



**THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE ON
NIGERIANS RESIDING IN UKRAINE**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
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**This Independent Study (IS) has been approved to be a Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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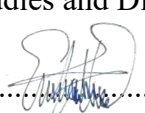
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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of Russian-Ukraine war on the Nigerian nationals residing in Ukraine with special emphasis on the security challenges and comparative analysis between Nigerian nationals and foreign counterparts residing in Ukraine during the invasion. The research utilised a qualitative research design while relying on secondary data to gather information. Findings indicate that Nigerians in Ukraine during the invasion faced several security threats including exposure to bombardments, displacement from homes and restricted access to basic amenities. In terms of comparative experience between Nigerians and other foreign nationals, the study indicated that Nigerians experienced evacuation differences as they encountered delay, discrimination and inadequate diplomatic support from government and other related international bodies. Also, Nigerians experienced financial loss, amid uncertainty in terms of their education and future career prospects as key effects of the conflict. The research recommends providing emergency response mechanisms, establishing a centralized database for Nigerians abroad and enhancing international collaboration with international bodies in ensuring that Nigerians are protected abroad during the time of conflict and crisis.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine war, Nigerian nationals, displacement, evacuation, discrimination, financial loss, uncertainty

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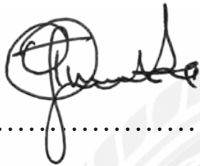
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of my Late Father, Alhaji Hassan O. Tinubu, who has nurtured me to become who I am today. His words of advice and encouragement, his sacrifices and relentlessness in my education, fueled my desire to acquire more knowledge. I also wish to dedicate this work to all the peace-loving people around the globe who have made sacrifices for peace and contributed to making this world a better place.




DECLARATION

I, Mr. Tinubu Zakariyah Oyindamola, with ID number 6517800004, hereby declare that this research is entirely mine and it is original work unless specific acknowledgements state otherwise. I have completed this Independent Study on my own, under the close supervision of an advisor.

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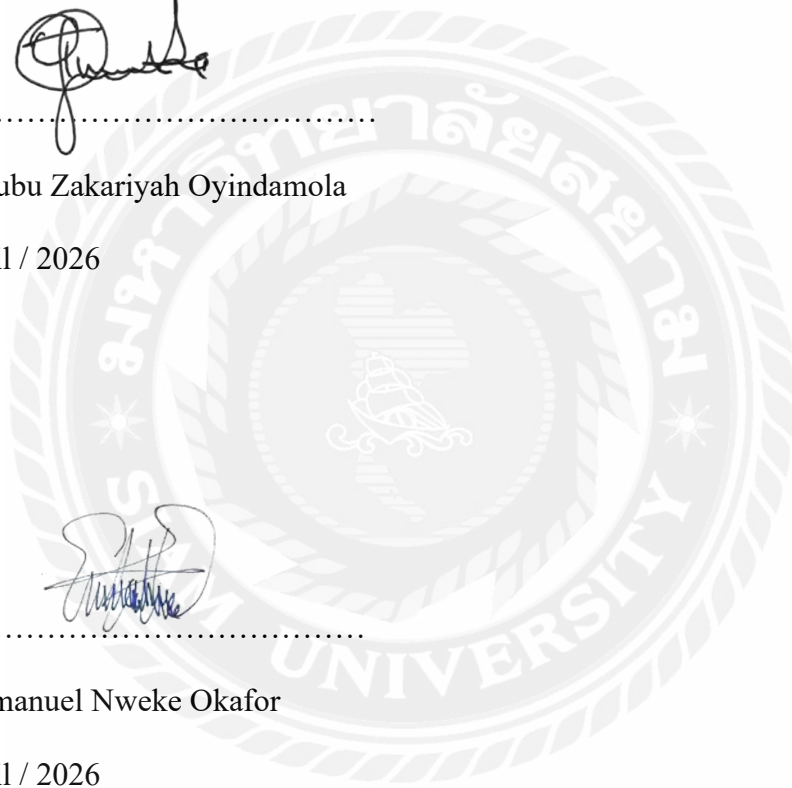


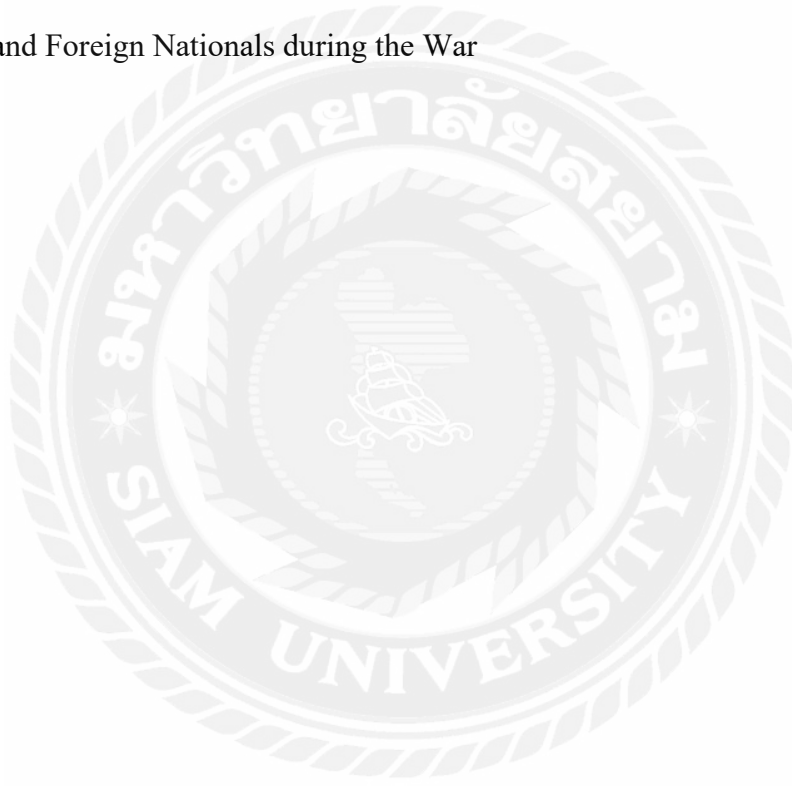
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

i. EU – European Union

- A political and economic union of European countries; key in refugee resettlement policies and border management during the Ukraine crisis.

ii. IOM – International Organization for Migration

- A UN-affiliated agency supporting migrants, including evacuation and reintegration programs for displaced Nigerians.

iii. NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

- Independent humanitarian groups (e.g., Red Cross, Amnesty International) providing aid to refugees.

iv. PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- A mental health condition affecting war evacuees due to trauma from conflict and displacement.

v. UN – United Nations

- The global organization coordinating international responses to crises, including refugee protection and anti-discrimination efforts.

vi. UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- Focuses on education continuity for displaced students, including Nigerian scholars in Ukraine.

vii. WHO – World Health Organization

- Addresses physical and mental health needs of refugees, including trauma care and emergency medical support.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, marked a significant geopolitical and humanitarian crisis. It had far-reaching effects not only on Ukraine but also on its global residents, including the substantial population of African residents, specifically Nigerians. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, before the war, over 80,000 foreign students were studying in Ukraine, with Nigerians being the largest group from Africa (Eweniyi, 2022). He said:

“International student mobility is a glaring testimony of internationalization as about 3.7 million international students left their homeland in 2009, indicating a 77% increment since 2000” (Eweniyi, 2022, P. 12).

Nigeria’s longstanding ties with Ukraine, particularly in higher education, have made the crisis more complex for Nigerians who reside, study, and work there. Over the years Ukraine became the preferred destination for many Nigerian students due to the affordability of the fees and the programmes that are being internationally recognised.

The actual strike initiated by Russia on Ukraine on the February 24, 2022, resulted in many casualties from the civilian population, as well as encouraging a humanitarian crisis through the displacement of many individuals across the region. As much as the world has been somewhat more or less bothered by the consequences of the conflict on the people of Ukraine, the war in some way affected the lives of foreign residents in Ukraine, including Nigerians. Ukraine was one of the favourite study destinations for many Nigerian students before the conflict, primarily because of the cost of their education and the offers they had in the sciences, including Medicine, Engineering, and other technical professions (Obiezu, 2022).

