

**FEET DRAIN DURING INVASION?
RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WARS OF 2022 AND NIGERIAN FOOTBALLERS IN THE REGION**

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ABSTRACT

This study traces the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It documents the multiple negative implications of the invasion using qualitative method of documentary analysis. The study amongst other things found that the loss of lives, destruction and fear created by the Russo-Ukrainian War created multiple negative effect which had a major impact on the football sector. While the world and academic literatures were agog with studies on the agricultural, human, security and energy implications of the war, this study found that the war has led to massive emigration of Nigerian footballers as approved by FIFA. It recommends reactive multidimensional peacebuilding strategy.

Key words: War. Football. Peace. Ukraine. Nigeria. Russia.

RESUMO

Dreno de pés durante a invasão? Guerras russo-ucranianas de 2022 e jogadores de futebol nigerianos na região

Este estudo traça a invasão russa da Ucrânia. Documenta as múltiplas implicações negativas da invasão usando o método qualitativo de análise documental. O estudo, entre outras coisas, descobriu que a perda de vidas, a destruição e o medo criados pela Guerra Russo-Ucraniana criaram múltiplos efeitos negativos que tiveram um grande impacto no setor do futebol. Enquanto o mundo e as literaturas acadêmicas estavam entusiasmados com estudos sobre as implicações agrícolas, humanas, de segurança e energéticas da guerra, este estudo descobriu que a guerra levou à emigração maciça de jogadores de futebol nigerianos conforme aprovado pela FIFA. Recomenda uma estratégia multidimensional reativa de consolidação da paz.

Palavras-chave: Guerra. Futebol. Paz. Ucrânia. Nigéria. Rússia.

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INTRODUCTION

Since her independence in 1991, Ukraine has been battling with what may be called the Eastern Version of Cold War.

Hostilities, mutual un-trust, mutual suspicion and animosities have punctuated the relations between the two states.

One of the major causes of this unhealthy relations was because Ukraine has been a satellite state of Russia, with most her domestic activities controlled by Russian politicians, oligarchs and businesses, (Gierczak, 2020).

More so, clash of interests between the external forces in Ukraine, the belief of some sections of the country (such as in, Donetsk and Luhansk Provinces and the Crimean Peninsula) that they have strong and unbreakable affinity with Russia, and the contrary belief of other Ukrainians added to the unstable systems in the country.

Furthermore, the 2001 census in Ukraine, which was the last official census in the country showed that about 77.8 % of the population was Ukrainians, while 17.3 % were Russians.

And among the 77.8 % Ukrainian population, 67.5% of them spoke primarily Ukrainian and 29.6 % spoke Russian, (Gierczak, 2020).

Looking at the roots of the Russo-Ukrainian war, Gierczak, (2020) summarized that there were five categories of causative factors.

They include (1) the need for Russia to maintain her post Soviet Union territories,

(2) the need for Ukrainians to maintain and be in charge of her sovereignty,

(3) the question of such regions as Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk,

(4) the Question of Ukrainians national identity, (5) the presence and interest of international players, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

These series of questions about Ukraine's existence and the place of Russia in her internal politics played out in the politics of the October, 2004 presidential election.

The outgoing president, Leonid Kuchma and the Russian president, Vladimir Putin had endorsed Viktor Yanukovich, who was pro-Russia and have Eastern Ukraine as

his strongest base, the opposition party had Viktor Yushchenko as their presidential candidate. Converse to Yanukovich, Yushchenko had western Ukraine as his strongest base, and had the backing of the West.

The outcome of the election altered the delicate balance of power dangling between Russia and Ukraine. In the election, Yushchenko won with a very thin margin, but it was declared inconclusive, and a runoff fixed for November of same year.

At the end of it, Yanukovich was declared the winner. This result was not welcomed by Yushchenko and his supporters who embarked on daily protest demanding for another runoff. "Their protests became known as the Orange Revolution, for the prominent display of Yushchenko's campaign color in flags, banners, and clothing", (Subtelny, 2008).

