted global trade, production, and consumption, leading to high commodity prices, tightening the fiscal space, and reducing the flow of development finance as well as posing a risk to food security worldwide (Ejumudo & Ikenga, 2015, Hassen & Bilali, 2022;

USIP, 2022; Atlantic Council, 2023). As a result, the Russia-Ukraine conflict is also affecting food security, which in turn endangers national security in Africa in one way or the other.

Due to Africa's strong trade and diplomatic connections with both Ukraine and Russia, the disturbance in the food supply chain has led to significant socio-economic hardships affecting millions. The conflict has triggered a surge in prices for wheat, sunflower, and crude oil, while also causing further disruptions in the supply chains for food, fuel, and fertilizer (GMO Global Market Observation, 2014).

The most severe consequences of the Ukrainian conflict involve the loss of lives and the ensuing humanitarian crisis resulting from a large displaced and besieged population. However, there are also substantial economic repercussions. Before the war commenced, major global macroeconomic indicators, such as the gross domestic product and the consumer purchasing index, were believed to have returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels (OECD, 2022).

Prior to the onset of the conflict, the cost of nutritious foods, coupled with high levels of poverty and inequality (Ikenga & Agah, 2020), rendered good diets unattainable for 66.2 percent of the global population (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2019). In Africa, approximately 323.2 million people, or 29.5 percent of the population, experienced hunger that year. Notably, food insecurity was notably higher in West Africa and Middle Africa, affecting 68.3% and 70% of the respective populations. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic further exacerbated the number of individuals facing food insecurity.

The situation took a turn for the worse with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. This is due to the significant trade ties that many African countries share with Ukraine and Russia. In 2020, African countries imported agricultural products valued at US\$ 4 billion from Russia, with approximately 90 percent of this comprising wheat and 6 percent sunflower oil.

Likewise, in 2020, Ukraine shipped agricultural products valued at US\$ 2.9 billion to the African continent. Almost half of this comprised wheat, followed by maize at 31%, while the rest included sunflower oil, barley, and soybeans (UNCTAD, 2022). Numerous countries across East, West, Middle, and Southern Africa heavily rely on imports of wheat, maize, sunflower, barley, fertilizer, and vegetable oils from Russia and Ukraine. Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, Algeria, Kenya, and South Africa emerged as the primary importers, collectively making up about

half of all imports (Wandile, 2022).

More than 40% of the wheat imported by Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Sudan originates from Russia and Ukraine, amplifying the vulnerability of African countries. This dependence is particularly precarious given that a significant proportion of household expenditures in Africa is allocated to food compared to other global regions (UNDP, 2022).

Hence, the trade disruptions resulting from the war are poised to have a substantial impact on Africans. The fact that Ukraine supplies half of the wheat distributed by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) means that trade disruptions would lead to constrained supplies and increased costs.

Particularly noteworthy is the escalation in the supply and cost of gasoline, resulting in increased expenses for transporting food into and out of the region (Ikenga & Oluka, 2023). This, in turn, indirectly contributes to a surge in food prices for nations relying on these countries for agricultural items and produce (OECD, 2022). Russia and Ukraine play pivotal roles as major producers and suppliers of fertilizers, as well as essential food commodities such as maize, rapeseed, sunflower seeds, and oil (GMO Global Market Observation, 2014; Lago, 2022; AUDA-NEPAD, 2022).

To put it differently, the African continent leans heavily on imported food, accounting for over 80 percent, heightening its vulnerability and placing strain on endeavors aimed at eradicating hunger, reducing poverty, and achieving continent-wide food security (Agah & Ikenga, 2019). Moreover, the substantial dependence of African countries like Nigeria on international food markets, coupled with the current high proportion of household expenditures allocated to basic commodities, implies that the ongoing conflict is not only diminishing food supply but also contributing to an increase in domestic food price inflation. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to address these challenges.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of Russia and Ukraine War on Food security in Africa with special reference to the Nigerian State.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine the causes of the Russia-Ukraine War.
- ii. examine the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on food security in Nigeria.

- iii. examine the socio-economic effects of the Russia-Ukraine war has on Nigerians.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Concept of War

War is a state of organized, often prolonged conflict between different groups or nations, typically characterized using extreme violence, including armed forces and weaponry, with the aim of achieving specific objectives. These objectives can vary widely and may include gaining or defending territory, asserting political dominance, or pursuing ideological, economic, or cultural goals (Olagbaju & Awosusi, 2020).