The war affected the lives of these Nigerians, especially in their education as well as their means of income. During the conflict, most Nigerian students had to abandon their institutions, and students were racially profiled upon attempting to cross borders in search of safer places to reside. Students' reports and human rights organizations provided examples of Africans, including Nigerians, being denied housing, and prioritized for evacuation less than Europeans (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Many Nigerians in Ukraine were predominantly students, attending Ukrainian universities due to the comparatively affordable cost of education and the availability of specialized courses like medicine, engineering, and technology (Obiezu, 2022). He said :

“The growing trend of studying abroad, Nigerian students often seek foreign education because of the perceived higher value attached to international degrees compared to Nigerian qualifications, noting that in Western Europe they rushed to Sweden, Norway, Finland or Denmark” (Obiezu, 2022, p.18).

The war disrupted academic schedules, forced closures of universities, and put an indefinite suspension to these students' education. Many Nigerian students were faced with the challenge of displacement and seeking alternative educational opportunities outside Ukraine. The Nigerian government, in collaboration with international organizations, facilitated evacuations, yet several Nigerians found themselves stranded due to the volatile situation and lack of diplomatic representation being available (Adeoye, 2022).

Also, weaknesses arose in international bodies to protect overseas students, which highlighted the requirement for increased collaboration between nations, educational institutions, and international agencies. Contingency plans, improved diplomacy, and support for overseas students studying in foreign countries would have played a critical role and vital in protecting such students in the future. Furthermore, the mental impact of the invasion on Nigerians in Ukraine has been significant. The experiences of witnessing violence,

displacement, and uncertainty have led to traumatic effects. According to reports, African nationals, especially Nigerians, experienced racism while trying to escape the country or seek humanitarian aid (Adebayo & Ojo, 2022). They said:

“In the 1980s and 1990s, there was this almanac with the picture of Jesus Christ with the usual fair complexion of the Caucasians while that of Satan was painted black depicting Africans. It is true that a good number of Africans are dark in complexion but due to the Eurocentric view about Africa, whites arguably came up with some compound words such as black magic, Black Maria, black mass, black sheep, black spot etc to discredit Africans as these words connote negativity” (Adebayo & Ojo, 2022, pg 28) .

The experience of being discriminated against further heightened their sense of alienation and vulnerability, considering that Nigerians were already suffering from the trauma of the war. Many reported feelings of fear, anxiety and helplessness as they struggled and had difficulty in accessing transportation, shelter and humanitarian assistance during the crisis.

The evacuation process was faced with several challenges for many Nigerians in Ukraine, where a number of them remained stranded for more than a week. However, the bureaucracy and logistics further hampered evacuation efforts, thus putting people’s lives at stake. According to Adeoye (2022) many African students and workers, including Nigerians, struggled to cross the borders into the neighbouring nations owing to large numbers of refugees at the borders. He said :

“Challenges encountered by these students included exploitation by landlords, poor finances, stigmatization, and difficulties in accessing welfare support services. Many also faced language barriers and cultural adjustment problems, which affected their academic performance and social integration in their host countries” (Adeoye, 2022, P. 19).

The movement of Nigerians from Ukraine is more than just an occurrence but poses questions on how migration policies should be made to prepare for situations that may come about during crises. The issue highlights the importance of diplomacy, preparation for evacuation, and collaboration efforts among nations in meeting the requirements of their

nationals or citizens residing in war-torn areas. IOM (2022) noted that the complex interdependence between international mobility and human security becomes evident during crises such as the Russia-Ukraine war, especially with regards to students and immigrants residing outside their native countries.

It is vital and important to consider how the Russian-Ukrainian conflict affects Nigerians living in Ukraine. This study seeks to explore the various effects that the war may have had on Nigerians in Ukraine, with special emphasis on the safety challenges, experiences during evacuation, disruption in education, and socio-economic implications. The discussion will contribute to the wider debate about migration, international crisis management, and the welfare of foreigners in times of conflict.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

This research is significant because it addresses the intersection of international conflict, migration, and the unique challenges faced by African nationals, specifically Nigerians. By focusing on the experiences of Nigerians during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the research contributes to a broader understanding of the impact of global conflicts on marginalized expatriate communities. It highlights the vulnerability of international students in conflict zones, the racial dimensions of humanitarian responses, and the broader implications for international migration policies. Additionally, this research seeks to inform both Nigerian policymakers and the international community on the need for improved crisis response mechanisms for African nationals in global conflict areas.

This study will also serve as a foundation for understanding the long-term impacts of displacement and the interruption of education and livelihoods among African diaspora communities in conflict regions. The findings could help shape future policies aimed at safeguarding the rights and well-being of African expatriates and students abroad.

This research intends to analyse the impact of the military action of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the Nigerian individuals who were involved in the course of the evacuation after the crisis; social, economic and psychological impacts of the war. Focusing on the experiences of some Nigerian individuals in Ukraine when the war began, the study shows the general themes of racial disparities in the disaster response system and the lack of proactive changes in international humanitarian practices. It also focuses on the shortcomings of home countries, including Nigeria, in taking preventive measures when their citizens are under threat during international crises.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This Independent Study analysed the impact of the military action of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the Nigerian individuals who were involved in the course of the evacuation after the crisis; social, economic and psychological impacts of the war, to answer the following research questions:

1. How has the invasion affected the safety and security of Nigerians living in Ukraine?
2. What measures have the Nigerian government and diplomatic missions taken to assist their citizens in Ukraine?
3. How does the experience of Nigerians in Ukraine compare to that of other foreign nationals during the invasion?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This independent study had the following research objectives:

1. To assess the safety and security challenges faced by Nigerians residing in Ukraine during the invasion.
2. To compare the experiences of Nigerian residents with other foreign nationals in Ukraine during the invasion.
3. To provide recommendations for policies and actions to better support Nigerians in Ukraine during conflict situations.

1.5 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The scope of the study was centred around examining the effects of Russia invasion of Ukraine on Nigerians who were residing in Ukraine at the time of the war that started in February 2022. The research also laid emphasis on the various experiences of Nigerian citizens especially students and other residents who were directly affected by the conflict.

The study also examined key areas including challenges faced during conflict, evacuation experiences, disruption of educational and economic activities as well as the psychological and social consequences of displacement.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Territory: it refers to the land and geographical areas that belong to a sovereign state. It includes land, internal waters, territorial seas, air space and international boundaries.

Dominant superpower: a state with a dominant position characterized by its extensive ability to “exert influence or project power” on a global scale. The combined means of a superpower as military, economic, technological, political and cultural strength as well as “diplomatic and soft power” influence.

Expansionism: the doctrine of expanding the territory or the political and economic influences of a country to any other countries. It can become a policy of territorial, political or economic expansion of a powerful country by exercising its influences to dominate any other countries.

Russian diplomacy: this refers to the conduct of foreign relations by the government of Russia through negotiations, treaties, strategic partnerships and official communications. As a country, Cambodia adopted foreign policy for making friends, playing several cards, building up global networks, which are all about mutual interest and together contribute to global peace, security and prosperity.

National Security: this refers to the protection of a state sovereignty, territorial integrity, political institutions, and citizens from threat that may undermine its survival and well-being. It encompasses military defence, intelligence and diplomatic measures designed to safeguard national interests.

Foreign interference: attempts by one country or a group of actors to manipulate directly or indirectly any domestic or national politics of the other country through covert and deceptive means to undermine its sovereignty, political regime, economic benefits and harm its social cohesion.