These political crises continued, and series of experiments, negotiations, compromises were made to patch the fragile peace between Moscow and Kiev, and to pacify the interest of the Western powers in Eastern Europe what Putin saw as existential threat.

By 2014, the crisis heightened, following the annexation of Crimea and the taking over of government buildings in the country by pro-Russian separatists, (Metre, Gienger, and Kuehnast, 2015).

The inability of diplomatic solution resulted to the February 24th, 2022 launch of an all-out assault on Ukraine by Russia, after months of threatening military manoeuvres and negotiations in bad faith, (European Parliamentary Research Service 2022a).

It was a pathetic and unwarranted invasion described by European leaders and the European Parliament as unjustified military aggression that undermines global security and peace, (European Parliamentary Research Service 2022).

In response to the war, the Bureau of the FIFA Council, in line with the recommendations from the International Olympic Committee ordered a pause in international competitions in Russia.

There was also the decision by the Council to enact Temporary Employment Rules on footballers in Ukraine. There was an extension on the temporary employment rules contained in the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP). This extension was

to arm football workers in Ukraine during the wartime.

The amendments also empowered international football workers in Russia to suspend their employment contracts with their clubs until June 30th, 2023, (FIFA, 2022).

It was on the foregoing basis that Nigerian football workers embarked on a mass exodus in the two Eastern Europe countries in what these researchers styled Feet Drain.

Research Methodology and Approaches

This study analyzed the effects of the Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022 on Nigerian footballers in the two countries. The major argument was that the war caused feet drain in the two countries.

By feet drain, the research meant the withdrawal of services and emigration from the warring nations, thereby causing a shortage of professional players in the football clubs of these countries.

Although the position of FIFA resulted to the movement of football workers of other nations out of the warring nations, but this research could not cover other nationals, as it focuses on Nigerian footballers.

Primary data were sourced through radio and television news and broadcasts. Interviews granted by some football workers to various media were also used in this work.

Relying on such interviews was because efforts made to have direct interviews with some of the footballers of Nigeria origin did not materialize, as they were unreachable during the course of this work.

Other primary sources include archival materials. There was a visit to the National Archives of Nigeria, Enugu, where such materials as newspaper publications by West African Pilots were accessed and assessed.

These papers published in the mid twentieth century provided an insight into the first movements of Nigerian footballers to Europe. The choice of the archives was because it is a repository of colonial history of Nigeria.

Furthermore, West African Pilot existed in the same region where the archives is situated. This makes the archives rich in many publications of the paper.

Other primary sources used include tweets from various tweeps, facebook posts and comments, and so on.

Such secondary sources of data as textbooks, journal articles, and so on, were employed.

These materials were important because the study also looked at the historical antecedents of the war.

The researchers used content and descriptive analytical approaches to study their variables.

To enhance understanding, the findings were chronologically arranged in thematic headings. The need for these approaches was to show the linkages between the various events studied.

Conceptualization of Feet Drain

With the astronomical rise in scholarship in the 21st century, there has been difficulty in having a one generally accepted definition for certain concepts.

This is so because the larger the number of scholars interested on a concept, the more diverse explanations and points of views to the studied concept.

Furthermore, in recent times, new words and ideas are merging and being introduced into lexicons of different disciplines. It therefore becomes important to conceptualize such new entrants, to make it easier for readers.

It is on the basis of the foregoing that this section is devoted to conceptualizing feet drain. But before that, these researchers find it germane to shed little light on brain drain, from which a variant, called feet drain was arrived at.

Brain drain is the popular concept used to describe what preferred to call the "High Skill Migration" (HSM), which he described as the movement of people with increased levels of skills and education who, if they stayed could make significant contribution to the development of the country.

It is the international movements of manpower from a region of lower economical survival opportunities to a region of higher survival opportunities. It has to do with the desire to secure a greener pasture and to have higher purchasing power.

