



**Report about the African Facts-finding mission on the War in Ukraine
Organized by Euro-African Foundation
19-23 September 2022**

Introduction:

The war in Ukraine has reached its fourth month. Consequences of the war are affecting Africa and Africans. One of the main repercussions is the economic impact on African countries. Others included the impact on the situation of African citizens in Ukraine and surrounding countries. Meanwhile African public opinion has been swamped with a lot of contradicting information and fake news. Very few leaders from Africa have visited Ukraine during the last months of the War. Therefore, we in the Euro-African Foundation organized an African fact-finding mission to Poland and Ukraine-Poland borders to see the War in Ukraine from an African perspective, under the leadership of the President of Africa Liberal Network, Mr. Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo.

Objective of the FFM:

The main objectives of the African fact-finding mission were to:

Investigate the situation and find facts about the ongoing war in Ukraine and violations of human rights, including the situation of African citizens who have escaped from Ukraine, and to Inform the African public opinion about the findings.

Participants of the Fact Finding Mission were politicians, youth leaders, activists on human rights and refugee's rights, mainly:

1. President Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo, Chairman of the delegation, Burkina Faso, President of the Alliance for Democracy and Federation–African Democratic Rally (ADF-RDA), former Minister of Social Action and National Solidarity and former Minister of Transport, former forth and second Vice President of National Assembly of Burkina Faso, foret rapporteur of pan African parliament , Vice-President of Liberal International, President of Africa Liberal Network
2. Honorable Mohamed Mohamoud Ibrahim, Somalia, International Liaison of Chadi Party, Former Deputy of the Prime Minister, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Somalia, Vice-President of Africa Liberal Network for East African region.
3. Jawad Chafil, Morocco, President of the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa - Morocco Branch , Member of Union Constitutional Party, former Parliament candidate ,
4. Khadmalla Saeed, Sudan, former North Africa coordinator for Africa liberal youth (2017-2022). Freelancer, Social and Political activist on Nubian issues.
5. Adil Abdel Aati, Chairman of the Board, Euro-African Foundation

Meetings and visits conducted:

The program of the visit included meetings with African Ambassadors of Senegal, South Africa (both to Poland and Ukraine) , Rwanda, as well as European Ambassadors of Lithuania and Belgium. We also met with representatives OF Polish Government including an adviser at the chancellery of the Prime Minister, General Director at the cabinet of the Minister of Integration, a couple of Polish, African and Ukrainian foundations active in Poland. Our mission included also

visiting shelter houses and transfer centers for Ukrainians refugees, traveling to Poland Ukraine borders as well as interviewing African citizens and students who left Ukraine.

1. Working dinner with Mr. Jakub Głowaczewski, adviser at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland, special envoy to Africa;
2. meeting with Mr. Marek Sierant, spokesperson of Ukraine House Association and the team;
3. Meeting with HE Papa Diop, Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal in Poland;
4. Meeting with Mrs. Natalia Rzenno, General Director at the gabinet of the Minister of Integration;
5. Meeting with HE Ms. Nomvula Josephine Mngomezulu Ambassador of South Africa in Poland;
6. Meeting with HE Andre Groenewald Ambassador of South Africa in Ukraine;
7. Meeting with Mr. Sergiy Sukhoboychenko, Chairman of the Board of Flaying Bag Foundation and Ukrainians citizens and children;
8. Meeting with HE Eduardas Borisovas, Ambassador of Lithuania in Poland;
9. Meeting with HE Rik VAN DROOGENBROECK, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Poland and Lithuania;
10. Meeting with Mr. Vice-President of the Board of Polish Humanitarian Action and the team;
11. Meeting with Mr. Roman Korbutm, co-founder and activist at EuroMajdan Warsaw Foundation and Ms. Elena Zavadzka, activist at Ukrainian House;
12. Meeting with Mr. Elmi Abdi, Chairman of the Board of Foundation for Somalia and Mrs. senait cieplińska, Chairwoman of the Board of Adulis Foundation Meeting with Belarusian National Anti-Crisis Management;
13. Visiting Medika border point and Przemyśl railway station;
14. Visiting two Houses to host Ukrainian citizens in Rzeszow;
15. Meeting with HE prof Anastase Shyaka, Ambassador of Rwanda in Poland;
16. Visiting Transit center for Ukraine refugees in Warsaw;
17. Meeting with The Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM);
18. Participation in the inauguration of Africa Journal of Political, Economic and Social Studies.