1.7 LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

The limitations of the research include the following:

- ✓ The study relied completely on secondary data sources such as academic journals, news and government publications which may limit the depth of the personal perspectives in the study
- ✓ Many of the available sources discussed the experiences of other nationals especially the Ukraine residents better than focusing on the Nigerian residents. This limited country specific information led to interpreting broader data within the Nigerian context.
- ✓ Secondary data sources may reflect biases by the authors, or institutions that produced the articles or papers which could influence the interpretation of certain events that occurred in the war.
- ✓ Since the study did not contain or involve interviews or surveys with Nigerians, it was not possible to capture personal experiences and emotional responses of the affected individuals

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

By critically assessing existing various related studies, reports, and theoretical perspectives on the topic of the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Nigerians in Ukraine, the literature review presents an examination of the academic background relevant to this study. This section aims to build a solid foundation for the research by discussing the major areas, theories, and empirical studies on topics including armed conflicts, international migration, foreign nationals in conflict zones, and the experiences of international students in situations of crisis.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To ensure clear and consistent use of terms across the research, the section discusses and outlines the key concepts that are fundamental to the study. Conceptual clarification plays a major role in academic research as the same terms might mean different things depending on their usage context. This study explores concepts related to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, international migration, foreigners in conflict areas, displacement, and racial discrimination for the purpose of clearly presenting the plight of Nigerian residents in Ukraine during the war.

2.2.1 Russia – Ukraine Conflict

The Russia Ukraine conflict is indeed one of the biggest and significant geopolitical crises of modern international relations. It has historical roots intertwined and combined with

the political, economic, and cultural discord between Russia and Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Ozili, 2022). He said :

“By 1939, most parts of Ukraine came under communist Russia in a union known as USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) also known as Soviet Union. From 1922 to 1991, Soviet Union was intact until the West through USA contributed to its disintegration as Ukraine became independent” (Ozili, 2022 pg.17).

Ukraine was an independent country after the dissolution of the Soviet Union but due to the historical ties, geographic proximity and economic interdependence, Russia still keeps seeing the nation as a part of its strategic sphere of influence. This perception contributed to the persistent political tensions between countries over issues such as security alliances, territorial control and regional dominance.

The conflict arose directly from political changes in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014. Plans were underway in 2013 for the Ukrainian administration to sign a trade pact with the European Union which would have meant moving closer to Europe. Moscow exerted pressure on the government, which suspended the agreement, but this move did not go unnoticed and resulted in massive demonstrations that were called the **Euromaidan movement** (Kavanagh, 2022). Also, these demonstrations led to the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014. Meanwhile, Russia responded by annexing Crimea in March 2014 after a highly disputed referendum and backing separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk areas of Ukraine that eventually erupted into an armed conflict in the Donbas region (Ozili, 2022).

Furthermore, in February 2022 the Russian Federation launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine, which made the conflict between Russia and Ukraine more severe. Before the invasion, Russia had sent a lot of troops to Ukraine's borders and made a number of security demands of Western countries at the same time (Nwama et al., 2022). According to

Onwuamaeze (2002), one of these requirements was that NATO stop expanding into Eastern Europe and promise that Ukraine would not join the alliance.

However, there was a decline in this request as Russian President Vladimir Putin officially recognized the independence of the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk on February 21, 2022. He then sent Russian troops into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, calling the action a "special military operation." The invasion quickly became the biggest armed conflict in Europe since World War II (IOM, 2022).

The war between Russia and Ukraine has had major effects on world politics that go beyond the region. The invasion worsened diplomatic relations between Russia and Western countries, especially the US and the EU member states, many of which have given Ukraine a lot of military, financial, and humanitarian aid. After the invasion, Western governments put strict economic sanctions on Russia to hurt its economy and make it difficult for it to keep fighting. These sanctions affected important parts of the Russian economy, such as finance, energy, technology, and trade. They also limited what people and groups connected to the Russian government could do (Nwanna et al., 2022).

Also, the effects of the war go beyond just safety issues. The conflict has caused problems in global energy markets, food supply chains, and international trade. This shows how modern geopolitical conflicts are all connected. It also led to interruptions in grain exports from Ukraine and energy supplies from Russia have also caused food prices to go up and inflation to rise around the world. This has affected developing countries most severely, since they rely on imported energy and agricultural goods (Nwanna et al., 2022).

2.2.2 Migration and International Students

Migration is an important sociological concept whereby people move from one geographic location to another, often crossing international borders to meet their economic, educational, social, and political objectives. According to Baas (2019) migration refers to the process of moving people either across an international boundary or inside a nation-state from their usual place of residence, regardless of the reasons behind the migration and their legal status or length of stay.

International student migration has grown more popular in recent decades as one of the modes of migration around the world. Lo et al., (2023) noted that international students refer to those people who move outside their own country to obtain qualifications from other academic institutions. There has been an increase in the number of students enrolled in international education in the past two decades, showing increased interest in international studies and collaborations in research (Beech, 2017). The process of deciding whether or not to undertake international studies could be explained with the help of migration theories, with special focus and emphasis on the **push-and-pull theory**. The factors which could be categorized under the "push" category include limitations of the home country concerning education and economic issues or even political unrest. On the other hand, "pull" factors may include the attractions and benefits of the host country (Duong et al., 2023). They said:

"Push factors include war, drought, family and religious disagreement and others are poor economic activities, lack of job opportunities, discrimination, political intolerance and persecution. Pull factors include better economic opportunities, more jobs and the promise of a better life. Warm weather, peaceful and comfortable locations also attract people"(Duong et al., 2023 P. 18).

Baas (2019) noted that many students in Nigeria viewed studying abroad as a means of getting quality education, being exposed to other nations, and enhancing future job opportunities. Ukraine has been noted to be among the countries that attract students from

Nigeria due to relatively low cost of studying there, quality education provided, and easy access. However, international students face certain weaknesses, particularly when there are instances of political turmoil or war in their host countries.

2.2.3 Foreign Nationals in Conflict Zones

The concept of foreign nationals in war refers to the people that live either temporarily or permanently within a territory that is different from where they come from whenever there is an outbreak of war in the area (Woods & Naimark, 2020). These include tourists, expatriates, immigrants, and even diplomats. The occurrence of war leads to complicated humanitarian scenarios for the foreigners living within such regions due to several factors. Ivaniuta (2018) indicated that the most vulnerable group during any conflict is foreigners, due to lack adequate social networks, legal protection, and even support from their adopted nation's government. Unlike citizens, they would have difficulties accessing humanitarian help, means of transport, or even evacuations if required.

However, with the assistance from international humanitarian laws and international bodies like the United Nations and ICRC, it is very important that one pays attention to the need for protection of civilians in wars, regardless of their citizenship (Matiashova et al., 2022). Also, the implementation of such policies is plagued by several difficulties related to logistics, security, and politics. In many cases, foreigners rely heavily on the help of their national governments and international agencies when it comes to being evacuated or relocated.

During the Russia-Ukraine war, thousands of foreign students and employees were present in Ukraine when the conflict broke out. The majority of them experienced severe difficulties, including obstacles in leaving the nation, inadequate transport arrangements, and being placed in perilous and unsafe environments. Hence, a deeper understanding of the

concept of foreign nationals in conflict zones becomes crucial for comprehending the struggles faced by Nigerians who had gone to study in Ukraine.

2.2.4 Displacement and Forced Migration

Anholt & Sinati (2019) noted that displacement and forced migration refer to the compulsory displacement of people due to causes such as war, persecution, natural disasters, or human rights abuses. Unlike voluntary migration, forced migration is brought about by situations that limit people's ability to stay in their places of residence to protect themselves and survive. Displacement can happen either internally or internationally, giving rise to populations known as internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees. In migration studies, forced migration is used commonly as an umbrella term that encapsulates the movements of refugees and IDPs who have been coerced into leaving their homes due to conflicts, violence, or natural disasters (Verwimp et al., 2020).