Conflict is by nature is a natural phenomenon, and this stems from the fact that in every society, there are bound to be disputes, claims, counterclaims, contestation over resources (Agah & Ikenga, 2007), values, and wealth which are part and parcel of human interaction. However, when it's unchecked, it leads to war. Coser (2018) perceives war as a complex and evolving phenomenon that reflects changes in technology, geopolitics, and human societies.

The key characteristics of war include violence, organized conflict, and the pursuit of political and strategic objectives. Wars may vary in duration, involve diverse participants, and may be subject to rules and conventions aimed at minimizing harm to civilians and combatants. According to Wilmot & Hocker (2019), War has profound social, economic, and humanitarian consequences, leading to displacement of populations, loss of infrastructure, and psychological trauma. It can involve nation-states, non-state actors, rebel groups, or other entities and may manifest as international conflicts or civil wars. Over time, efforts have been made to mitigate the devastating effects of war and promote peace through international organizations, treaties, and diplomacy.

### Concept of Food Security

Food Security can be conceptualized as a state when all people always have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life (FAO, 2012).

Similarly, according to Anderson (2020), food security is defined as a condition where all individuals consistently have both physical and economic access to an ample, safe, and nutritious food supply that fulfills their dietary requirements and preferences for a healthy and active life. Additionally, Adebayo (2021) suggests that food security operates at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, it pertains to a nation's or

continent's ability to provide enough food to sustain its population, achieved through either domestic production or the importation of foods, including food aid. On the micro level, it involves the food security of households and individuals.

Nevertheless, a country may achieve food security at the national level while still experiencing localized instances of food insecurity during various stages of the agricultural cycle (IFSS, 2002). Consequently, Adebayo further delineates four distinct yet interconnected dimensions of food security: Food Availability, which concerns the consistent and adequate provision of food at the household level. For a continent to be food secure, it must ensure that food is available to all its citizens in appropriate quality and enough.

**Food Accessibility:** This depends on income levels as the citizens must have the resources to purchase appropriate foods. **3. Food Utilization:** This refers to the consumption of safe and nutritious food. An individual that gets adequate quantity of food must also be able to make use of quite a commensurable quantity.

Thus, a country whose citizens are unable to utilize the quantity of food available because of frequent ailment and conflict has not yet attained food security. **Stability of Access:** Food security is determined by the ability to preserve, or store produced food. This refers to the stability of supply over time. However, due to inefficient harvesting, processing, and storage facilities on the continent heavy post-harvest losses in supply of food are widespread.

Today, food security is a big issue not only due to food production and hunger but also other factors such as population pressures, food prices, climate change, disparities of wealth, and income and very importantly, the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. The issue of food security now is more alarming because of failure of past efforts and approaches to resolve food insecurity problems such as famine and malnutrition in developing countries.

Therefore, achieving food security has become a complex issue since it cuts across the globe; it's affected by ongoing issues such as: climate change, disasters, urbanization, conflicts and more recently, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Presently, millions of Africa's populations are in dire need of food on the continent as they continue to suffer from hunger and famine.

### **Historical Development of Russia and Ukraine War**

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia poses

the most significant threat to peace and security in Europe since the Cold War, according to the Global Conflict Tracker (2022). The current conflict between Russia and Ukraine has its roots in the armed conflict that erupted in eastern Ukraine in 2014, following the Russian annexation of Crimea.

This series of events unfolded after the 2013 protests in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, triggered by then-President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject a deal with the European Union (EU). The protest faced a violent crackdown by state security forces. In March 2014, Russian troops seized control of Crimea, with President Vladimir Putin justifying the move as necessary to protect the rights of Russian citizens in Crimea and the Russian-speaking regions of southeast Ukraine.

Following a disputed local referendum in which Crimeans voted to join the Russian Federation, Russia formally annexed the peninsula. This action heightened ethnic divisions, leading to pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk declaring their independence two months later. Subsequently, an armed conflict ensued between the Russian-backed forces and the Ukrainian military.

Although Russia denied involvement, both the United States and NATO had earlier reported the build-up of troops and military equipment near Donetsk and Russia, and cross-border shelling that followed Crimea's annexation. As a result, the conflict evolved into an active state of deadlock, marked by regular shelling and skirmishes along the frontlines that separated the eastern border regions controlled by Russia and Ukraine (Global Conflict Tracker, 2022).

In 2015, attempts to broker an end to the violence commenced with the initiation of the Minsk Accord in February. This negotiation involved France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine. The accord framework outlined provisions for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry, and the establishment of full Ukrainian government control throughout the conflict zone. Despite these efforts, all attempts to achieve a diplomatic settlement and a satisfactory resolution proved unsuccessful.

