



The Russia-Ukraine War: Analysis of An East African Nation's Dilemmas and Its Nexus to Economy and Ideology

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By

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List of Acronyms

CNN:	Cable News Network, Inc
FID:	Final Investment Decision
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UN:	United Nations
UNHCR:	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
UPDF:	Uganda People's Defense Force

1.0 Background

Russia wittingly started invading the Independent Sovereign State of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 (CNN, Feb 2022)¹. For years, the world watched Vladimir Putin make his strategic move and build a plethora of military bases to invade its neighbor, a former member of the Soviet Union. First, we interrogate the genesis. In 2014, Russia cogently annexed Crimea from Ukraine, claiming it was in the interest of protecting Russian speaking natives. Historically, Crimea was originally part of the Russian Empire in the 1780s, but was later transferred to Ukraine in 1954. Even at the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 by the Belavezha Accord, Crimea was still within the territorial boundary of Ukraine (Merezhko, 2015)². The seizure set the stage and built confidence for a complete invasion of Ukrainian territory should there be

¹ CNN (Feb, 2022). Russia-Ukraine news <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-news-02-24-22-intl/index.html>

² Merezhko, O (2015). Crimea's Annexation by Russia - Contradictions of the New Russian Doctrine of International Law.

security risks stemming from NATO's strategic expansion. Eight years later, Russia has made the bold move in the 21st Century, an armed war in the heart of Europe since the 1941 second world war.

We must recollect that the invasion stems from Russia's distress over Ukraine's interests in becoming a more democratic nation by aligning with the West, the European Union and joining NATO. A position that would alter Russian culture, threaten its security and its governance practices. Which prompted Moscow to start viewing Kyiv's skewedness to Europe as a strategic expansionary drive by NATO (NATO, 1999)³ to engulf the Russian Federation.

Since the war began, several people have been displaced or killed. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

https://www.zaoerv.de/75_2015/75_2015_1_a_167_194.pdf

³ NATO (1999). The Future of NATO Enlargement. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/reportch3.pdf>

(2022)⁴, over 1.8 million have been displaced, and over 1,200 civilians have been killed (8th March 2022), let alone the army casualties at the frontline. It is estimated that the number will surge to 4 million displacements if the invasion persists (UNHCR, 2022). In an attempt to deescalate the war and restrain Putin, the West, the EU and the UK adopted a plethora of economic sanctions against Russia and Belarus (an aide to Russia), a move that has significantly disrupted the supply chain and altered the systems of the global market.

A war that is 7,647.6 km away from East Africa, wouldn't be of any interest to the countries in the global south if the world had ceased to be a global village, unfortunately not.

⁴ United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (2022). Sweden's support provides a lifeline to people fleeing and displaced in Ukraine. <https://www.unhcr.org/neu/76513-swedens-support-provides-a-lifeline-to-people-fleeing-and-displaced-in-ukraine.html#:~:text=More%20than%202%20million%20people,have%20been%20displaced%20to%20date.>

2.0 UN Security Voting Context and Abstention Rationale by Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

On 2 March, the U.N General Assembly voted 141-5, with 35 countries abstaining from the draft resolution titled "**Aggression against Ukraine**". Five countries, Russia, Belarus, Syria, North Korea and Eritrea, voted in favor of Russia. While Uganda, South Sudan, Burundi abstained and Ethiopia avoided the vote entirely (UN,2022)⁵.

The special emergency session demanded an immediate sojourn on the Russian attack to Ukraine. Unfortunately, the resolution mere demonstrates intension and doesn't mount to action because of the impediments underpinned by absolute veto power. Article 27 of the U. N Charter gives absolute veto power to five

⁵ United Nations (2020). U.N. General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to censure Russia. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/un-general-assembly-votes-overwhelmingly-censure-russia-rcna18340>

permanent members at the UN security council; China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Thus, these countries can always use their veto power to protect their geopolitical interests. For instance, the USA wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Cuba and Libya were shielded by veto powers. Therefore, Russia cannot halt Ukraine's invasion despite condemnation from the vast majority of U. N member states.

