

## **EFFECTS OF RUSSIA – UKRAIN WAR TO AFRICA**

Russian and Ukraine are net exporters of grain across the globe, which accounts for an average 25% of the world's grain demand. Africa is a major player in the importation of food averaging one third of its grain demand. For instance, Africa imported agricultural products worth \$4 billion from Russia and Ukraine in 2020 including 90% of the wheat consumed locally. Ukraine alone, supplies the world's 15% maize requirement and 50% sunflower oil traded globally<sup>1</sup>. This implies that the two countries play a major role in the world grain food basket<sup>2</sup>. Two likely effects of the ongoing crisis are reduced exports from Ukraine due to disrupted production and trade, and reduced exports from Russia, due to economic sanctions designed to harm the Russian economy. Commercial exports from major ports in Ukraine like Odessa have already been suspended. So, there will be less wheat, maize, barley, and cooking oil available on world markets for the foreseeable future.

As a result of the war, the impacts are now far reaching and affecting the consumption and nutritional patterns of households in many countries, including Kenya. This has aggravated the already rising food prices which by February 2020, FAO food price index had reached a new all-time high partially due to global demand post covid-19 and reflection of the expectation of the eminent disruptions of the world food markets and dollar fluctuations<sup>3</sup>. Rising oil, gas and petrol prices has driven food price inflation even further, since food and fuel price movements tend to track each other closely<sup>4</sup>. Because poor households spend a higher proportion of their income on food, higher food prices have affected low-income consumers and low-income countries worst. In Kenya for instance, the effects have already been felt in the prices of bread (500g retailing at KES 60 from KES 45 December 2021), a bar of soap retailing at KES 218 from initially KES 148, cooking oil doubling, baking flour retailing at KES 50-70 higher compared to same prices in January 2022. A close check on the price increase is directly attributed to increase in prices of imported raw materials, increase price of fuel and high cost of per unit production.

Food production has also declined in developing countries including Kenya due to scarcity of fertilizer. Russia is the largest global exporter (33%) of fertilizer ingredients such as potash, ammonia, urea and natural gas for making nitrogen-based fertilizers<sup>5</sup>. This has disrupted the planting seasons in Kenya, and most likely scarcity of locally produced maize in the near future. Still in production, grains are a major ingredient of animal feeds manufacturing. In the recent past, animal feed prices have been on a sharp rise, which has seen the price of a packet of milk to double in price and other animal products. If nothing is done to mitigate these sharp effects, there is a looming global world food crisis<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephene D (2022) Why Russia's war on Ukraine poses a risk to global food security. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/opinions/why-russias-war-on-ukraine-poses-a-risk-to-global-food-security/>

<sup>2</sup> IFAD (2022) Impacts of Ukraine conflict on food security already being felt in the Near East North Africa region and will quickly spread. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/impacts-ukraine-conflict-food-security-already-being-felt-near-east-north-africa-regio>

<sup>3</sup> FAO (2020) Statistical Yearbook; World Food and Agriculture. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb1329en/cb1329en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> PAN AFRICA (April 2022) Russia-Ukraine war could worsen African food shortages. <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rn-news-africa-pan-african-2022-4-ukraine-war-could-worsen-african-food-shortages>

<sup>5</sup> Craig H., Janet R., Edward D., & Tim S (April 2022) The Ukraine Crisis Threatens a Sustainable Food Future. <https://www.wri.org/insights/ukraine-food-security-climate-change>

<sup>6</sup> Ismail Numan (March 2022) Repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine war for Africa. <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/repercussions-of-the-russia-ukraine-war-for-africa>