In an interview with CBS News, the Ukrainian ambassador to the United Nations expressed the view that Putin's ambition extended beyond the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, characterizing it as an effort to 'restore the Russian Empire.' This perspective aligns with the viewpoint of former United States National Security Adviser McMaster, who suggested that the invasion of Ukraine was Putin's determined attempt to 'restore Russia to national greatness.' McMaster



emphasized Putin's belief that the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a disaster, and this obsession drove his pursuit of making Russia great again (CBS News, 2022).

Consequent on the above assertions, the CBS News also reported that prior to the current invasion president Putin had demanded that NATO rules out admitting new members from the former Soviet states and most importantly Ukraine, and that in addition, NATO forces should pull back from positions in countries near Russia. However, the demands to preclude the admission of new members were rejected. The prevailing belief is that the United States and NATO suspect Putin's objective is to overthrow Ukraine's current government, paving the way for the establishment of a new pro-Russian regime.

Conversely, Ukraine has firmly anchored its national security policy on the pursuit of NATO membership, and it remains resolute in this ambition despite the intensification of Russia's invasion (CBS News, 2022).

In today's global economic landscape, marked by extensive interdependence due to the information revolution, the economies of countries worldwide are intricately linked. Consequently, any conflict, regardless of its scale, has a ripple effect throughout the entire system. Thus, even though Russia's assault on Ukraine is geographically distant, its economic repercussions are felt globally. As noted by Egan (2022), millions of American households are impacted because of the interconnected nature of the global economy and financial markets.

Smialek and Swanson (2022) suggest that a potential fallout from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict could manifest as increased inflation, driven by rising global oil and food prices. This situation would heighten uncertainty in the United States, as the average American household would bear the burden of Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine. They argue that, while the United States imports very little from Russia (the world's largest wheat exporter), "commodities crunch caused by a conflict could have knock-on effects that at least temporarily drive-up prices for raw materials and finished goods at a time when much of the world, including the United States, is experiencing rapid inflation.

Put differently, although the United States imports a relatively small quantity of oil from Russia compared to Europe, the global nature of the energy commodity market means that a change

in oil prices in one part of the world will inevitably impact oil prices everywhere, including in the United States. This report also suggests that the current global unrest could lead Americans to reduce consumption and engage in various economic activities, potentially disrupting the Federal Reserve's plans to raise interest rates (Mbah & Wasum, 2022). The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has already resulted in the price of oil reaching an "eight-year high."

If tensions escalate further or if US policymakers implement an anticipated "another round" of sanctions against Russia, the price of oil could surpass initial expectations. The stability of the world economy is closely tied to that of Russia. JP Morgan forecasts that this conflict could easily drive the price of oil to \$120 per barrel (Obi & Ikenga, 2018, Egan, 2022). RSM suggests that if oil prices reach \$110, year-over-year inflation could exceed 10%, a level not seen since the peak of inflation at 10% in 1981. Additionally, RSM states that inflation is the "greatest concern facing the US economy" (Egan, 2022). Concerns about inflation in the United States are exacerbated by potential shortages of essential metals like nickel, aluminum, and palladium in the global supply chain (Cohen & Ewing, 2022).

Like many other Western nations, the United Kingdom has been dealing with high and rising inflation, with prices rising alarmingly during the past 30 years. According to experts, Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine has led to greater inflationary pressures and which has forced the Bank of England to hike interest rates in reaction (United Kingdom Parliament, 2022).

While Russia is a significant exporter of gas to various European countries, the United Kingdom does not receive gas imports from Russia. Nevertheless, the UK has felt the impact of the substantial surge in global oil prices, causing considerable uncertainty. Analysts caution that annual household fuel consumption in the UK could surpass £3,000 per year (Jones, 2022).

The fact that both Russia and Ukraine are major producers of various agricultural commodities, including wheat, raises additional concerns about the increase in food costs, adding strain to UK household and business budgets (United Kingdom Parliament, 2022). Even though 90% of the UK's wheat is domestically produced, farmers may face higher costs for fertilizer, a significant export from Russia (Jones, 2022). Two-thirds of the ammonium nitrate fertilizers used globally by farmers are of Russian origin, as highlighted by Nick Allen, the CEO of British Meat Processors (Lanktree, 2022).