Questions and issues raised:

The following questions and issues were raised and investigated within the mission:

1. Who started the war in Ukraine and why?
2. What was/is the situation of citizens of Africa residents of Ukraine after the war in Ukraine, Poland and Europe (reason of escape, reaction of Ukrainian, Polish and European authorities towards African citizens, their legal and material status now, etc.)?
3. Information about the border crisis between Poland, Baltic countries and Belarus (reasons, impacts on African cities, etc.)
4. What are the consequences of the War for :
 - Civilians in Ukraine (including women and children)
 - Ukraine and neighboring countries,
 - Critical Infrastructure (Including the nebular power plants)
5. What is the impact of the war on Africa, considering the following?
 - Economic aspects, including food security, energy security, using African resources to finance the war, increase of inflation, etc.
 - Security aspect, including the role of PMC Wagner Group, quality of Russian military offer, internal tensions and coups d'états
6. What kind of policies and initiatives for Africa Russia and Ukraine and their allies (media, humanitarian aid, etc) have undertaken.
7. What is the role of neighboring countries in helping refugees and victims of war in Ukraine?
8. Facts about Human rights violations and crimes of War in Ukraine (mass murder, rape, forced resettlement, etc.)
9. How would you describe the will of both sides of the conflict to end the war?
10. How can Africa help?

The Finding:

1. Who started the war in Ukraine and why?

The mission after studying hundreds of reports and news, conducting meetings with activists and historians, got to the conclusion that the war in Ukraine was an unprovoked, un-lawful act of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In fact we discovered that the war did not begin in 24th of February 2022, but it began in 2014 when Russia attacked and later un-lawfully annexed Crimea and attacked the Donbas Region of Ukraine.

Therefore we rigidly condemn unauthorized and unlawful Russian aggression against Ukraine. We are deeply shocked by the brutality and ruthlessness of Russian armed hostilities against civilians and soldiers, which is a violation of provisions of Geneva Convention.

2. What was/is the situation of citizens of Africa residents of Ukraine after the war in Ukraine, Poland and Europe (reason of escape, reaction of Ukrainian, Polish and European authorities towards African citizens, their legal and material status now, etc.)?

Approximately 50 thousands students and citizens were residing in Ukraine when the war exploded on 24 of February 2022. The biggest group were Nigerian with approximately 15 thousands students and citizens, Egyptians with about 12 thousands citizens, about 9 thousands from Morocco, 1500 from Sudan, to smaller numbers like 100 Senegalese to 86 Rwandans or 45 South Africans.

Most of these students and citizens were evacuated through the borders of Poland, but also through the borders of Moldova, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The evacuation process was difficult and tough due to the bombing and shelling of Russian forces on Ukrainian cities, especially Kharkov, Kiev, Sumy, Multipol, Mariupol and others,

Most of these students and citizens spent many hours walking on foot, waiting in lines on polish and other borders. Many of our citizens crossed the borders and they were frightened, injured (of walking mainly), dehydrated, and in deep trauma.

African embassies in Poland and Ukraine, as well as in neighboring countries played a great role in evacuating students and residents, as well as African led organizations and groups. They provided information, means of transport, legal documents, food and shelter.

