

UPF UK: Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions

Robin Marsh
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Moderator: Dr. Afzal Ashraf Formerly a University Lecturer in International Relations, Politics, and History at the University of Loughborough and the University of Nottingham.



Hon. Muhammad Azhar Siddique: Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Chairman of the Judicial Activism Panel.

[Hon. Muhammad Azhar Siddique Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions](#)

Prof. Saleh Dauda: Professor of International Relations at the University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Dr. Mark C. Donfried: Executive Director and Founder of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy.

Emmanuel C. Njoku: Ambassador of ECOWAS. Chairman, Emma Njoku Foundation and Managing Director of Prezzo Shed Investments.

The Universal Peace Federation held an important event on the 18th of July 2023, at their UK London Headquarters, focusing on 'Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions.' Esteemed speakers from diverse backgrounds gathered to shed light on the often-neglected viewpoints from nations typically referred to as the 'Global South.' The event aimed to foster respectful dialogue, promote mutual understanding, and address the widespread impact of the war on nations reliant on Ukraine for food supplies and global trade.



The primary objective of the event was to highlight the often-overlooked perspectives from the Global South, acknowledging the impact of the Ukraine-Russia War on nations that depend on Ukraine for food supplies and play a significant role in global trade. By encouraging respectful dialogue and promoting mutual understanding, the Universal Peace Federation demonstrated its commitment to fulfilling one of its key roles in fostering global peace.



The event 'Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions' proved to be an insightful platform for promoting inclusivity and understanding in international affairs. As the world navigates complex geopolitical dynamics, such initiatives serve as vital steps towards a

more harmonious and balanced global dialogue. The Universal Peace Federation's efforts in orchestrating this event exemplify its commitment to promoting peace and mutual understanding on the international stage.



Biographies:

Moderator: **Dr. Afzal Ashraf** has broad experience of International Relations and security issues, both as a practitioner and as an academic. This includes service as a senior officer in the UK Armed Forces in operations ranging from famine relief in Africa to stabilisation operations in the South Atlantic, deterrence support in the Cold War and strategic aspects of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As an Assistant Professor, Dr. Ashraf taught International Relations at Loughborough University and at the University of Nottingham where he is now a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Conflict, Security and Terrorism.

Dr. Mark C. Donfried is the current director of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, a Berlin based NGO that he founded in 2001. His focus at the moment is fulfilling his role as director of the ICD in pursuit of its mission to extend research, programs and practices in the field of cultural diplomacy. Mark Donfried also teaches courses in cultural diplomacy for the Center for Cultural Diplomacy Studies.

Hon. Muhammad Azhar Siddique: Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Chairman of the Judicial Activism Panel. Anchor and Expert, Article Writer and Social Activist. Human Rights Campaigner, Pro Bono Publico Lawyer.

Prof. Saleh Dauda: Professor of International Relations at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. He became a professor of International Relations in 2008. He has published widely in both local and International Journals. He has written ten books in International Relations and related areas. His research interest is in Africa's International Relations, Third World in Global politics, Regionalism in Africa and Foreign Policy Formulation and Analysis.

Emmanuel C. Njoku: Ambassador of ECOWAS. Chairman, Emma Njoku Foundation which is an NGO focussing on Health and Education. Managing Director of Prezzo Shed Investments. He is trained as a lawyer and has been involved in renewable energy, Human Resources management, Real Estate and Law while sitting on the Boards of many companies in Nigeria and overseas.

The war is having a wide impact and effect on many countries that rely on Ukraine for food supplies as well as trade in the wider world - much of this is not fully appreciated. Our aim is to facilitate respectful dialogue and promote mutual understanding, fulfilling one of the key roles of the Universal Peace Federation.



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Hon Muhammad Azhar Siddique: Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions

Written by: Hon. Muhammad Azhar Siddique

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Global South Perspectives on the Ukraine-Russia War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions

I am very clear about this universal reality that war is never a lasting solution to any problem.

Also human history has shown, time and time again, that war leads to death, catastrophe and other issues. So instead of turning to weapons we should engage in dialogue to find solutions.

The Russia-Ukraine war and its consequences so far have shown the need for peace and justice in society.

Mankind has learnt the undeniable reality that war and invading another country is never a solution, in any circumstances whatsoever. On the other side, dialogue and discussions have been an incredibly effective method in resolving all kinds of problems in the past.

Therefore, all the world powers especially the United Nations, should unite and work to find a fair and just solution to this conflict and to save humanity from the brink of disaster before it is too late.

To contribute to the efforts to end the war, the West should stop lecturing and treat Global South as partners. But even they largely focus on how the West can persuade those developing nations to see their own interests differently

The West should understand their interests. There have been no major concessions and no willingness to reconsider the approach of the West to the war in Ukraine either, in light of its impact on the Global South.

The West seems to be taking the interests of the Global South even less seriously than the West used to – not more.

Instead of uniting democracies around the world, the war in Ukraine has divided them. The self-centred approach of the West has been harmful to its own influence among non-Western democracies at a time when it needs them more than ever.

In order to end the crisis between Russia and Ukraine, the focus of the world powers should not be to settle personal and deep-rooted grudges or an ego contest but the real focus should always be how to stop war and pave the way for dialogues leading to peace in the region and the world.

The world body also adopted a new resolution calling for an end to the war.