Docquier and Rapoport, (2006) noted that in the non-academic literature, the term is generally used in a narrower sense and relates

more specifically to the migration of engineers, physicians, scientists and other very highly skilled professionals with university training.

While defined it as the process whereby highly skilled workers migrate from developing countries to more developed nations, added that the motive for this movement is often to take advantage of positive wage disparities.

Brain drain does not just happen. Generally, the reasons for brain drain can be broadly divided into two: the pull and the push factors.

According to Push factors are circumstances or events in the home countries that result in persons leaving, while pull factors are the incentives in the receiving countries that encourage persons to seek employment opportunities there. Feet Drain can also have been called "Muscle Drain" or "Feet Exchange", (Elliot, 2011).

It is a concept used to describe the exodus of professional footballers from a place of lesser comfort and opportunities to a place of more comforts and opportunities. In this regard, either a pull or push factor forces footballers to withdraw their services in their based regions.

The concept of feet drain is not a very recent phenomenon. Historically, noted that as early as the nineteenth century when English football moved to France, footballers followed the trend, and relocated to Paris to play there.

In the mid twentieth century, it was also recorded that the Argentine footballer, Di Stefano, the French footballer, Kopa and the Hungarian footballer, Puskas, all migrated to Spain to play for the Real Madrid Football Club.

There was also the mass exodus of baseball players, from Dominican Republic to North America in the middle of the twentieth century as the result of the growing and inviting nature of the game in the region during this period, West African Pilot (Friday, 26th January, 1945), West African Pilot, (Wednesday, 28th February, 1945), all observed that from Nigeria, in the 20th century, players like Albert Osakwe

played for the Oxford Blue in the trio of football, cricket, and tennis as far back as 1945.

Observed that the extent of football migration took an increasing speed with the growing trend and practise of the concept of globalisation, and the 1995 deregulation of global labour market.

Globalisation created borderless borders between nations, and footballers have utilized the opportunity to crossover from their countries to others in search of better opportunities.

More so, the Bosman ruling of December 15, 1995 was a milestone in football transfer history and migration of footballers. Describing the effects of the ruling, former Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson maintained that "once the European Court of Justice ruled that clubs no longer had to pay transfer fees after the expiration of a player's contract, all hell broke loose. Suddenly it was a free-for-all".

Added that the ruling allowed footballers to leave their clubs on free transfers once their contracts expire, thereby leveraging them to demand and bargain for higher pays from either their current clubs (if they wish to continue with them) or new clubs.

There was also the Cotonou agreement reached in the year, 2000, which allowed footballers from Africa, free movement across borders in their profession.

It was on the foregoing backups that in the middle of the 2000/2001 football season, the Nigerian born footballer, Julius Efoha Aghahowa became the first Nigerian to officially sign for a Ukrainian football club, when he was transferred to play for Shakhtar Donetsk. In Russia too, since the introduction of the Russian Premier League in 2002, many Nigerian players have been signed to continue their senior careers in the country.

The table below listed Nigerian professional footballers who have played in Russia since 2002, when the Russian League came to be.

Some Nigerians Who Have Played in Russian Football Clubs.

S/n	Nigerian Player	Football Club	Year signed
1	Joseph Enakarihire	FC Dynamo Moscow	2005
	Chidi Odiah	CSKA Moscow	2004
2	Peter Odemwingie	Lokomotiv Moscow	2007
3	Richard Eromogbe	FC. Khimki	2008
4	Solomon Okoronkwo	FC Alania	2008
5	Obafemi Martins	FC Rubin Kazan	2010
6	Victor Nsofor	Lokomotiv Moscow	2011
7	Ahmed Musa	CSKA Moscow	2012
8	Emmanuel Emenike	Sparktak Moscow	2012
9	Fegor Ogude	FC Amkar Perm	2014
10	Sylvester Igbonu	FC. Ufa	2015

Review of Related Literature and Statement of the Problem

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, 2022, scholarly debates on this have taken a heightened position.