Poland and other neighbors of Ukraine had helped in evacuation of our students; however they expected their respected embassies to play the main role. We found out that our citizens faced the next problems:

1. Lack of information on the border in English and/or French languages, and huge problem of communication with border guards,
2. Short period of stay in Poland after crossing the borders to settle their legal status or return home (15 days),
3. Harsh treatment of some of the Ukrainian border guards,

However, our mission did not find signs of legal or institutional racism against our citizens neither in Ukraine nor in Poland. The harsh treatment has stopped after the intervention of African embassies in Warsaw and to Ukraine.

We would like here to appreciate the synergy of the work of African embassies in Ukraine and Poland, and their role in helping our citizens regardless of nationalities, the solidarity of our students in these difficult times, and the help and assistance given by of polish officials and citizens to our students in those difficult days.

Some of our students and citizens returned to their respected countries, and other found chances of education in east European countries, including Hungary, Romania and Poland. The majority has fled to Western Europe. Our mission however could not identify the fate of thousands of students in their new places of destination, and their legal status is not certain.

3. Information about the border crisis between Poland, Baltic countries and Belarus (reasons, impacts on African citizens, etc.)

The crisis on the European Union's border with Belarus began in the summer of 2021. The crisis was caused by the Belarusian authorities, which used migratory movements from African and Middle Eastern countries to trigger the migration crisis. Unrecognized by democratic countries president of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko threatened to "flood" the EU with human traffickers,

drug smugglers, and armed migrants. Later, Belarusian authorities and state-controlled tourist enterprises, together with some airlines operating in the Middle East, started promoting tours to Belarus by increasing the number of connections from the Middle East and giving those who bought them Belarusian visas, ostensibly for hunting purposes. Social media groups were additionally offering fraudulent advice on the rules of crossing the border to the prospective migrants, most of whom were trying to reach Germany.

The border of the European Union was guarded by military forces that prevented migrants from crossing the border, which resulted in suffering and even death of the deceived citizens of African and Middle Eastern countries. Many African citizens stayed for almost 6 months in detention centers in Poland and Lithuania, before being released and guaranteed asylum status. Lithuania has granted 4500 refugees the status for these people who fled from Belarus.

Poland has built a wall on its border with Belarus, and Polish and Lithuanian missions has traveled and addressed countries of the departure of immigrants, mainly Iraq and Turkey in order to stop the smuggling, and It turned out that the crisis at the border was under control, but migrants are still treated as pawns in the Belarusian geopolitical game. The mission discovered that more and more Africans are recruited nowadays in Russia in order to send them to the Polish and Lithuanian border. We notice with route as dangerous as taking boots through the Mediterranean Sea, and we strongly advise African citizens not to risk their life taking this route.

4. What are the consequences of the War for :

- **Civilians in Ukraine (including women and children)**
- **Ukraine and neighboring countries,**
- **Critical Infrastructure (Including the nebular power plants)?**

Our mission has find out that the war has a very negative impact on the population of Ukraine, on Ukraine and neighboring countries, as well on the critical Infrastructure of Ukraine (Including the nebular power plants)

Russian attack on Ukraine has caused major humanitarian, demographic and psychological problems for the civil population of Ukraine. Nearly 6.5 million citizens of Ukraine have been internally displaced, and more than 4 million have fled the country because of the war. The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine may deepen during the coming winter. This unstable situation in Ukraine has caused destabilization of European Union borders. It is accompanied by the constant threat of an outbreak of a conflict in Belarus, which may be directly involved in military actions against Ukraine.

The effect of war on Ukraine is the increase in energy and fuel prices felt by individual consumers. This contributes to an increase in inflation and deepens poverty. At the same time, Russia is using the issue of rising energy prices in its influence operations aimed at raising international concern and persuading the international community to recognize Russian territorial gains in Ukraine and regain its position in the international arena. However, energy cooperation with Russia is currently undesirable.