Forced displacement is an important humanitarian effect of war. War can affect infrastructure development, economic activities, and lead to widespread insecurity, which forces people to move from their homes in search of security and safer environment. Mijic et al (2024) noted that millions of people become refugees annually due to violent conflicts, persecution, and political instability. Therefore, forced displacement can be described as a significant humanitarian problem across the globe.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is responsible for creating one of the biggest displacements that Europe has seen in recent times. As a result of the massive invasion that occurred in February 2022, there have been many individuals who have had to leave their home country for others such as Poland and Romania (Mikheieva et al., 2023). Also, there were also many foreigners who wanted to leave the country due to the dangers posed by the conflict.

There were many people who experienced problems when trying to cross borders. There were some logistical challenges that made it difficult for many evacuees to travel (IOM, 2022).

The experiences of Nigerians in this displacement help highlight other issues that face migrants and international students during periods of conflict. Displacement disrupts educational and economic opportunities while also exposing one to psychological stress, financial constraints, and uncertainty about the future. It is important to understand the dynamics of displacement and forced migration in order to understand the implications of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on Nigerians residing in Ukraine.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is basically the conceptual foundation of a research study. It specifies the theories that will be used for interpreting and analysing the research problem. Also, it leads the researcher to locate the study within the ongoing academic discourse (Braidotti, 2019). He said:

“Theory of race and ethnicity anchors on the division of people on the basis of physical attributes and characteristics, and involves profiling and assigning the social meaning to the groups. It further asserts that microaggressions are the subtle or sometimes nuanced insults directed towards people of colour” (Braidotti, 2019 pg. 104).

In the case of conflict, migration, and humanitarian crises, theoretical perspectives play a key role in revealing how individuals and groups are affected by insecurity, displacement, and vulnerability. This research utilized Human Security Theory and Migration Theory as the primary frameworks for interpreting the situation of Nigerians living in Ukraine throughout the Russia-Ukraine war.

2.3.1 Human Security Theory

Human Security Theory was developed in the 1990s as a wider perspective on security, going beyond the traditional state-centred viewpoint. Historically, security analysis has centred almost exclusively on safeguarding the sovereignty and geographical boundaries of states (Anderson-Rodgers & Crawford, 2022). Also, human security as a concept changed the focus from states to the protection and development of individuals. It gained prominence in 1994, where human security was defined as the safeguarding of human beings from significant and omnipresent dangers that jeopardize their very existence and well-being (Hantscher, 2019). He said:

“Among all these concepts, human security takes the most dramatic steps by making the referent object not the state, society or community, but the individual. As the traditional concept of security is state centered” and its core value is to gain the security of the state from all types of threats that endanger its sovereignty, territory and its existence” (Hantscher, 2019 pg. 15).

The concept of human security can be considered from several different dimensions: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, individual security, communal security, and political security. The various dimensions emphasize the importance of protecting people from harm, including violence, poverty, displacement, and political unrest (Mansbach & Pirro, 2023). During armed conflicts, human security becomes incredibly important as civilians are the ones who suffer most when their safety, access to essential services and well-being are directly threatened. Warfare almost always leads to the destruction of facilities, hinders the people's access to health and education services, and pushes them to become victims of violence and displacement (Zubchuk et al., 2021).

The connection between the Human Security Theory and this research lies in the need to protect civilians during the period of conflicts. In relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, there were numerous security challenges faced by Ukrainians and foreigners alike. Nigerian

citizens in Ukraine, where many were studying, had several issues to deal with, which included unsafe living conditions, difficulty in moving around, problems with evacuation, and disruption of their studies. The example of Nigerians in Ukraine highlights the threat to human security posed by war and conflict regardless of nationality.

2.3.2 Migration Theory

Theory of Migration is an analytical tool to help individuals understand the reasons behind people moving from one country to another and factors that influence migration trends. The push-pull theory, which states that migration occurs because of a combination of push factors that drive people away from their place of origin. According to Brettell and Hollifield (2022), individuals who participate in study abroad programs seek academic degrees from international universities. Globalization, as well as factors like higher education internationalization and recognition of foreign degrees have caused an increase in student mobility worldwide. Students commonly from developing countries travel abroad in hopes of receiving a quality education, global recognition, and better job opportunities (Borzel, 2023).

However, migrant groups are sometimes vulnerable during times of crisis, like war, natural disasters or political upheaval. Migration Theory applies to this study as it may provide reasons as to why Nigerian students migrated to Ukraine for their higher education as well as why their identity as migrants placed them at a risk during the Russia–Ukraine war. Through migration theory this study was able to gain insight on the causes for migration and how Nigerian residents became vulnerable during the war (Brettell & Hollifield, 2022).

2.4 UKRAINE AS A STUDY DESTINATION FOR NIGERIAN STUDENTS

Ukraine became one of Nigeria's top destination for study abroad. This is because tuition fees and cost of living is relatively low compared to Western and some Eastern European countries. Government of Ukraine and some Universities there have provided affordable scholarships and low tuition fees as compared to their counterparts in other foreign countries which made them to be attractive especially to students from low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria (Govaere et al., 2025). They said:

“The fees in Ukraine were affordable just like the cost of living when compared to that of USA and Britain. The fees were equivalent with that paid by some private universities in Nigeria. Considering living expenses in 2016, Ukraine was the most affordable nation and in terms of personal financial satisfaction ranked second best” (Govaere et al., 2025 Pg. 20).

Furthermore, availability and variety of study programmes offered through English medium instruction is another reason why Nigerian student are choosing to study in Ukraine. While language was a significant challenge for prospective students who did not speak Ukrainian in the past years, Ukrainian universities started offering more English taught degree programmes following demands from international students (Libanova, 2019). Medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and information technology have the highest number of ETPs.

This increase in English language courses not only makes it easier for people to learn the language, but it also makes graduates more likely to get jobs around the world because the courses meet international standards (Adepoju, 2020). As a result, Nigerian students can now study in fields that are very competitive or hard to get into at Nigerian universities because there is not enough space or the entry requirements are too strict.

Ukrainian universities have also built international partnerships and mobility pathways that make it easier and more rewarding for Nigerian students to study abroad. Collaborative

agreements between Ukrainian universities and international entities—such as Erasmus+ and other exchange programs—facilitate cross-border research, credit recognition, and postgraduate placements (Duyile & Nwachukwu, 2022). These partnerships can help Nigerian students in Ukraine learn about other European school systems and make more professional connections. Integrating into larger academic and research networks makes Ukraine a more attractive place to study and a good place to start an international academic career.

Despite these benefits, Nigerian students in Ukraine face sociocultural and geopolitical challenges that can affect their education. Goodman (2019) indicated that Nigerian students face various cultural differences, discrimination, and different academic expectations. Furthermore, the recent geopolitical instability in Ukraine, particularly the escalating conflict in 2022, has heightened apprehensions regarding student safety, the continuity of education, and institutional functioning (Bank, 2018). These factors highlight the necessity for prospective Nigerian students to make informed decisions and the requirement for comprehensive support systems, including pre-departure orientation, on-site counselling, and contingency planning from both Ukrainian universities and Nigerian educational authorities.

2.5 IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON FOREIGN NATIONALS

2.5.1 Disruption of Education and Employment

Armed conflict often disrupts formal education and employment prospects for foreign nationals. Colleges and universities in areas of conflict often stop academic activities, which means that students have to wait longer to graduate as education is interrupted, and they lose academic credits (Lisogor et al., 2023). When programs aren't transferable or host institutions can't offer online continuity, it makes things even more difficult for international students. In extreme instances, students may be compelled to withdraw entirely or transfer to overseas

institutions, resulting in financial burdens and logistical difficulties (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2024). They said:

“A good number of these students that were affected by this war would not gain admission immediately in universities in other lands, thereby prolonging their year of graduation. In June 2022 the Nigeria Medical and Dental Council announced it would not recognize medical online degrees awarded by Ukrainian universities because some universities decided to go online as the war raged on” (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2024 Pg. 23).