Globally, scholars from varying disciplines have given their voices and set their inks flowing in the analysis of the war.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (2022) had a global examination of the impacts of the war. Writing on 10TH June 2022 on the topic, "The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for Global Agricultural Markets and the Risks Associated with the War in Ukraine", the organization argued that there are many risks that bedevil the globe because of the war.

They include trade risk, price risks, logistical risks, production risks, humanitarian risks, energy risks, exchange rate, debt, and growth risks.

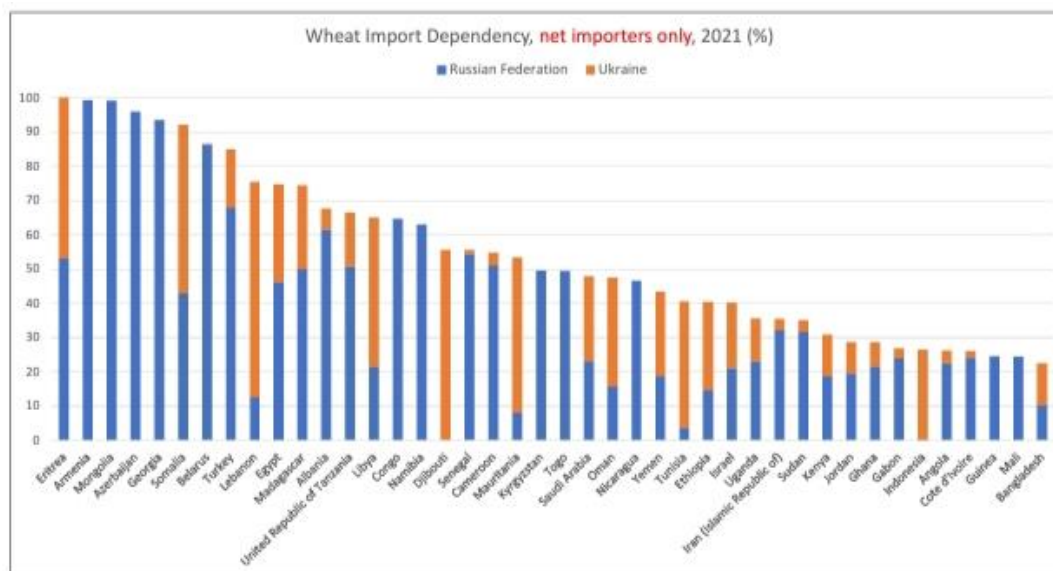
According to the organization, while some of these risks have started manifesting, others are time bombs waiting for the right time in future to explode, (FAO, 2022).

In another article dated 13-17th June 2022, titled "Impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on Global Food Security and Related Matters under the Mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)", the organization maintained that other factors as Covid-19 caused an all time high in prices of both market commodities such as fertilizer and other agricultural services.

By March, 2022, the FAO Price Index skyrocketed to a new "historical record high, up 12.6 percent from February, and 33.6 percent from its level a year earlier, and 15.8 percent higher than the peak reached in February 2011" (FAO, 2022).

Regarding the global impact of the foregoing, the organization reiterated the dependence of about 50 countries on Russia and Ukraine for their wheat supply (FAO, 2022).

Consequently, FAO predicted that there is a strong indication that the world will face food crises in the coming months and years as many countries depend on Russia and Ukraine on wheat imports as shown below.



In a work updated on the website of the Congressional Research Service, on September 14, 2022, Andrew S. Bowen, an analyst in Russian and European affairs focused on the military intelligence of the war.

The paper argued in line with Zach Beauchamp (2022), Detsch, (2022), Watling, (2022), and Mark Galeotti (2022) who all agreed that Russia invasion was based on a wrong assumption, imperial delusion, and miscalculation of what the outcome of the war would be.