The shelling by the Russian Federation (nuclear terrorism) of the power plants in Zaporizhia and Nikolaev shows the constant attempts to intimidate the Ukrainian and international community with possible nuclear contamination. Electricity lines, hospitals and water supply systems are intentionally destroyed in order to cause a freezing starving winter.

5. What is the impact of the war on Africa, considering the following?

- **Economic aspects, including food security, energy security, using African resources to finance the war, increase of inflation, etc.**
- **Security aspect, including the role of PMC Wagner Group, quality of Russian military offer, internal tensions and coups d'états**

Our mission has found out that the war has a huge negative impact on Africa and Africans on all aspects. Ukraine, known as the world's granary, is an important producer of basic agricultural products. By the war, 75 percent of Ukrainian exports were transported through the ports of the Azov and Black Seas. From February 13, 2022 Russian Federation restricts navigation in a large

area of the Black Sea by blocking food transports. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2020, Ukrainian wheat exports accounted for 9 percent of world export (5th place), corn 14 percent (4th place) and sunflower oil 44 percent (1st place). Even before the invasion, world grain prices were the highest in a decade (wheat 31% higher than in the previous year, and sunflower oil 63% higher). Wheat and maize prices in the first month of the invasion rose by 22% and 20%, respectively. If the war continues, 47 million people, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, could suffer hunger.

We have discovered as well, based on different reports, including from BBC, that the Russian Federation has been grabbing natural resources from Africa for several years, including gold from Sudan, gold and diamond from Central African Republic, diamond from Botswana, to finance its military machine and to avoid sanctions.

We have also observed the activities of PMC Wagner Group in Africa and Ukraine. This group has been involved in suppressing protests in African countries (Sudan, supporting military dictatorships, and participating in the murders of civilians. In return for the supply of weapons, they obtain intractable contracts for the extraction of natural resources, making governments dependent on each other and contributing to stagnation and the deepening of the economic crisis in Africa. At the same time, the Russian Federation is conducting an intensive media campaign, presenting itself as a partner country.

6. What kind of policies and initiatives for Africa Russia and Ukraine and their allies (diplomacy, media, humanitarian aid, etc) have undertaken.

Both Russia and Ukraine are conducting a diplomatic offensive in Africa, which aims to gain support for their countries in the recent conflict.

The Russian Federation, while circumventing sanctions, is trying to get Africa on its side, but did not present any goods offered for Africa and Africans. At the same time, the Russian Federation is conducting an intensive media campaign, presenting itself as a partner country and a fighter against Western Imperialism.

The Ukrainian president said in a tweet that 28,600 tons of wheat will arrive in Somalia and Ethiopia in the coming weeks and blamed the impending famine in that country on Russia's actions this year. "Ukraine continues to save the world with its grain," Zelenskiy assured.

The president of Poland has visited three African countries in recent weeks, those are the republics of Nigeria, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire. Mr. Duda expressed his respect for Africa and understands its concern about equal treatment of wars around the globe.

The European Union declared that its engagement and assistance to Africa would not decrease, however Humanitarian organizations have noticed less engagement in the African crisis, after the war in Ukraine. Six ongoing conflicts in Africa now, do not attract attention as the war in Ukraine.

7. What is the role of neighboring countries in helping refugees and victims of war in Ukraine?

The role of neighboring countries in helping refugees and victims of war in Ukraine is crucial. Both the governments of European countries and non-governmental organizations helped to contain the humanitarian crisis. Several million Ukrainians, forced to flee after the Russian attack, obtained both short and long-term help. We express great gratitude to international organizations, African embassies in Poland, Polish and European authorities who prevented the death of many thousands of refugees.

