

Conflict Mediation "The African delegation in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict"

Paixão António José

Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war, previously referred to as the Ukrainian crisis in its initial phase, is an ongoing international conflict between Russia, along with Russian-backed separatists, and Ukraine that began in February 2014. Since the conflict began, the Russian army has been gaining territory, controlling regions such as Bakmut, Donetsk, Lobkove, Tokmak, Mariupol, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Donbas, and a part of the annexation of Crimea in 2014. It is estimated that at least 62,295 people were killed, at least 60,117 people suffered non-fatal injuries, at least 15,000 people were missing, about 17 million people were killed, at least 140,000 buildings were destroyed and about \$411 billion in property damage. Therefore, for the African continent, the consequences are visible, especially in increased imports of commodities from Russia, in addition to international pressure, especially from its allies, and the US, who want Africa to take sides in the conflict. However, the continent refuses to follow a non-African agenda in its international politics, given the historical past of colonialism and the consequences of the cold war for the continent. Therefore, the African Union has taken the initiative to mediate the conflict on its own terms.

The African approach to the conflict

From the beginning of the conflict, African countries had a single approach

to the conflict, which was non-interference in internal affairs. Over the course of the conflict, considering other approaches from outside the continent, the approach split into two: countries positioned against Russia's war in Ukraine and countries maintaining a policy of strategic non-alignment, and the few countries explicitly in favor of Russia's war.

Three major events at the UN General Assembly clearly demonstrate Africa's position on the conflict; the two consecutive resolutions condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine were passed at the UNGA with about 50% of African countries voting in favor and the remaining half abstaining or absenting themselves from the vote. In 2023, only Eritrea and Mali voted against the resolution. In 2022, only Eritrea voted against the resolution. A resolution to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council that passed the UNGA was more divisive within the African bloc. Of the 54 African countries, 24 chose to abstain, 12 were absent, 10 countries voted in favor, and 9 voted against.

African's Peace Delegation

Four heads of state came to Kiev and St. Petersburg: President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, President Macky Sall of Senegal, President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia, and Azali Assoumani of the Comoros (current chair of the African Union). Egypt and

Uganda sent high-level officials to represent them. President Ramaphosa led the delegation.

“From the beginning of the conflict, African countries had a single approach to the conflict, which was non-interference in internal affairs(...)”

It is important to emphasize that African countries have a historical relationship with Russia, as Moscow supported the liberation struggle against colonialism in Africa; however, most of the ruling parties in African countries have closer ties to Russia from the pre-independence period. South Africa, which led the delegation, continues to have a delicate position by maintaining close ties with both the United States and Russia. South Africa is simultaneously regarded as Russia's closest ally in Africa and one of the United States' most important allies on the continent.

During the apartheid era, the Soviet Union supported the liberation movement led by the African National Congress (ANC) by providing military training to its members. Almost 30 years after the end of apartheid, the ANC continues to dominate South African politics, and some ANC leaders have a special fondness for Russia's support of

the anti-apartheid movement. Also at present, the two countries are members of the BRICS alliance (composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), a powerful collective of major economies with significant global influence.

In February of this year, South Africa held naval drills with Russia and China off the coast of Durban, drawing significant criticism from countries aligned with Ukraine. In May, South Africa was involved in a diplomatic spat with the United States, with the latter accusing the former of shipping arms to Russia. All in all, South Africa's delicate diplomatic dance to appease both the United States and Russia has become near impossible since the start of the war in Ukraine. Despite South Africa's professed neutral stance toward the war in Ukraine, historical ties and recent events have thrown its neutrality into doubt. By leading this peace delegation, the country hopes to dampen accusations of favoritism toward Russia.

Africa delegation in Kiev - Ukraine

On June 16, a peacekeeping mission, which included the presidents of Zambia, Comoros, Senegal and South Africa, the prime minister of Egypt and senior officials of the Republic of Congo and Uganda, visited Kiev, where it held talks with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky. During the visit, the African delegation discussed the same ten points mentioned in the next point, to build peace; in addition, the delegation also paid tribute to the civilians killed during the Russian occupation of part of Kiev's Bucha region.

Africa Delegation in St. Petersburg - Russia

On June 17, 2023, President Vladimir Putin received heads of delegations from African states at the Constantine Palace, located on the outskirts of St. Petersburg, the former capital of Russia. Petersburg, the former capital of Russia, the group included the same entities the same entities that visited Kiev. On the Russian side, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Presidential Advisor Yury Ushakov attended the meeting.

“South Africa’s delicate diplomatic dance to appease both the United States and Russia has become near impossible since the start of the war in Ukraine(...)”

Therefore, the group proposed ten points around which peace can be built:

1. The group has recognized many other proposals that have been put forward by a number of other major players in the world.
2. The second point is that the group drew attention to – the key element of the general proposal – is that this war must be ended; the conflict must be resolved through negotiations and through diplomacy. The war cannot go on forever. All wars must end at some point.