The forgoing authors wrote that President Putin was of the view that the war would be a very brief one that would last for few days or weeks. This was shown in the level of unpreparedness of the Russian armies before the invasion, added Michael Kofman and Evans (2022) and Isaac Chotiner (2022).

Thus, Putin believed that the “weak and ineffective” Zelenskyy and his army would be easily defeated, added Reynolds and Whatling (2022).

Researchers like Pikulicka-Wilczewska, Sakwa (2022) believe that Russian invasion of Ukraine was a fight for identity questions. They maintained that there was a need to examine the war in the point of view of Russo-Ukrainian relations over history.

In his article titled “Russia’s War in Ukraine Identity, History, and Conflict”, Mankoff (2022) argued that Putin had believed that the question of Ukrainian national identity and independence were artificial constructs.

Consequently, any attempt by Western Ukraine to romance with the West and such organizations as the NATO and EU would not be tolerated. The question of identity, according to the American historian, Timothy Snyder (2022) and Mankoff (2022b) is a “politics of eternity” rooted in the “organic unity of the Russian Empire and its peoples.”

Furthermore, Gierczak, (2020) added that there are other issues such as religious, political, and economic interests in the war.

It was the protection of these interests on the side of Ukraine that western bodies indicated interest to secure and consolidate the national sovereignty of Ukraine Lakomy (2016), Mearsheimer (2014), and Zwolski (2018).

Yakovlev, Bazilevych and Chumachenko, (2020) believe that the pre-war Ukraine, like other countries of the world in 2020, was managing cases and impacts of Covid-19.

Chumachenko and Chumachenko, (2020), studied the war and the dynamics of COVID-19 in Ukraine. To these scholars, a large number of the impacts of the war was because of the impacts of the COVID-19 caused by the Omicron strain.

This global pandemic was a monster that ravaged the world, since the year 2019, when it first started in Wuhan, China. According to them, the war came at the peak of the wave of the pandemic in Ukraine which as at early 2022, was recording about 30000 new cases daily.

Adding to the debate on this aspect of the war, Martinho (2022) summed that the duo impact of the war and covid-19 depends largely on the different regions of the world; as different regions feel the effect differently from others.

Looking at the war and its impact on Africa, Konseiga (2022) maintained that this was a very difficult period for West African countries, who were trying to survive from the global impacts of the Covid-9; but the war complicated the situation.

This author maintained that the huge negative effect on West Africa was because of the high dependence of the following countries on Russian wheat: Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Cameroon, Liberia, and Benin.

He added that other aspects the war's negative impacts are felt in Africa are High import dependence of West Africa countries, rising energy costs, rising price of agricultural inputs, inflation and high food prices, disruption of supply chains, rising cost of transportation, and so on.

In terms of military invasion of one country by another, over the years, this has become topical. Interestingly, there are many factors that have led to that. Why some of these reasons have been generally condemned (with exception of the invaders and some of her friendly nations), others have been justified as efforts to protect the interest of a given people in the said country or humanitarian purposes, (Obiezu and Ndoh, 1998).

But even at that, a resurging question becomes: Does what an invader tags humanitarian endeavor, actually humanitarian in nature? Obiezu and Ndoh, (1998b) believe that humanitarian appendages in some of the post cold war invasions, is the western inventions to sugar-coat their obnoxious military and political activities in the other parts of the world.

For instance, the presence of the United States in Iran, Angola, Cuba, Iraq, Nicaragua, Libya, and Zaire was an effort by US to maintain her Cold War interest, and not for humanitarian purposes in the countries involved, as they claimed.

Furthermore, Roth, (2004) believed that the nature and heightened number of invasions since the mid 20th century have connections with the cold war politics, and not the claimed humanitarian adventure.

Using such places and experiences in Bosnia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia and so on, he summed that some of these invasions are better described as the offshoots of Cold War power tussle between the East and West.

Davis and Slobodchikoff (2022) then likened the foregoing to the Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

They maintained that there were elements of super power competition in it, because Moscow saw Ukraine's romance with NATO and other Western powers as widening the influence of the West.