Furthermore, foreign workers may also lose their jobs, see their businesses close, or work in unsafe conditions. Lisogor et al. (2023) indicated that foreign nationals are usually the first individuals to lose their jobs due to their often-unstable legal status and insufficient local employment protections. They said:

“A master’s student, Mose Anthony lamented that the war stopped his programme abruptly that was supposed to end in seven months’ time. A good number of these students that were affected by this war would not gain admission immediately in universities in other lands, thereby prolonging their year of graduation” (Lisogor et al., 2023 Pg. 23).

These disruptions not only hamper people's immediate livelihoods, but they can also have long-term effects on career paths and the growth of human capital. Many affected individuals may experience disruptions in education, professional training and employment opportunities which make it difficult to achieve long term objectives and goals.

2.5.2 Security Threats Faced by Foreign Residents

Foreign nationals living in conflict zones are exposed to higher security risks, such as being victims of targeted violence, discrimination, and exploitation. In some situations, foreign students and migrants are at risk of being threatened or attacked because they are seen as foreigners or because of their nationality (Jalazai, 2021). The threats to security may also

include forced recruitment into local militias or armed groups, arbitrary detention and extortion, especially when the rule of law breaks down.

Pena & Ramirez (2023) indicated that migrants can be vulnerable targets for criminal organizations looking to take advantage of their precarious legal status. Violence threatens physical safety of international students only but also disrupts their psychosocial development and academic engagement as it continues to lead to fear which ensures that they are not able to focus and get involved in campus life. These threats may also arise during periods of political instability, armed conflict, social tension or economic crisis and often affect migrants, expatriates, international students and refugees (Maathuis & Kerkhof, 2023).

2.5.3 Challenges in Evacuation and Relocation

Evacuating foreign nationals during armed conflict is difficult due to logistical issues, bureaucratic problems, and quickly changing conditions on the front lines. Governments and international organizations must work with strict deadlines, limited access corridors, and sometimes hostile actors, which makes rescue efforts harder (Maathuis & Kerkhof, 2023). A lot of foreign students and migrants don't have easy access to safe housing, working transportation, or up-to-date travel documents, which makes it even harder to evacuate them (Libanova, 2019). Even if there are evacuation routes, moving people requires working with host states, consular services, and international agencies to make sure that the people evacuated have legal status, a place to live, and money when they get to a safe place (Astrov et al., 2022).

2.6 EXPERIENCE OF NIGERIANS DURING THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

2.6.1 Evacuation Experiences of Nigerian Students

The outbreak of fighting that occurred in Ukraine in February 2022 put a lot of Nigerian students at risk since they had to be evacuated from the region due to the dangers that came

with staying there. Notably, some of these students had been studying medicine and engineering courses in the conflict-ridden areas. The early stages of evacuation faced several logistical challenges such as traffic jams, communication breakdowns, and blocked pathways. The Nigerian students would move from place to place to other cities in western Ukraine like Lviv before moving on to bordering countries such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia (Daniel et al., 2024).

As a result, the Nigerian government arranged chartered flights and helped with repatriation, thereby eventually bringing more than 1,600 people back to Nigeria (Onwuamaeze, 2022). However, students documented their hardships in these interventions that they were delayed, poorly coordinated and stressed psychologically, hence highlighting the difficult issues of withdrawing foreign citizens in a war time (Daniel et al., 2024).

2.6.2 Safety and Security Challenges

There were several dangers and risks faced by Nigerians residing in Ukraine, which included exposure to bombing, missiles, and general civil unrest. The students reported that they resorted to taking refuge in basement shelters, with limited supply of food, water, and information (Duke et al., 2024). In addition to physical danger, the international students were vulnerable socially, facing discrimination and difficulties in crossing borders safely (Daniel et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the psychological stress experienced by students, affecting their ability to continue their studies and increasing their level of stress (Daniel et al., 2024). The combination of physical threat, social issues and other challenges highlights the heightened risk of non-citizens during warfare, reflecting the conclusions drawn from research conducted among international students facing crises (IOM, 2022).

2.6.3 Access to Humanitarian Assistance

There were difficulties in obtaining humanitarian aid because of the swift escalation of conflict and associated logistics issues. In the absence of evacuation processes organized by the government, many students complained that they lacked proper advice from their embassies and had inadequate means of sustaining themselves (Pereira et al., 2022). While evacuation efforts commenced, aid was largely provided through charter flights and temporary accommodation facilities set up in other countries.

However, there were shortcomings in providing essential services such as food, healthcare, and information updates to students awaiting evacuation. Humanitarian aid targeted the rescuing of people from a dangerous situation, neglecting the provision of support for long-term educational continuity or psychosocial well-being of foreign students who were displaced due to war. This marked a glaring shortcoming in the overall response to the displaced international students during armed conflict.

2.7 ROLE OF NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES

The Nigerian government's response to the Russia–Ukraine crisis caused a lot of public debate and criticism, especially among Nigerians who were directly affected by the conflict. A lot of Nigerian students and people living in Ukraine said they had trouble getting consular services and help getting out of the country during the early stages of the invasion (Nweke et al., 2022). The situation was made more difficult by the sudden escalation of the conflict, which required immediate diplomatic action for the safety of Nigerians overseas.

Afolayan (2020) noted that many governments in Africa face problems providing help to their citizens in distress in foreign countries due to poor diplomatic abilities, lack of funds,

and logistical challenges. These restrictions make it harder for governments to quickly gather resources, set up emergency communication channels, and plan evacuations when conflicts break out suddenly. As a result, the experiences of Nigerians during the Russia–Ukraine war show that many developing countries have bigger problems with their diplomatic and emergency response systems.

Apart from the roles carried out by state governments, other organizations on an international level were able to play a crucial part in supporting foreigners affected by the conflict. Organizations including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and various humanitarian organizations provided aid to people leaving Ukraine (Nweke et al., 2022). Helping them involved providing temporary housing, humanitarian assistance, helping in transport, as well as coordinating with the local government in neighbouring countries. These services rendered by the international bodies also involved distribution of food, water, medical supplies, and temporary shelter to the affected populations (IOM, 2022)

According to Adeoye (2022), the rising cases of violence, terror, and political instability within different parts of the globe necessitate increased readiness within the area of diplomacy by African nations. This ensures that countries receive adequate protection through effective plans to evacuate and protect themselves from harm within such conflict zones. These steps could also involve creating an early warning system, better diplomatic relations with the country hosting the refugees, and contingency plans for evacuating the nationals in danger zones.

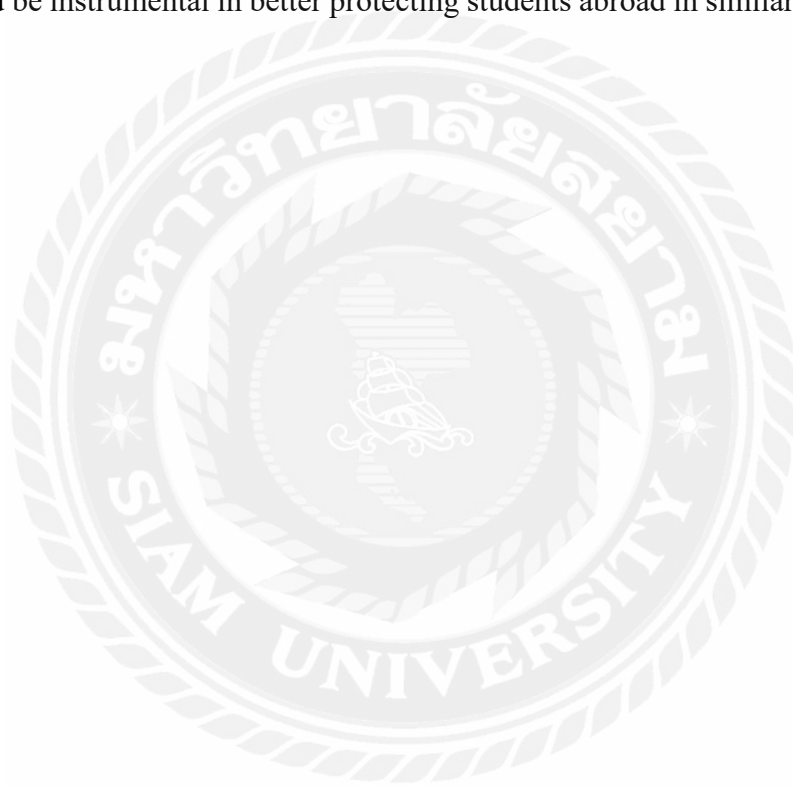
2.8 PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON NIGERIAN NATIONALS

According to Nweke et al (2022), refugees and forcibly displaced people are at greater risk of developing mental disorders, such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression, compared to those who have not been forcibly displaced. These psychological effects could be even more severe if displaced people are met with discrimination or hostility while trying to find safety. For Nigerian students staying in Ukraine at the time of the war, besides the immediate risk to their lives, the possibility of losing their academic year and their source of income was also a major concern.