Chris Rogers, a prominent supply chain economist, predicts that the most significant economic impact of this conflict on the UK and Europe will be supply chain cost inflation (Lanktree, 2022). Europe, heavily reliant on Russian oil and gas, appears to be the region most vulnerable to the effects of the conflict. The replacement of all Russian natural gas supplies to Europe in the short to medium term is impractical, and present price levels will significantly impact inflation.

Experts suggest that the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 will result in higher inflation and disruptions in the supply chain for Europe, the United Kingdom, and numerous other nations globally. A decline in Russia's exports, coupled with Saudi Arabia's reluctance to increase oil supplies, would profoundly affect the global commodity price (Lanktree, 2022). About 25% of the oil and 40% of the natural gas purchased by European nations depend on Russia (Wiseman, 2022).

The Eurozone economy will primarily be affected through the channels of energy prices and confidence or uncertainty, with a lesser impact through the trade channel, which is relatively small between Russia and the Eurozone. Persistent uncertainty, dragging on investment and consumption, is likely to stifle growth (Thomas & Strupczewski, 2022).

Due to Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, natural gas costs in Europe have risen to approximately six times more than at the beginning of 2022. This increase is attributed to a 20% spike in natural gas prices, leading to rising inflation and soaring energy bills (Wiseman, 2022). Recognizing Ukraine's independence in 1992, Canada has maintained a friendly bilateral relationship, providing over \$890 million in aid since January 2014.

The probable economic consequences of Russia attacking Ukraine in 2022 on Canada worries experts (inflation cost of food, and immigration); the Canadian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, is 'prioritizing immigration applications,' according to Neustaeter (2022), 1.3 million Ukrainians have immigrated to Canada, making it the country with the most Ukrainian immigrants outside of Russia.

Accordingly, there are worries as to how this conflict may affect Canada's already-fragile supply chain, particularly in terms of food pricing (Mbah & Wasum, 2022). In the days following the attack, the unpredictability brought on by conflict prompted financial trading to fall and markets to fluctuate drastically, causing panic in the global

financial market.

Considering that Canada imports approximately \$550 million worth of oil from Russia annually, as indicated by the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, experts are anticipating a significant uptick in gas prices for Canadians. The head of the Canada Ukraine Chamber of Commerce expressed worry about how the conflict might impact business connections with Canada, highlighting the challenge of attracting investors due to perceived political risks associated with conducting business in the affected area.

Investors are closely watching the situation, especially given the widespread Western cautions against involvement in Ukraine (Bharti, 2022). The disturbance of global supply networks resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had repercussions across various business operations. The Russian export embargo, reciprocal import ban, and the refusal to permit foreign cargoes through its airspace and waterways during the conflict have the potential to disrupt the global supply chain. This disruption could lead to shortages and higher import prices. Businesses project that trade restrictions and cross-border blockades will induce supply hoarding, contributing to increased prices.

### **Effect of Russia and Ukraine War on Food Security in Africa**

Africa's food insecurity problem is not entirely a new one as it has always been there but has increased over the years to reach the present alarming proportion due to wrong policy actions and inactions on the part of successive African governments, institutional / regional leaders as well as the fall out of the Covid-19 pandemic, natural disasters like droughts, famine, all thanks to adverse activities of climate change.

Similarly, the fact that most countries in the horn of Africa are heavily dependent on the importation of essential staple crops from Russia and Ukraine to the tune of about 90 per cent of wheat imports, gives this conflict the capacity to be the world's worst food crisis ever. It is also worthy of note that although the Horn of Africa is presently very vulnerable, other regions of Africa are not immune as they are also facing severe food crisis that has amplified due to the ongoing conflicts, hence the impacts can be viewed as follows:

- **Disruption of Trade Routes:** The Russia military action against Ukraine is a major disruption on the trade routes as the conflict has made the Black Sea route very dangerous

and impassable which resulted in the closure of most Ukrainian ports which were the main access route from where over two thirds of Ukraine foods and grains exports exit for distribution. Again, according to the BBC news (2023), a third portion of Ukrainian lands are presently covered with mines and might take years to demine for farming activities to commence even if the conflict is brought under control. This also adds to the already bad situation as regards food shortages as the farmers cannot grow their crops thereby worsening food insecurity on the continent.