To Davis and Slobodchikoff, (2018), and Karlsbergs (2022), the belief that Russian invasion of Ukraine was an extension of the Cold War power competition was glaring. But they pointed that a little difference between the current invasion and those that occurred during the cold war area was that, while the cause of the later was more of geopolitics and power politics, the former was majorly ideological questions.

To the Russia's foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, the NATO was a tool employed by US to continue her cold war expansionist policy and to enslave Europe. It was because of the existential threat posed by the foregoing that Russia invaded Ukraine, (The National News, 2022).

Lavrov further added that the invasion of Ukraine had striking similarities with the US actions in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, because through NATO, Russia was being threatened by the proliferation of western weapons in Ukraine, Aljazeera, (2022). Therefore, it was necessary for Russia to invade and fight what they saw as existential threat.

All the foregoing literature are helpful to this current work

They exposed readers to varieties of issues and scholarly perspectives to the war. These researches filled aspects of gap in the current debate on the war. Unfortunately, the aspects of history, identity, economy, human rights, health, politics, globalization, war and conflict have all been over crowded.

This has created a yawning gap in the aspects of the migration of football workers in Russia and Ukraine. In some occasions, what

exist are few mention of football which normal surfaces when cases of FIFA and such European football bodies as UEFA decisions are being discussed. In few other instances where sports were discussed, it was not entirely football Katsarova, (2022).

Furthermore, the cases of Nigeria footballers in both Ukraine and Russia have not been given attention of this nature. And considering that a Nigerian player, Sylvester Igbonu was the first African footballer to depart Russia, and the mass withdrawal from service by other footballers from the two warring nations, there is a need for a research and documentation of this exodus.

This current research was a clarion response to this lacuna. The work probed into the situation of Nigerian footballers in the east, and made a proper documentation for scholarship purposes.

The War and Nigerian Footballers in Russia and Ukraine

With the pronouncement by the Bureau of the FIFA Council, in line with the recommendations from the International Olympic Committee, which ordered a pause in international competitions because of the war, the footballers in the war ridden countries of Russia and Ukraine made up their minds to flee for their safeties.

On the 16th March, 2022, BBC Sport Africa reported that Sylvester Igbonu had departed Russia in line with the decision reached by FIFA on the 7th and 16th of March granting international football workers in the country the coverage to flee. The 31 years old Nigerian footballer was signed by FK Nizhny Novgorod from Dynamo Moscow, another Russian Football Club. This termination of contract was made after making one appearance in his new club.

According to one of his advisers in an interview to newsmen, his decision to leave was a personal decision reached after consulting at length with his family, (BBC, 2022). In an interview granted to The Punch Newspaper, as reported on March 18th, 2022, Igbonu reported that

It was difficult for me to terminate my deal after one month, but I could not leave with the fear my family had over me playing in Russia...people being reportedly killed every day was not pleasant news at all.

On social media and on TV, it's news about the invasion. My family's constant calls made me have a rethink about my stay in Russia...One of my teammates' deal was suspended, while some players in other Russian clubs had their contracts suspended as well.

Nobody is happy with what is happening here (Russia) and Ukraine and we don't know how long the war will last. Playing football in Russia is not like it used to be. If there is life there's hope. I believe I will get another team and continue my career. Reports about footballers leaving their clubs are gradually having a big impact on the league" (Edward, (2022).

There were also Nigerian player leaving Ukraine in droves

Pulse Nigeria sports news of February 24, 2022 and AfricaNew of same day, reported that six Nigerians departed Ukraine because of the war. This was followed by the suspension of the Ukrainian league by the Ukrainian Football Federation.

According to Pulse Nigeria Sports News, while three, out of the six players were playing for the top-flight, three were playing in the second division, (Young, 2022). The table below presented the information of these footballers.