Also, many universities in Ukraine had to suspend all learning processes owing to safety reasons, thus making the international students doubtful of how their learning process would continue. In many cases, students found themselves unable to transfer their credit hours or continue their education elsewhere because of this situation, resulting in delays in achieving their career goals due to interruptions in their educational journey (Adeoye, 2022). As a result, many Nigerian students were forced to deal with academic uncertainties for an extended period of time.

However, apart from the problems faced by the educational system, the conflict brought about great financial losses for Nigerian students and their families. Many families had invested huge sums in foreign education, including payments for tuition, accommodation, and transportation. The evacuation of the students from Ukraine led to financial loss, as the studies could not be completed. Moreover, migration elsewhere or back to Nigeria often required even more expenditure. In addition, the consequences of the crisis were not limited only to the students but reached as far as families whose finances had been used in supporting their education over time (Duke et al., 2024).

However, the situation faced by Nigerian students in the midst of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is an indication of the vulnerability that international students face when geopolitical events occur. The number of students who had no means of accessing immediate assistance was quite large. In such a way, gaps emerged in international efforts aimed at protecting foreign students, and it became clear that improved cooperation was needed between countries, academic institutions, and international bodies (Adeoye, 2022). Contingency plans, more efficient diplomacy, and emergency assistance for students studying outside their native countries would be instrumental in better protecting students abroad in similar situations in the future.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter encompasses the research plan, data collection, and analysis methods used to assess the effects of Russia's war on Ukraine on Nigerians living there. A qualitative, research design was employed, and secondary data collected from the literature, official documents, newspapers, and trustworthy web sources were used. This methodology sought to offer a thorough and step-by-step guide for studying the experiences of Nigerian residents in Ukraine during the conflict.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a descriptive research design, the study explored the experiences and problems of Nigerians in Ukraine during the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This approach suits research which seeks to depict events and to comprehend connections among variables without influencing them (Sileyew, 2019). Secondary data were also used in the research to enable the study of patterns and trends in evacuation experiences, security challenges, and government interventions, thereby providing a thorough understanding of the topic. The research design was considered appropriate because the study relied on already existing information rather than collecting primary data from participants.

3.3 DATA SOURCES

3.3.1 Secondary Data

The study extensively uses secondary sources to collect information about the lives of Nigerians living in Ukraine in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. Examples of such sources are academic journals that supply peer-reviewed articles on topics like migration, effects of war on foreign nationals, and international students' experience in crisis situations (Cheong et al., 2023). Also, reports from government and intergovernmental bodies were used such as official documents of the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigerian embassies, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (IOM, 2022).

Media reports from reliable news outlets were also utilized to record evacuation processes, safety challenges, and humanitarian interventions during the conflict. In addition, analytical insights into the geopolitical and humanitarian aspects of the Russia-Ukraine war were gathered from online databases and reports. They not only complemented the academic and media sources but also gave in-depth perspectives. All of these secondary sources together gave a solid basis for comprehending how the conflict has affected Nigerian citizens in Ukraine during the war.

3.3.2 Inclusion Criteria

To ensure that the secondary data is relevant and reliable, the study had specific criteria for including sources. All sources were from 2017 with focus on real-time experiences of Nigerians throughout the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Also, studies that were from reputable sources such as peer-reviewed academic journals, books, reports from international organizations were considered suitable for this research.

Furthermore, only sources published in English were included to ensure accessibility and accurate interpretation of the data. In terms of scope and focus of the research, only studies that examined the experiences of international students, migrants or foreign residents in Ukraine during the conflict were included especially where the studies laid more emphasis on Nigerian residents. Preference was also given to sources published 2017 onwards, particularly those published after 2022 in order to ensure that the information collected were accurate and reflected the recent development that occurred during the war.

3.3.3 Exclusion Criteria

Sources that could not be verified or that seemed unreliable were excluded. Sources that did not focus on the war or did not provide relevant information related to the experiences of Nigerian nationals residing in Ukraine were excluded in the study. Also, studies published in other languages apart from English were excluded due to difficulty in getting accurate translation which could affect the validity and reliability of the information.

Publications that were outdated or published before 2017 were excluded from the study in order to ensure the information gathered were accurate. Furthermore, duplicate sources or publications that were presenting similar information were excluded in order to avoid repetition and ensure only relevant data and information were analysed.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Secondary data were gathered through various sources like online databases, official websites, and recognized news portals. The data collection procedure involved searching for targeted keywords like "Nigerian students in Ukraine 2022," "Russia Ukraine war evacuation Nigerians, " and "impact of conflict on international students." Each source was critically

evaluated by the defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to assess its relevance and reliability. Targeted data were identified and extracted, primarily focusing on the evacuees' experiences, safety and security issues, difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid, and the Nigerian government's involvement. Furthermore, the extracted information was categorized thematically to align with the objectives of the study, thus creating a structured basis for further analysis.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The study was based on the thematic content analysis of secondary data. This method involved thoughtful reading and coding of the extracted data to recognize common themes among the various sources. The codes were later collected into bigger categories that included evacuation safety humanitarian assistance, and governmental role. The findings were synthesized through descriptive analysis to narrate well the experiences of Nigerians living in Ukraine. Cheong et al., (2023) noted that thematic content analysis is suitable for qualitative secondary research because it helps to uncover the patterns, connections, and similarities between the various data sources.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study ensured appropriate ethical considerations during the collection and the use of secondary data. Ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring that all information used in the study was obtained from credible and publicly accessible sources. Proper citation and referencing were regularly used to give credit to the original authors and institutions. Furthermore, all data were presented objectively without misinterpretation or manipulation of

information. These measures ensured that study maintained academic integrity and complied with ethical standards in research.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The approach used for this study certainly has its limitations. Using only secondary data for research does not really allow one to grasp individual experiences fully, as primary communication with the participants was not used. There is a chance that media reports and other online sources are biased or lack information, which may influence the thoroughness of the results. Also, this research might have missed capturing differential experiences between Nigerians living in different cities in Ukraine due to the availability of sources that are not evenly distributed. However, even with these constraints, the adopted method still delivers a dependable and organized structure for studying how the Russia-Ukraine conflict has affected Nigerians living in Ukraine using authentic and evidential sources.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four presents the results and discussion of the research on how Russia's invasion of Ukraine affected Nigerians living in Ukraine. This section interprets data collected from secondary sources including scholarly publications, government documents, reports from international organizations and reliable media outlets that captured the lives of Nigerians amidst the war.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 Major Security Challenges Faced by Nigerian Students during the War

Table 1. Challenges Faced by Nigerians during the War

Challenge	Evidence from Reports
Bombardment and air raids	Students took shelter in bunkers for days
Food shortages	Limited supplies while staying in basements
Long-distance trekking	Some students trekked up to 16 km to borders
Border discrimination	Africans reportedly delayed at border crossings
Academic disruption	Studies suspended or delayed

Source: Onwuamaeze, 2022

Table 1 depicts the major challenges Nigerian students faced during the conflict. According to the table, a large number of students stayed in underground shelters for days during the bombings which caused them to suffer from psychological trauma and lack of food. Also, the breakdown of the transport system made the students walk for long hours, 16 kms at times, to the nearest border, subjecting them to tough weather and dangerous situations.