- **High Prices of Foods /Grains:** Closely related to the first impact mentioned above is the price of oil and energy products which has added to higher ocean shipping charges for food commodities as well as increased costs for alternative air and rail transportation. Since Russia is a key exporter of oil and energy products globally, the increase in the price of oil which exceeded the USD100/barrel for the first time in eight years made a mark on the prices of food as the additional cost of transportation and distribution of food commodities are now billed into the original price thereby resulting in hike in prices of grains across the world and is causing food shortages in some countries and putting many families on the risk of malnutrition (Hatab, 2022)
- **Shortages and Rising Cost of Fertilizers:** Russia is one of the top producers of natural gas a major component of ammonia and urea that is used in the fertilizer industry; is also a top exporter of nitrogen fertilizers, second in potassic fertilizers and third in phosphorus fertilizers (Rochat, 2022). Furthermore, Russia has placed a temporary embargo on the export of fertilizer in the wake of the conflict to secure the supply for their local farmers. Prior to the conflict, there was an inadequate supply of fertilizers and with the sanction imposed on Belarus by the EU and the USA in 2021 for its role in the conflict and the increase in price of natural gas, it is now more difficult to export fertilizers to Africa which consumes about 20% to 80% (Hatab, 2022). Hence, the scarcity of fertilizers and the incapacity of farmers to bear the exorbitant costs of the product and other inputs will lead to a decline in agricultural output. This, in turn, will contribute to food insufficiency on the continent, simultaneously causing an increase in food prices. It is evident that the conflict is adversely affecting the outlook for small-scale

farmers, disrupting the supply chain and leading to diminished crop yields, thereby worsening the issue of food insecurity on the continent. It is therefore a major setback to the efforts of the farmers that rely on these inputs to produce their crops.

- **Result of Indirect Sanction on Russia:** It has been stated that there are over 9,000 different sanctions imposed on Russia by NATO and its allies making it the world's most sanctioned country presently (Hatab, 2022). By implication, the supply of fresh vegetables and fruits that are exported to both Russia and Ukraine by small scale producers and exporters from African countries like Egypt, Morocco and Kenya has been put on hold due to the closure of ports leading to huge losses due to inadequate storage facilities on the continent thus a loss of livelihood for those farmers.

For instance, South Africa's export of oranges, mandarins, lemon, pears and apples to both Russia and Ukraine in 2020 was put at USD 260 million (Hatab, 2022). One can correctly assert that with the ongoing conflict, it is a huge loss to both farmers and exporters on the continent. **Social and Political Unrest on the Continent:** The heavy reliance on imported food by Africa and the increased rise in household expenditure has the capacity to trigger social and political unrest continent-wide. For instance, the cost-of-living index is now 54 percent and 45 per cent in Nigeria and Egypt respectively since the start of the conflict. With the rising food prices and the shortage of food supplies, the purchasing power of an average household on the continent is reduced and the demand by workers for increase in wages can manifest in growing resentment and might lead to food riots which will invariably trigger social and political unrest in the continent according to Hatab (2022). For instance, food price inflation was a major catalyst of the Arab Spring in North Africa.

### **The Implication of Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Nigerian Economy**

The Nigerian economy is still reeling in the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic and the various lockdown that followed; thus, the Russia's invasion of Ukraine has therefore exacerbated the situation by driving up commodity prices and choking up the food supply chains. (Efebeh, 2020). Russia's actions have led Western nations to impose several sanctions, including the suspension of trade agreements and other forms of economic isolation on her. Russia's invasion has a wide-

ranging economic impact, especially as the conflict persists. These factors encompass the escalating costs of gasoline imports and subsidies, an uptick in gasoline smuggling, and surging prices in the energy sector, spanning diesel, jet fuel, kerosene, and gas.

Remarkable macroeconomic impacts involve the fiscal deficit, levels of debt, debt service payments, growth in money supply, depreciation of the exchange rate, and heightened inflationary pressures (Ozili, 2022). Despite being geographically distant from the conflict zone, Nigeria is not shielded from its repercussions, given Russia's global economic influence and Nigeria's dependence on international trade and imports. Therefore, it is crucial to underscore the economic consequences of the ongoing conflict on Nigeria.

In the aftermath of Russia's assault on Ukraine, crude oil prices have surged, with Brent exceeding \$100 per barrel and Bonny Light trading at \$110. Nigeria, being an importer of refined petroleum products, bears the brunt of the surge in crude oil prices. The cost of diesel, not subsidized in the country, has risen to over N800 per litre, already surpassing N830 at certain stations. Due to the precarious state of power generation and distribution in Nigeria, there has been an enforced surge in demand for diesel in the local market, causing the landing cost of refined products to soar. Given that most businesses in the country rely on generators for power, the spike in fuel prices has emerged as a significant hindrance to conducting business.