Table showing Six Nigerian footballers who fled Ukraine Because of the War

Name	Age	Club in Ukraine	Year joined
Michael Gopey Stephen	22 years	Ingulets	July, 2021
Michael Obamina	18 years	Rukh Lviv	September, 2021
Viv Solomon-Otabor	26 years	Rukh Lviv	January, 2022
Henry Tedum Paago	23 years	FC Trustyanets	2021
John David Chukwufumnanya	23 years	Real Pharma Odesa	
Bright John Essien	19 years	Peremoga Dnipro	May, 2021

Source: (Young, 2022).

From the above table, it is evident that these players were either few weeks, months and barely a year into their new clubs before the war started. Michael Obamina who signed a four years deal with Rukh Lviv was yet to play his debut before the war truncated the contract. Same thing was the experience of Viv Solomon who also joined Rukh Lviv from a Scottish club, St Johnstone in January 2022.

Moreso, John David Chukwufumnanya who signed for Real Pharma Odesa was also yet to make his first appearance before the war affected the contract. These three players were yet to consummate their contracts before they were truncated by the war.

Reporting Obamina's experience in Ukraine, Goal.com of 28th February quoted him to have narrated that

It's basically been one of the most devastating moments of my life and career...just a few days after arriving from our mid-season tour of Turkey, the Russians invaded the country and it's been really messy, really crazy, these few days.

Everybody is just fighting for survival and trying to breathe, trying to get air, just make sure you live to see the next day...We're just trying to live, almost the whole system is down...right now the country is in a state of emergency, and almost the whole system is down...everything is shut down, the only systems working right now are hospitals, maybe grocery stores...there is fear, anxiety, and accidents happening here and there, within and outside the city... a couple of times, we tried to get out, but we're just stuck here right now" (Dove, 2022).

The experience of James Nwankwo is worth mentioning at this point. Although he was not a professional footballer in Ukraine, but there are indications that he played as a student Ukraine.

Few months after he left Ukraine because of the war, he represented Hungary at the Wroclaw Cup, sponsored by Stowarzyszenie Reprezentacja Polski Bezdolnych (Polish Homeless National Street Soccer Team Association) in July, in Poland. Before the war, Nwankwo was living in the Ukrainian city of Ternópil as a mechanical engineering student. The invasion by Russia made him to flee Ukraine.

Describing his experience, Nwankwo recounted that "I stayed at the [Polish] border

for five days; it was so difficult, there was no food, we had to eat ice." (Homelessworldcup, 2022).

Generally, looking at the conditions of Nigerian footballers in Russia and Ukraine during the period of the war, Emmanuel Amunike, the assistant coach of Nigeria national team, Super Eagles of Nigeria, maintained that peace in the two countries is the only thing that can stop the players from migrating. Speaking to newsmen, he summed thus "I hope Russia and Ukraine settle this issue for peace to reign in the region. Football won't develop under such a fearful atmosphere. I pray it stops soon." (Edward, 2022).

Adding his voice to the debate, a former Nigerian goalkeeper and gold medalist, Dosu Joseph stated that "It's not easy for players to concentrate under these (war) conditions, particularly when you have family who is worried over you daily." (Edward, 2022). A former Nigerian born Reggiana FC goalkeeper added that consequent to the Russo-Ukrainian war,

Both the clubs and agents are in a delicate state at the moment because both parties will be protecting their interest, which is far from what football should gain.

These issues should be resolved amicably. Nobody remembers who wins a war, but the victims are the only ones remembered (Edward, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Feet Drain, in this study was used to explain the mass exodus of Nigerian footballers in Russia and Ukraine, consequent upon the Russo-Ukrainian war of 2022.

The studied, having x-rayed the available relevant data, argued that what the war caused in football is the warring countries qualified to be describe as feet drain. It eroded the quality of professional footballers in these two countries.

The study further maintained whereas pull and push factors are the major categorizations of feet drain, the war in the East served as a push factor that chased the cream of experienced footballers out of Russia and Ukraine.

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