The Global South has predominantly condemned the Russian invasion. In a recent UN vote on the its anniversary in February, 141 out of 193 countries called on Russia to withdraw from Ukraine, although the 32 countries that abstained made up almost half of the world's population. Much to Europe and US' bafflement and frustration, even the non-Western democracies – Brazil, India, Indonesia, and South Africa – refused to join sanctions on Russia. Moreover, Brazil refused to supply Ukraine with German-made ammunition, while India increased its imports of Russian oil.

Therefore, Russia should withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine and should ensure cessation of hostilities.

On the issue, the United States and its European allies have so far suffered disappointment due to lack of support from from the Global South.

For much of the first year of the war, there was a sense of relief and even triumphalism about the West's own unity in response to the Russian invasion. Many in Europe and the US seemed convinced that Russia was isolated. Yet there is now a growing realisation that the Global South has not been supportive of the West. Moreover, the West must reckon with the non-Western democracies that are essential to building a broader coalition. If we want to find common ground with them, we may even need to modify our own approach to the war in Ukraine.

Up until the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the West had been widely seen as going through a crisis or in a state of decline. In that environment, the unity of NATO's response to the Russian aggression was cheered as a triumph. Countless commentators praised Europe and the US for being more united than many had ever imagined.

Also Pope Francis has appealed to end the tragic Ukraine conflict stating, "...let us not stop talking; indeed, let us pray to God more intensely... Those who wage war forget humanity."

Roberta Metsola, the European Parliament president, in an interview with Times of Malta, spoke of the "palpable fear" that Russia's war against Ukraine could spill into neighbouring EU states.

Besides resolving the issue, the world should cooperate to address the global impacts of the war on food security, energy, finance, the environment and nuclear security. All the nations especially Brics including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa should cooperate with the world to address these impacts.

On 23rd February 2023, the UN General Assembly called for ending the war in Ukraine and demanded Russia's immediate withdrawal from the country, in line with the UN Charter.

Most regrettably, the war in Ukraine has made the situation extremely grave and precarious and if the right decisions and timely steps are not taken towards de-escalation and peace building then it may well escalate further. Undoubtedly, the consequences are and will be horrific and destructive in a manner previously not seen by the world.

Ukraine war: Consequent Geopolitical Tensions

Russia is the world's largest natural gas exporter; the second-largest exporter of crude oil; and the third-largest producer of crude oil.

Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Europe and China imported around 60% and 20% respectively of Russia's oil and 40% of European gas consumption was supplied by Russia.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine pushed crude oil prices to a historic high and had a similar impact on European gas prices. High shipping costs, reputational impact and buyers' lack of willingness to order oil from Russian ports mean that Russia's oil supply to global markets has been severely disrupted.

The EU has suddenly woken up to the dangers of over-reliance on hydrocarbon provision by unreliable partners. Its response is to accelerate its transition to renewables. However, that transition cannot be achieved overnight, and so in the short to medium term, the EU will continue to rely on hydrocarbons for its energy needs.

In the medium term, individual European countries are making huge commitments to strip hydrocarbons out of their energy systems. In January this year, Germany purchased 55% of its gas; 50% of its coal; and 35% of its oil from Russia. By the end of March, those figures had already fallen to 40% gas, 24% coal and 25% oil. Germany (whose energy minister recently described renewables as 'freedom energies') has further undertaken to reduce its gas requirements to below 10% of domestic consumption by 2024 and to increase from 42% to 80% its energy provision from renewables by 2030. That is an ambitious target, made all the more so by the fact that, as industry, transport and heating electrify, demand for power will also accelerate. The increase in renewable provision from 42-80% requires a near-trebling in installed capacity – from 225 TWh in 2021 to over 600 TWh by 2030. Nuclear is making a renaissance (the UK Government announced this week its intention to build up to eight new nuclear stations) and the rise of Hydrogen as the miracle fuel continues.

Food

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has already had a noticeable impact on food prices. Between them, Russia and Ukraine export around a quarter of all traded wheat; 1. more than three-quarters of traded sunflower oil; 2 and one sixth of the world's supply of maize.

Russia is one of the world's largest exporters of the three major types of fertilizers – nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Replacing those ingredients will, together with higher gas prices, result in higher input costs, which will, in turn, impact next season's harvest, leading to elevated food prices in the longer run.

Migration and Governance Issues

These economic and social pressures will result in a political response as the lack of access to and increasing prices of food and energy are likely to lead to increased migration from Africa into Europe, with the consequent increase in right-wing populist sentiment.

In addition to migration, the global pressures on energy and food prices risk leading to increased inequality and civil unrest, making governance more difficult and contributing to regional instability. The consequences of that instability range from further disruption to global supply chains, to the deployment of peace-keeping forces and the need for significant volumes of aid – all of which themselves have global consequences.

Stress nexus

These issues – food and energy shortage, supply chain disruption and migration, set against the continuing economic and social impact – form a 'stress nexus'.

Stress nexus is potentially exacerbated by the growing impacts of climate change to magnify the risks to societies around the world. This combination of disruptive factors has led some commentators to raise the spectre of a more globalised systemic disorder.

The Russia-Ukraine crisis is likely to accelerate that tendency, with implications for North African economies as near-shore destinations for European investment. That tendency potentially conflicts with the Energy Transition's need for efficient global supply chains.

Therefore, the world, especially Ukraine and Russia, must understand that war is never a lasting solution to any problem, and must get ready for dialogues to find a solution to the crisis.