Additionally, Nigerians have recently grappled with a fuel shortage, potentially linked to the conflict. Prices of PMS have surged from N175 per litre to between N450 and N500 per litre as of January 29, 2023, and have further risen to N600 today, reflecting a more than 300 percent increase in just a few months. This, in turn, has had a cascading effect on the prices of goods and services across the nation.

In the upcoming months, this is probably going to get worse as ships bringing petroleum products into the nation can run into problems; although the petroleum industry in Nigeria is heavily laden with corruption, (Efebeh, 2018), but the latest crisis has added a new twist to it all. In most areas of Nigeria, the price of transportation has increased in step with the price of petroleum products (Maijama'a & Musa, 2022).

In Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State, the cost of ride-hailing services has increased dramatically during the past six months. Given the amount of traffic that wreaks daily havoc on the

state, higher transportation expenditures are the last thing Lagos residents' desire. In the specific scenario of Nigeria, increased oil prices in the international market have resulted in higher petroleum product and subsidy expenditures, which have then increased the cost of borrowing for the government and cause the fiscal deficit to exceed projections. This has made an already risky financial situation worse.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has impact on the Federation Account because the Nigeria National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Ltd will not contribute as much money due to an increase in subsidy commitment. This could have an impact on how funding is distributed to different levels of government, particularly in states that rely heavily on monthly allocations from the Federation Account.

Given the volatile state of the global oil industry, where oil prices have surged significantly, particularly impacting jet fuel prices, there has been a substantial and rapid increase in the cost of air travel over the past few weeks. Consequently, the airline industry in the country has been compelled to decrease the frequency of its operations. In February alone, airline prices surged by a minimum of 100%, with an economy one-way ticket now exceeding N50,000.

Nigerians who can afford it will have to pay much more for both domestic and international travel as airline costs rise. People who work in industrial areas such as Lagos State, Port Harcourt, and others but live in other states are also affected by this because they will have to cut down on the frequency of their travels.

Durum wheat, a basic crop predominantly imported by Nigeria that has undergone astronomical price increase since the invasion started, is one of the staples that Russia exports in large quantities, just like the crude oil market does (Maijama'a & Musa, 2022). The war between Russia and Ukraine has caused wheat prices to reach their highest point in a week.

Nigeria, ranking wheat as the third most-consumed grain in the nation, is a substantial importer of wheat products. As per the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2022), the country imported more durum wheat valued at over N128.1 billion in 2021 than it did in the entire year of 2020. Given Nigeria's heavy reliance on imports to fulfill domestic demand and its existing challenges with high inflation and disruptions in the food supply chain, the surge in commodity prices exerts additional strain on the local market. The conflict has disrupted the supply of wheat in the Nigerian market. Consequently, the price of wheat has



increased, impacting the cost of flour and, subsequently, the prices of bread and other baked goods (Ozili, 2022).

As anticipated, the disruption in wheat supply caused by the Russia/Ukraine conflict has led to a substantial increase in the prices of flour, consequently affecting the prices of bread and other baked goods in Nigeria. Prices for the larger size of bread, previously sold for N450, and the smaller size for N200, have risen to N1,200 and N700, respectively, since the conflict began between the two nations in February 2022.

Nigeria already spends over 50% of its budget on food, and if food prices continue to rise at the unprecedented rates they are, Nigerians' purchasing power will decrease. The central bank often intervenes in the market to fix currency rates in Nigeria's controlled floating exchange rate regime. However, a sizable amount of cash is exchanged in an unreported and in-monitorable manner of the black market.

Considering that Nigerians would secure foreign exchange from any available means to fulfill their business commitments, Nigeria is susceptible to additional depreciation of the naira. Inflationary strains are also impacting advanced economies, with the US experiencing the highest inflation rate in 40 years as of February 2022. Given Nigerians' inclination toward imports, we would essentially be introducing foreign inflation into an already ailing economy.

Nigeria's foreign exchange liquidity will be strained further because of a lack of FPIs and FDIs, as well as a drop in Diasporas remittances from Nigerians living in Russia, Ukraine, and other nearby countries, leaving the country vulnerable to further depreciation. It would be unfavorable if a lack of foreign capital reversed the current accounts and world trade balance's upward trend.

It is important to highlight that numerous Nigerians have joined the ranks of thousands of Nigerian youths who have stayed at home due to the prolonged ASUU strike and the impossibility of resuming lectures in Ukraine due of the disruption.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Conflict Theory

This study adopted the conflict theory as its tool of analysis and investigation.