3. The third point is de-escalation of the conflict, a de-escalation from both sides. The escalation is not conducive to peace negotiations.
4. The fourth point, which also appeared in other proposals, is to recognize the sovereignty of countries in the understanding of the UN Charter. Moreover, understanding of the UN Charter, on the basis of internationally recognized principles. The group declared the necessity to recognize the sovereignty of countries within the meaning of the UN Charter.
5. The fifth point is that all countries need security guarantees. All parties have already raised this issue. All parties want certain guarantees, and the group agreed with that.
6. Point six directly affects African countries. The group called for the opening up of the movement of grains across the Black Sea so that any barriers that currently exist are removed so that grains and other commodities can reach the markets.
7. Point seven. The necessity to ensure that there is humanitarian support for those who need it, as well as for those who suffer as a result of this conflict.
8. Point eight concerns the release of prisoners of war on both sides. A related issue concerns children who have been held hostage by this conflict. These children must return to where they came from, to their homes.
9. Point nine. Wars breed destruction and therefore post-conflict reconstruction is necessary. The group supports this post-recovery effort.

African countries' votes on UN resolutions 2022 and 2023 condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine

N.	Country	Vote 2022	Vote 2023
1	Algeria	Abstain	Abstain
2	Angola	Abstain	Abstain
3	Benin	Yes	Yes
4	Botswana	Yes	Yes
5	Burkina Faso	No vote recorded	No vote recorded
6	Burundi	Abstain	Abstain
7	Cabo Verde	Yes	Yes
8	Cameroun	No vote recorded	No vote recorded
9	CA Republic	Abstain	Abstain
10	Chad	Yes	Yes
11	Comoros	Yes	Yes
12	DR Congo	Yes	Yes
13	Republic of Congo	Abstain	Abstain
14	Ivory Coast	Yes	Yes
15	Djibouti	Yes	Yes
16	Egypt	Yes	Yes
17	Guinea Equatorial	Abstain	No vote recorded
18	Eritrea	No	No
19	Eswatini	No vote recorded	No vote recorded
20	Ethiopia	No vote recorded	Abstain
21	Gabon	Yes	Abstain
22	Ghana	Yes	Yes
23	Gambia	Yes	Yes
24	Guinea	No vote recorded	Abstain
25	Guinea Bissau	No vote recorded	No vote recorded
26	Kenya	Yes	Yes
27	Lesotho	Yes	Yes
28	Liberia	Yes	Yes
29	Libya	Yes	Yes
30	Madagascar	Abstain	Yes
31	Malawi	Yes	Yes
32	Mali	Abstain	No
33	Mauritania	Yes	Yes
34	Morocco	No vote recorded	Yes
35	Mozambique	Abstain	Abstain
36	Namibia	Abstain	Abstain
37	Niger	Yes	Yes
38	Nigeria	Yes	Yes
39	Rwanda	Yes	Yes
40	Sao Tome and Principe	Yes	Yes
41	Senegal	Abstain	No vote recorded
42	Seychelles	Yes	Yes
43	Sierra Leone	Yes	Yes
44	Somalia	Yes	Yes
45	Sudan	Abstain	Abstain
46	Tanzania	Abstain	No vote recorded
47	Togo	No vote recorded	Abstain
48	Tunisia	Yes	Yes
49	Uganda	Abstain	Abstain
50	Zambia	Yes	Yes
51	Zimbabwe	Abstain	Abstain

Source: United Nations 2022: A/RES/ES-11/1; 2023: A/RES/ES-11/6

10. The tenth point is adopting certain processes that will lead to the end of this war. The group clearly expressed the idea that the African continent, the African countries present here, can play a certain role in this.

Final Considerations

The delegation heard both sides, in the case of Kiev, upon arrival the delegation was greeted with a rocket, to

later participate in a press conference open to the public, the delegation also clarified the African position in the war. Therefore, In St. Pittsburg, the delegation met with President Putin and his aides, the Russian president introduced the agreement signed in 2014 between Russia and Ukraine, which resulted in Ukraine's non-compliance. Moscow accused Kiev of pursuing its own agenda in the conflict.

Thus, relying on the ten points men-

tioned above, the delegation played its historic role in the historic mission in the context of Peace building; hoping that both sides would abide by the points as much as they could, especially point three, which mentions de-escalating the conflict.

Referências

- ¹ Nzuki, Catherine. Africa's Peace Delegation: A New Chapter for Africa and the Ukraine War. 18 de June de 2023. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/africas-peace-delegation-new-chapter-africa-and-ukraine-war>>.
- ² Klomegah, Kester Kenn. Modern diplomacy. 2 de June de 2023. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/06/18/african-peace-mediators-present-10-points-document-to-vladimir-putin/>>.

Outras Referências e Notas

- Magome, Mogomotsi. On Ukraine-Russia trip, South African leader's delegation stuck at Polish airport over arms permits, 16 de June de 2023. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ukraine-russia-trip-south-african-leaders-delegation-stuck-100141128>>.
- Ray, Michael. Russia-Ukraine War. 2022. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://www.britannica.com/event/2022-Russian-invasion-of-Ukraine>>.
- Sharp, Alexandra. African Peace Mission to Ukraine Gets Off to a Rocky Start. 16 de June de 2023. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/16/africa-peace-mission-delegation-russia-ukraine-missiles-blinken-china/>>.
- Tandwa, Lizeka. Poland prevents Ukrainian bound South African delegation from disembarking for hours. 16 de June de 2023. 19 de June de 2023. <<https://mg.co.za/politics/2023-06-16-poland-gives-the-middle-finger-to-south-african-security-personnel/>>.
- Team, Visual Journalism. Ukraine in maps: Tracking the war with Russia. 18 de June de 2023. 20 de June de 2023. <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>>.