4.2.2 Estimated Number of Nigerians before the 2022 Invasion

Table 2. Estimated Population of Nigerian Nationals before the War

Category	Estimated Number
Nigerian Students in Ukraine	Over 12,000
Nigerians Evacuated by March 2022	About 1,200
Nigerian Students at Sumy State University	368

Source: Adeoye, 2022

Table 2 indicates that before the beginning of the war in February 2022, there were over 12,000 students from Nigeria in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the initial attempts to evacuate the individuals have resulted in the return of roughly 1,200 Nigerians to their homeland by mid-March 2022. This highlights the scope of the problem facing the Nigerian government and reveals the vulnerability of Nigerian citizens who are still caught up in the conflict zones.

4.2.3 Comparative Evacuation Experiences of Foreign Nationals in Ukraine

Table 3. Comparative Analysis of the Experiences between Nigerian Nationals and Foreign Nationals during the War.

Category	Nigerian Nationals	Western / Some Asian Nationals	Ukrainian Citizens
Access to evacuation trains	Limited access; reports of delays	Generally better access	Priority access
Border crossing waiting time	Up to 24–46 hours in some cases	Shorter waiting times	Immediate priority
Diplomatic evacuation support	Slower coordination	Faster evacuation flights	State-led evacuation
Discrimination reports	Several documented cases	Few reports	Not applicable
Access to humanitarian aid	Limited initially	Moderate access	Highest priority

Source: Adeoye, 2022

The data presented in Table 3 reveal not only that all the groups affected from the conflict and had to be evacuated but also that their comparative experiences. In general, Ukrainian nationals appeared to have the first right to evacuation means and border crossing points whereas Nigerian and other African student groups had to endure longer queues and were offered less access to evacuation support. This is a clear sign that nationality and diplomatic backing impacted the evacuation situations of foreign nationals during the crisis.

4.3 OBJECTIVE 1: Assess the Safety and Security Challenges Faced by Nigerians Residing in Ukraine since the Invasion

According to secondary sources, a large number of the Nigerian communities living in Ukraine encountered major safety and security issues after the Russian invasion in February 2022. Before the war started, Ukraine was one of the countries with a huge number of international students among which there were thousands of Nigerians who were enrolled in different universities of the country. Adeoye (2022) reported that Nigeria had about 3,552 students in Ukraine in 2018, ranking it as one of the largest African student populations in the country. However, the war situation sparked a security crisis for these foreign students almost instantly.

Exposure to military attacks and confinement in shelters was one of the major security challenges faced by the people of Nigeria (IOM, 2022). During the height of the invasion, for safety purposes, lots of students were compelled to stay in the underground bunkers or basements as there was the launching of missiles and bombardments in the main cities. Such shelters were basically bomb shelters that were built during the Cold War with the intention of protecting the civilian population in the event of air raids. Also, several Nigerian students were reported to have remained in these shelters for days at a time, with little or no access to food and other necessities. The extended isolation in these harsh conditions resulted in mental agony and terror of the students, which emphasizes the grave security perils of living in a war zone (Kavanagh, 2022).

Difficulties in evacuating conflict areas were also a major challenge. According to eyewitnesses, students were even forced to spend long hours during air raids and bombardments in underground shelters and metro stations in main cities in Ukraine like Kyiv,

Kharkiv, and Sumy (Adio, 2022). Also, students had to constantly live in fear of attacks; they were also suffering from shortages of necessary supplies such as food, water, and other essentials which made the situation a nightmare for them psychologically. International students, who were already far away from their families had difficulty accessing to any kind of institutional support when the invasion started. Ozili (2022) indicated people living in environments of conflict or those who are exposed to war conditions will suffer emotional distress, trauma, and anxiety because of the continuous presence of violence and insecurity (Halidu, 2025).

Furthermore, Russian full-scale military invasion made Nigerian students face the reality of dangers that come with an armed conflict abruptly. Air blasts, army attacks, and the rising of insecurity are the major forces that have compelled numerous Nigerian students to leave their homes and schools in the cities of Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipro, while searching for safer ways to exit the country (Halidu, 2025). As many Nigerian and other African students had come to Ukraine mainly for education, as young migrants they did not have their families nearby, which made them even more vulnerable during the crisis and, at the same time, increased their reliance on evacuation by institutions and assistance from NGOs (Nweke et al., 2022).

4.4 OBJECTIVE 2: Compare the Experiences of Nigerian Residents with other Foreign Nationals in Ukraine

During the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the experiences of Nigerian residents differed in various ways to the experience of other foreign nationals living in Ukraine at the time of conflict. Ukraine had become home to more international students from various parts of the world before the onset of the war in February 2022. Adeoye (2022) reported over 75,000

international students from around 154 countries were registered in Ukrainian universities before the war. Most of them were undertaking professional courses such as medicine, engineering, and technical fields. Approximately 12,000 Nigerian students were considered as part of the student body in different Ukrainian educational institutions.

Major differences in the evacuation experience of Nigerian residents compared with some other foreign Nationalities emerged despite these shared circumstances. Omoera and Nwaoboli (2023) indicated that some countries managed to prepare better coordinated evacuation schemes for their citizens at the beginning of the hostilities. Oore-ofe et al. (2023) noted that while some countries immediately responded with proper diplomatic negotiations and arranged airlifts to bring back their citizens from the surrounding countries, a number of Nigerian students lamented the slow response of the government in providing them with official evacuation assistance. This compelled most of them to depend on self-initiatives, friends and voluntary help to get to the neighbouring countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania.

Another main difference between Nigerian residents and other groups is how foreign nationals are treated during evacuations, especially at transport stations and border crossings. Daniel et al., (2024) highlighted cases of African nationals, including Nigerians, being delayed and facing difficulties in getting on evacuation trains or crossing borders. According to Adeoye (2022), they encountered various challenges such as long waiting times and limitations on movement at major transit points. Access to evacuation transportation, border crossing procedures, and diplomatic support during the crisis varied among different groups.

Maijama and Musa (2022) noted that the situation of Nigerian migrants in the midst of the Russia- Ukraine crisis is a perfect example of how humanitarian situations may reveal existing racial and structural inequalities that determine one's mobility, protection, and

availability of aid. The paper mentions that the migrants from Africa escaping Ukraine encountered serious issues such as being discriminated against, borders being closed, and receiving humanitarian help late as opposed to their European counterparts. These findings are consistent with broader migration research which indicates that migrants from the Global South are more likely to be exposed to various vulnerabilities during conflict-induced displacement due to their countries having less effective diplomatic representation and fewer international protection mechanisms (Kreisberg & Dayton, 2022).

Furthermore, Adeoye (2022) highlighted racial discrimination and unequal treatment as among the security problems that Nigerian residents and other African nationals faced. There are reports that some African students were denied boarding the evacuation train or were requested to surrender seats to the Ukrainian citizens. According to reports, Africans at certain border crossing points were increased waiting time compared to Ukrainian nationals and indeed in some cases segregation during evacuation was facilitated. At some border points, students who were badly affected in this way were stranded without help for about two days while of course priority was given to Ukrainian citizens who were looking for refuge (Halidu, 2025).

Overall, the comparative analysis shows that Nigerian residents in Ukraine faced, to a large extent, similar immediate threats as other foreign nationals during the invasion, such as exposure to military attacks, being forcibly displaced, and sudden suspension of academic activities. The war had an impact on all the international students residing in Ukraine. However, the level and type of their experiences were determined by factors such as nationality, level of diplomatic preparedness, and generally migration patterns. Therefore, the experiences of Nigerians in the conflict should be interpreted not only in the general context of international student displacement but also of global migration inequalities and uneven humanitarian responses. These results highlight the importance of foster international cooperation as well as

the enhancement of diplomatic channels to make sure foreign nationals are accorded fair protection in situations of war.