Conflict theory is a sociological perspective that has evolved over time, influenced by thinkers like Karl Marx, Max Weber, and others. It's characterized by several key assumptions. First, it assumes that inequality is inherent in society, with individuals and groups

having unequal access to resources and power.

This inequality leads to power struggles and competition for limited resources. Conflict theory also highlights the role of conflict and competition in driving social change, with conflicts between different groups often resulting in shifts in social structures and norms. It distinguishes between dominant and subordinate groups, highlighting the structural inequalities that perpetuate the power imbalances. Additionally, it recognizes that dominant groups may use ideology to justify and maintain their position and that social movement can emerge as a response to perceived injustices. Conflict theory provides a critical lens through which to analyze societal dynamics, focusing on the central role of power, inequality, and struggle in shaping social structures and change. It contrasts with consensus theories that stress stability and cooperation in society.

This viewpoint is primarily focused on macro-level scrutiny, investigating extensive social frameworks and their influence on individuals and collectives. It has played a crucial role in comprehending diverse social challenges, encompassing aspects such as race, gender, class, and the influence of power in molding societal imbalances and disputes. The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has extensive, indirect implications for food security in Africa, and the conflict theory perspective aids in illuminating these dynamics. Initially, the conflict has the potential to disturb global food markets, instigating price fluctuations that echo throughout the world.

Such disruptions affect food affordability in African nations, where many rely on imported food. Additionally, changes in international trade dynamics, including disruptions in agricultural exports and imports, can affect the availability of food resources in African countries that depend on the global market for their sustenance.

Furthermore, the war contributes to heightened competition for essential resources on the global stage. As nations seek to secure food and agricultural commodities, this can lead to geopolitical tensions and potentially reduce access to vital resources for African nations. Political and economic instability resulting from the conflict can also have ripple effects, impacting African economies, trade relationships, and overall food security. Disruptions in international financial markets, for example, may affect the ability of African countries to finance food imports, potentially exacerbating food insecurity challenges.

Overall, conflict theory helps in understanding how the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict resonate across continents,

influencing food availability, affordability, and access in Africa and underscoring the need for strategic responses to mitigate these indirect effects. Conflict theory serves as a powerful analytical tool for highlighting social inequalities and power imbalances.

It enables a critical examination of societal issues and the structures that perpetuate them, making it valuable for understanding and addressing social problems. Conflict theory also illuminates the dynamics of social change, emphasizing that conflict and struggles often drive transformations in social structures and norms. It is particularly useful for social movements and activists, providing a theoretical foundation for advocating social justice and equality.

Despite its strengths, conflict theory can at times overemphasize conflict while neglecting cooperation and consensus in society, potentially presenting an overly negative view of social interactions. Furthermore, it may lack clear, prescriptive solutions for addressing the conflicts it identifies, leaving it primarily as a diagnostic tool rather than a problem-solving framework.

Critics contend that conflict theory oversimplifies intricate social problems, especially when exclusively concentrating on conflicts based on class, potentially overlooking other types of tensions. It can also exhibit a deterministic perspective, suggesting that conflict and inequality are unavoidable in society, which might dampen initiatives for constructive social change.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted the descriptive and historical method using secondary and progressive data evidence to assess the impact of Russia-Ukraine conflict on food security on the continent with special attention to the Nigerian State. While secondary data refers to those that are obtained from existing materials such as books, journals etc., the latter is from current information about the conflict as it unfolds and has a strong impact on political decisions.

This is predicated on the fact that since the start of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the global media especially, BBC, CNN, Aljazeera had provided live and current data as the conflict progresses which by and large had influenced the decisions of world leaders like the European Union, the United States President and NATO members on their subsequent policy actions taken thus far, such as the imposition of sanctions on Russia.

Data derived the secondary sources were analyzed by content analytical technique which help the researcher to extract various contents of documents used in this study.

### IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the analysis, the following findings were made:

The study delved into the attack of Ukraine and discerned that Putin's motivation primarily stemmed from his fervent desire to "reinstat Russia to its former national glory." This motivation can be traced back to his perception of the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 as a catastrophic event, which has fueled his obsession with resurrecting Russia's prominence. When examining the Ukrainian-Russian crisis through the lens of realism, it becomes apparent that the war is a result of a multifaceted interplay involving power dynamics, national interests, and geopolitical calculations.

It becomes evident that Russia's actions in Ukraine are not solely provoked by concerns about NATO expansion or Ukraine's inclination toward closer ties with Western countries. Rather, these actions reflect Russia's steadfast commitment to safeguarding its sphere of influence, securing vital strategic interests, and projecting its regional power. Russia's moves are meticulously calculated endeavors aimed at preserving control and influence over Ukraine.