Although the abstention included India and China, which was expected. The abstention from the East African nations was a strong demonstration of two things; i) ideological philosophy and ii) protecting national economic interests.

2.1 Protecting Ideological Philosophy

In East Africa alone, Burundi, Uganda and South Sudan voted in abstention while Ethiopia avoided the vote completely. From the surface, this was a diplomatic move to express neutrality. However, a critical look suggests otherwise. The intrinsic

action was guided by a deep-rooted violent and war ideology among East African nations. It would have meant that the afore-mentioned countries lack ideology and would appear hypocritical if they had voted against Russia. To put this into perspective, all the four Eastern African nations are quasi democracies that use violence to subdue alternative views like Russia. Therefore, a vote for the motion would have meant that we have become bad students of autocracy. Also, Eastern African nations depend on Russians for their arms supplies. A study by Chatham House (2017)⁶, indicated that Africa accounted for up to 3 percent of Russia's total arms exports between 2000 and 2016, with sales by volume concentrated in Sudan (90 per cent), Uganda (60 per cent) and Ethiopia (50 per cent).

⁶ Chatham House (2017). Russia's Role as an Arms Exporter the Strategic and Economic Importance of Arms Exports for Russia.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2017-03-20-russia-arms-exporter-connolly-sendstad.pdf>

Figure 1: Importation of Fire Arms by African Countries.



Source: Chatham House Publication 2017.

For instance, from a practical point of view, in 2014, the South Sudan military clashed with the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) over the territorial boundary and killed seven people (Reuters, September 2014). In 1998, UPDF entered the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo. They delayed in Congo for too long, their objectives were not achieved and ended up looting, and committing atrocities (John, 2001)⁷. According to the UN Commission of Inquiry (2019)⁸, it found

⁷ John, F. (2001). Explaining Uganda's Intervention in Congo. Evidence and Interpretation. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3557264>

⁸ [1] U.N Commission of Inquiry (2019). Report of the Commission of

that President Pierre Nkurunziza and his inner circle were responsible for mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. In 2021, Ethiopia opted to bomb Tigrayans opposed to negotiations. After connecting the dots, one can only conclude, that violent ideology was coined in diplomacy at an international level. No wonder, Uganda and South Sudan have leaders in perpetuity.

2.2 National Economic Interest and The War Implication on East Africa

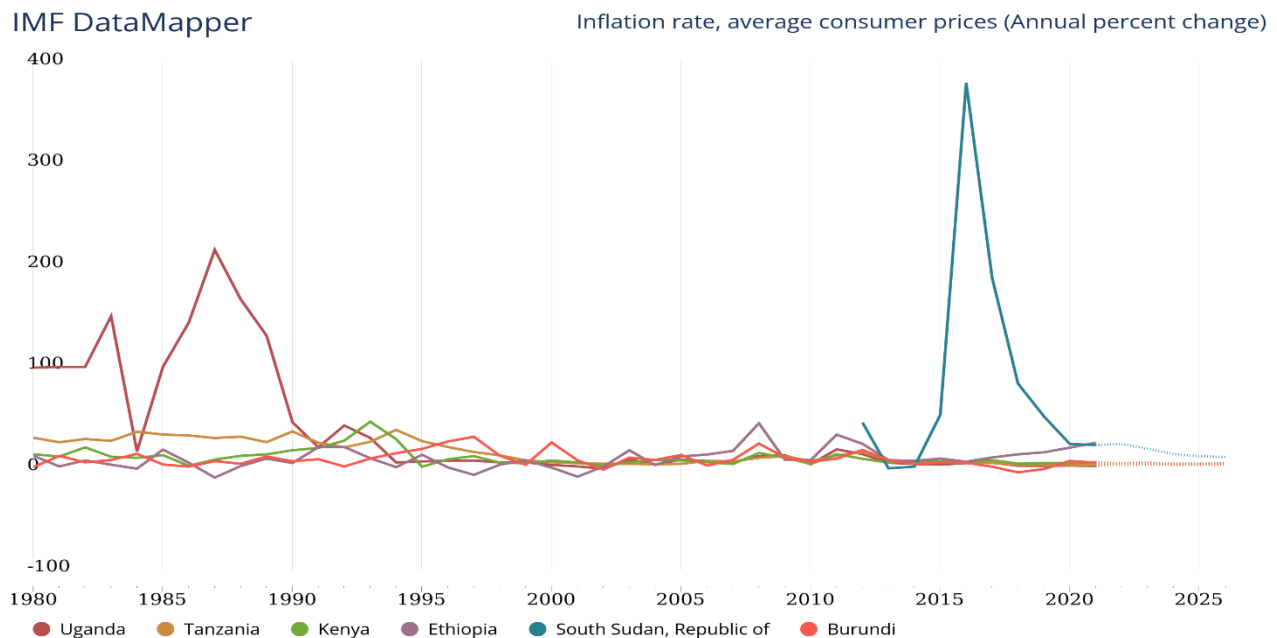
The East African nations have positioned themselves as neutral players at the United Nations. The war will still have negative upshots on economies underpinned by global market and supply chain disruptions coupled with sanctions. Since the war began, the East African region has experienced a significant rise in food and fuel prices. According to the East African