4.5 OBJECTIVE 3: Provide Recommendations for Policies and Actions to Better Support Nigerians in Ukraine during Conflict Situations

There have been several shortcomings that have emerged from the experience of Nigerian students and other nationals from Africa during the Russia–Ukraine conflict. As highlighted in previous sections, many Nigerians have encountered difficulties ranging from delays in receiving assistance for evacuation, lengthy travel times to border posts, limited availability of transport means, and lengthy wait time during evacuation.

An important recommendation is to enhance the mechanisms of Nigeria's diplomatic emergency response for citizens abroad. The situation of Nigerian students in Ukraine during the crisis shows that slow evacuation coordination made the students who had to depend on their own initiatives or informal networks for getting to the neighbouring countries more vulnerable (Nweke et al., 2022). For resolving this situation, the Nigerian embassies/consulates need to devise detailed contingency measures suitable for being implemented at the very moment of the first signs of host country conflicts or security threats.

Another very important suggestion is the establishment of a centralized registry system for Nigerian students abroad. When the Ukraine crisis broke out, the authorities found it challenging to swiftly identify and locate Nigerian nationals in the Ukrainian regions embroiled in the crisis, and this hampered the planning and coordination of evacuation operations (Ozili, 2022). Setting up a compulsory or highly recommended registration system for Nigerian students going abroad would help the government keep track of citizens living overseas through

regular updating of their details including whereabouts, contact information, and schools. This system would be a great tool for Nigerian officials in enhancing their role of helping the students and keeping them informed of any emergency measures during disaster situations.

Enhancing communication and information sharing during emergencies is also crucial. Nwamma et al., (2022) indicated that a high number of Nigerian students expressed that they got mixed up and felt insecure about where to go, what transportation means to use, and which safe routes to take to get out of the conflict areas. When a disaster happens, it is very important to have correct and up-to-date information so that the lives of the displaced people can be protected. Nigerian embassies and consulates should set up digital communication channels, like emergency alert services, social media, and mobile messaging networks, to keep their citizens continuously informed through live updates, in case of any emergency.

Destination countries attracting a significant number of international students will also want to include foreign nationals in their domestic emergency planning systems (Afolayan, 2020). A lot of the international students in Ukraine remained largely outside local emergency arrangements, which was one of the reasons for the confusion and difficulties with logistics in the evacuation process. Universities and host governments should consequently agree on handling emergency situations through crisis management protocols that are tailored to the requirements of international students. These protocols should comprise the following facilities for international students: planned evacuation routes, emergency housing, and transport arrangements made in a coordinated manner. Having such policies in place would mean that during emergency response efforts, international students are not neglected (Onwuamaeze, 2022).

In addition, there should be more focus on providing psychological and humanitarian aid to those students who become refugees due to war. Along with changing their residence,

Nigerian nationals were psychologically affected as well due to the constant exposure to insecurity and fear (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2024). It is therefore necessary for governments, schools, and human welfare organizations to work together in providing counselling services, financial assistance, and academic reintegration programmes to students who have been through conflict situations.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 CONCLUSION

The study investigated the impact of Russia invasion of Ukraine on Nigerians residing in the country, with special emphasis on the various safety challenges they faced, their comparative experiences with other foreign nationals and the policy needed to bolster or support Nigerians in similar conflict situations. The findings indicate that the invasion created various safety risks and challenges for Nigerians residing in Ukraine.

Many Nigerian residents were exposed to insecurity, displacement and disruption of daily life as the conflict increased and became more serious. They had limited access to transportation and gathering reliable source of information became extremely difficult which led to evacuation to neighbouring countries. It also led to suspension of academic activities for students, financial strain and psychological stress on Nigerian residents.

The research also highlights the difference in experience between Nigerian residents and other foreign Residents during the conflict. Similar to Nigerians, foreigners also residing in Ukraine were also affected by the conflict. However, the findings indicate that Nigerians faced additional challenges during evacuation from conflict zones and racial discrimination which included delays at border crossing and difficulties in accessing transportation out of conflict zones.

The study further gives recommendations and emphasizes the need to improve on policies to better support Nigerians residing in conflict zones. Strengthening diplomatic engagement, developing clearer evacuation strategies and establishing effective communication channels between Nigerian authorities and citizens that are abroad is important

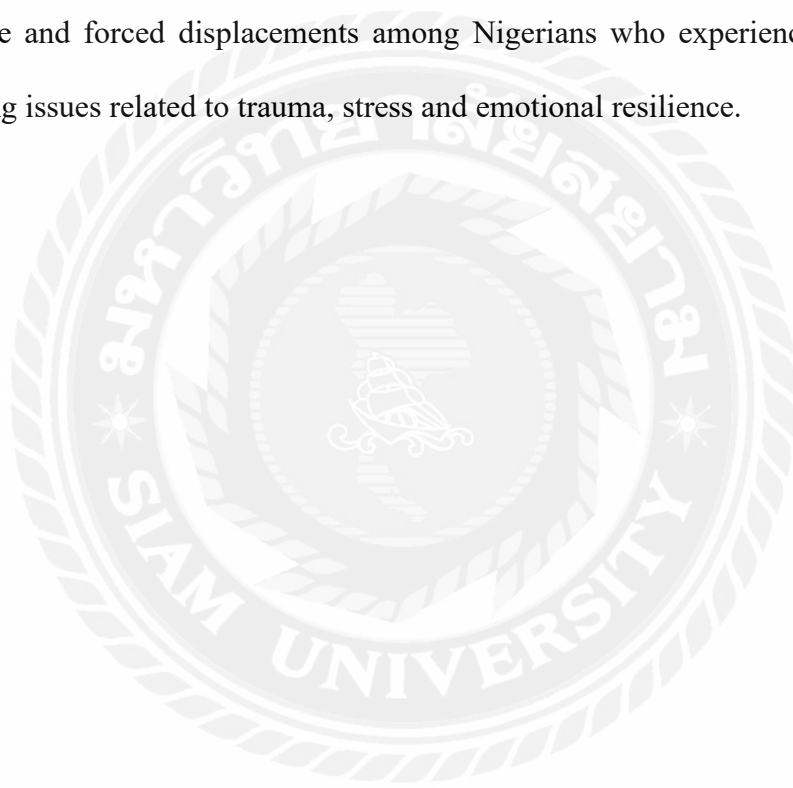
and paramount in protecting Nigerians in crisis environment. In conclusion, the experiences of Nigerians during the Russia-Ukraine war has highlighted the various challenges faced by migrant population during geopolitical conflicts.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION

- ✓ Nigerian diplomatic missions need to strengthen the crisis preparedness measures such as having clear evacuation protocols, prompt communication, support services specific for Nigerian citizens in conflict zones.
- ✓ It is necessary for schools to have emergency response plans in place which should include provisions such as relocation assistance, remote learning facilities, financial help for students who have been displaced.
- ✓ Accurate and timely information should be delivered through official channels. It should also be multilingual in order to not only decrease this misinformation but also avoid panic among people.
- ✓ Government and non-government organizations should together keep track of the most vulnerable groups in the society and offer them culturally-sensitive mental health interventions.
- ✓ Policymakers need to come up with policies that would ensure that the human security of migrants takes precedence, thereby addressing their safety needs, ensuring the continuous education of their children and protecting them from any form of discrimination in times of crises.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- ✓ Future research should utilise primary data collection methods such as surveys, interviews and discussions with Nigerians who resided in Ukraine during the conflict.
- ✓ Future research should also consider investigating the long-term effects of the conflict on Nigerians who were displaced from Ukraine, as regards the continuation of their education, employment opportunities and reintegration into host countries.
- ✓ Further studies should examine the psychological and mental health impacts of war exposure and forced displacements among Nigerians who experienced the conflict, including issues related to trauma, stress and emotional resilience.



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