Even though Russia's actions in Ukraine come at a considerable economic cost and bear the potential for protracted conflict, its unyielding determination to regain dominance over Ukraine underscores that the ongoing crisis extends beyond Ukraine's relationship with NATO. At the core of this crisis lies Russia's fundamental desire to establish a prominent global presence and address perceived challenges to its influence in the region. The research reveals a substantial dependence of the Nigerian government on Russia and Ukraine for the importation of crucial commodities.

The study showed that Nigeria heavily depends on imports to meet its domestic demands and already grapples with high inflation rates and disruptions within the food supply chain. The escalation in commodity prices is exerting further strain on the local market. One notable consequence of this conflict has been the disruption in wheat supply within the Nigerian market.

As a result, there has been a significant surge in the quantity of wheat, directly impacting the price of flour. Consequently, this has led to increased costs for bread and other baked goods, placing a burden on the average consumer.

Moreover, the crisis has cast a shadow over the crude oil price. Given Russia's prominent role as a crude oil exporter in Europe, the study indicates that Nigeria is bearing the brunt of the rising crude oil prices.

This has led to a substantial rise in the cost of diesel, a commodity that lacks subsidies in the country. Diesel prices have surged to over N800 per litre, with some stations already selling it for more than N830. The knock-on effect extends to petrol, currently priced at N630 per litre, triggering a chain reaction across various sectors of the economy.

The research also explored the socioeconomic implications of these developments on the Nigerian population. It revealed that a significant number of Nigerian students studying in Ukraine have been compelled to return home, with some relocating to different European countries. This disruption has resulted in an interruption of their education.

Additionally, it was found that due to the soaring fuel prices, the cost of goods and services across the nation has skyrocketed by more than 300%. Businesses relying heavily on generators for power are facing significant challenges, and transportation costs have surged. These combined factors have contributed to an elevated level of poverty among Nigerian citizens.

More individuals are grappling with financial difficulties, encountering obstacles in accessing quality education, and struggling to secure reliable employment opportunities. This, in turn, poses challenges for social stability and development.

## V. CONCLUSION

In summary, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict is causing profound and lasting impacts on global and African economies, particularly in countries like Nigeria that heavily rely on imports.

The economic consequences are broad, including higher energy costs, increased fuel imports and subsidies, disruptions to government finances, issues with smuggling petroleum products, reduced regional wheat exports, and trade disruptions. These factors exacerbate existing challenges, such as inflation and fiscal stability. At a broader scale, the conflict is leading to rising budget deficits, increased debt, higher debt servicing costs, expanding money supplies, currency depreciation, and mounting inflation pressures across African countries, notably Nigeria.

In response, Ukraine is taking humanitarian measures, appointing "Ambassadors of Grain from Ukraine" like Obiageli Ezekwesili, to help countries facing severe food shortages due

to the disruption of grain exports from the region. This crisis highlights the interdependence of the worldwide economy and emphasizes the importance of diversifying economies, lessening reliance on trading partners, and formulating strategies for resilience.

As the globe contends with these challenges, it calls for collaborative efforts to address immediate humanitarian needs and long-term economic issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

- The Nigerian Government should reduce dependency on specific countries, like Russia and Ukraine, for essential commodities. Encourage trade diversification to mitigate the risk of supply disruptions in times of global crises.
- Invest in domestic agricultural production to diminish dependence on imported food items, especially grains like wheat. Promote policies that support local farmers and increase food security. Explore alternative energy sources to diminish dependence on fossil fuels.
- Invest in renewable energy solutions to mitigate the impact of rising energy costs due to global conflicts.
- Implement strategies that encourage economic diversification beyond reliance on oil and gas, thereby lessening susceptibility to fluctuations in global energy prices. Actively pursue diversification of trading partners and markets to mitigate vulnerability to disruptions in specific regions. Explore new opportunities for trade and investment.
- Strategic Reserves: Establish strategic reserves for essential commodities, including grains, to cushion against supply chain disruptions during global crises.
- Promoting Public Awareness: Inform the public about the potential impacts of international conflicts on the local economy, such as inflation and price hikes, aiming to foster conscientious consumer behavior.

These suggestions aim to provide guidance to the Nigerian government in lessening the repercussions of external shocks like the Russia-Ukraine conflict and promoting economic stability and resilience amid global uncertainties.

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