Inquiry on Burundi <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/234/31/PDF/G1923431.pdf?OpenElement>

(March, 2022)⁹, Uganda's consumer price index inflation is expected to peak at 5 per cent, from 3.5 per cent; in Kenya, it is projected, at 5.08 per cent; and in Rwanda at 2.0

per cent, depicting a rough road ahead for the 177 million East Africans.

Figure 2: Inflation Rates in East Africa



©IMF, 2021, Source: World Economic Outlook (October 2021)

Source: @IMF. World Economic Outlook (2021)

All East African countries are net importers. According to Trading Economic (2020)¹⁰, Uganda's imports from Russia were US\$78.67 Million and the vast majority came from Cereals, Paper, fertilizers and aluminum. Therefore, our rolex (a local delicacy), farmers and wheat consumers will face it rough

since Russia will resort to protectionism.

Besides, Uganda imports most of its oil products from Kenya, where crude from the producing countries is shipped and refined. The supply disruptions caused by the sanctions will require that

⁹ The East African (March, 2022). Consumer Inflation hit East Africa.

¹⁰ Trading Economics (2020). Uganda's Imports from Russia

European countries like Germany who are highly dependent on Russian energy look for a new supplier. Further, 8 per cent of the US economy that depends on Russian fuel will also have to do the same. These supply deficits will cause a global scramble for energy and stiff competition. Unfortunately, East African economies cannot efficiently withstand a long stiff trade competition hence galloping inflation.

3.0 Policy Recommendations

- i) A check on using veto power at the U.N Security Council (International observation). The veto power has recently been used as a justification for war. Therefore, the United Nations must reflect deeply on the use and application of this instrument. Otherwise, the purpose is being misused.
- ii) The need for cautious dealing with Russia. The East African nations ought to trade with caution with the Russian Federation. **"You cannot be around an anthill without being mistaken for one"**. The East African nations must reflect deeply on their foreign policy with Russia.

A close relationship will likely sink the East African nations further into autocracy.

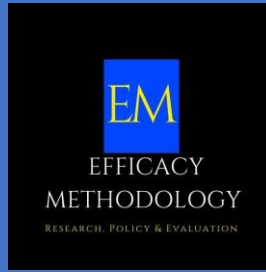
- iii) Fasttrack oil production process in Uganda. There is no likelihood that Russia-Ukraine war will end soon. It is only advisable for Uganda and Tanzania to fasten their oil production for sustainability and market stability especially now that the Final Investment Decision (FID) has been signed.

For the world to remain politically stable in the 21st century, democracy must defeat the autocratic war in Ukraine and prevent the war from escalating into World War III.

To recapitulate, the Ukraine war couldn't have been avoided given the geopolitics and world supremacy which had lasted for over 70 years. The Russians dared to test the jigsaw constructed on 24th October 1945 is still holding.

4.0 About Efficacy Methodology

Efficacy Methodology (EM) is Africa's leading independent nonprofit public policy think tank. Our focus is on Research, Policy and Evaluation. We are strategically working towards establishing collaborative administrative secretariats in Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Botswana and Angola.



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