8. Facts about Human rights violations and crimes of War in Ukraine (mass murder, rape, forced resettlement, etc.)

The Fact Finding mission notes with great sorrow that, based on interviews of Ukrainian refugees and survivors, as well as international human rights reports, that brutal crimes have been conducted in Ukraine by Russian armed forces. These acts include mass murder of civilian, as in

s Bucha, Mariupol, Irpien and Izyum, rape of women and girls, as in Busha and Irbin, forced resettlement of more than 300 thousand of Ukrainian children to Russia, execution and bombing of prisoners of war. These criminal actions of that bear the evidence of genocide. We strongly condemn these acts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and call for the perpetrators of the war crimes to be brought to justice.

9. How would we describe the will of both sides of the conflict to end the war?

From the very beginning of its hostilities in Ukraine, the Russian Federation planned to establish a government dependent on the Kremlin and/or colonize all of Ukraine. Lists of the most important people who were to be eliminated were prepared, and a policy of slow denationalization was planned for the rest. This strategy is confirmed by the policy still applied by the Russian Federation to deport thousands of Ukrainian children for their future Russification. This could not lead to peace between the two countries.

Ukraine for the other side, as declared lately by President Zelenskiy, would not join peace talks unless Russia withdraws its forces from Ukraine occupied territories. This demand is supported by Poland and Baltic Countries, and has been repeated in a call from the German Chancellor with Putin.

10. How can Africa help?

Africa may not have great resources, but Africans have hearts, and they help whenever it is needed. African countries have accepted thousands of European refugees during the Second World War. Now Rwanda has accepted female refugees from Afghanistan, and proposed a shelter for software developers and their families in Rwanda. We encourage other African countries to host symbolic amounts of Ukrainian refugees, despite the fact that millions of refugees are there in Africa.

Africa also can help in the diplomatic field, in order to put the two sides on the table of negotiations. We highly appreciate the visit of President Macky Sale, chairman of the African Union to Moscow, and his efforts to un-block the export of Ukrainian grain to Africa and elsewhere. We recommend a similar visit to Ukraine by HE Macky Sale. The condition of a united African position is to give the mandate and power by African countries to the African Union and its chairman to speak and act on behalf of all Africa.

Africa also can help to solve the Energy crisis for Europe. This needs however more investment in energy infrastructure in Africa, and a more just and responsible approach of the western world towards Africa.

Recommendations

To African victims of War in Ukraine:

We recommend African students and citizens who were /are in Ukraine to put their safety and legality of stay as a priority. Returning to their respected countries has shown - in the case of Rwandan students - that it is not the worst solution, since many of them have returned to continue their studies in Europe in dignity and in a legal way.

To European governments :

We recommend the EU and European governments to

- facilitate the stay of African victims of the war in Ukraine in the Schengen area on equal rights as the Ukrainian victims,
- treat all wars and conflicts on the globe with equal attentions and engagement. The wars are catastrophic for all people regardless of their nationalities,
- Organize an Euro-African mission to Africa, particularly to the Sahel and the Eastern region, to learn about the war and the plight of internally displaced people in Africa.

To African Embassies in Ukraine, Poland and Europe :

We recommend these respected embassies to continue the synergy of action and strengthen the dialogue and co-operation with humanitarian organisations, having Africa and Africans as their field of action.

To the AU:

We recommend African Union the following:

- draw inspiration from the mechanisms put in place in Poland to manage refugees,
- build anti-crisis institutions on the level of African Union,
- advice respected African countries to invite and accept Ukrainian refugees for shelter on their soil,
- have a strong and united position on the war based on the African Union constitution, which respect the integrity of territories and sovereignty of countries,
- send an official fact-finding mission of the AU to Poland and Ukraine in order to find more facts on the current situation of human rights and war crimes.

To Ukraine:

We recommend Ukraine to:

- continue sending grains and fertilizers to respected African countries,
- provide amnesty by the President of Ukraine for African citizens in Ukrainian prisons and jails.

To Russian Federation:

We recommend Russia Federation to:

- immediately remove the blockage of Ukrainian ports and end any hostile activities around or in ports,
- immediately withdraw all it's forces from Ukraine as a first condition to finish the war and begin peace negotiations.