

Analysis of Early Warning System and Failure of Preventive Diplomacy in 2022 Russia-Ukraine Invasion

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors that accounted for the failure of the early-warning system in the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as its influence on peacekeeping diplomacy, human casualties and refugee crisis. It adopted an ex-post facto research design and utilised documentary method to collate secondary data from several international organisations such as the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Data were analysed using the content analysis method. Findings reveal that, regardless of the clarity of the early warning indicators, international response was not backed by strong mediation frameworks and enforceable security guarantees. Such was equally the case with Russia's ultimatum on NATO expansion interpreted by the West. The study therefore recommended the transformation of early warning systems from advisory to mandatory procedures for instant and preventive response, as well as the strengthening of European crisis-response frameworks.

Keywords: Early warning system, Russia-Ukraine conflict, global security, Europe, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

1.0 Introduction

Adverse impacts of global armed conflicts gave rise to the consideration of an early warning and response system as a preventive mechanism to help identify warning signs of possible conflict for prompt preventive actions. Detecting such early signs of tensions, whether political, economic, military or social, enables countries and international organisations to wade in and prevent the outbreak of full-blown wars, save lives, and support long-term peace (Kumar, 2021).

Early warning and response systems historically became prominent after the Cold War as part of a wider global instrument for preventive diplomacy through monitoring trigger signs such as human rights violations, political unrest and ethnic tensions. Since then, these systems have continued to forecast the potentialities of conflict and support quick interventions through mediation, diplomacy, sanctions, or peacekeeping missions (Gowan, 2025). The efficacy of the systems has not been in doubt. During the 2007–2008 post-election events in Kenya, early warnings from regional observers and international partners prompted timely intervention, which resulted in a power-sharing agreement (Kioko, 2018). Also, they helped to birth the United Nations' preventive deployment in Macedonia between 1995 and 1999, which was instrumental in preventing violent conflicts that engulfed its neighbours from hitting the country. (Lund, 2023).

Russia and Ukraine have a deep historical and geopolitical connection, with Ukraine's sovereignty being at the centre of controversy with Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, especially as Ukraine had sought closer ties with the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation against the interests of Russia (Charap & Priebe, 2019). The historical Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, as well as the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, have become reference points to the deep issue between the two countries. Prior to Russia's full invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, some early warning indicators that included the former's major military exercises near Ukraine's borders, its ultimatums concerning NATO's expansion and other credible intelligence were reported (Borger, 2022).

The eventual outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict underscored a critical gap in how early warning systems address modern threats. There have been concerns over what is termed the warning-response gap - where warnings are accurate and timely but fail to translate into decisive preventive measures, often due to several reasons, not limited to scarce resources, weak institutional capacity, or political hesitation to act promptly. Investigations have, therefore, become important, more so, in the reality of paucity of research, hence this study which specifically sought to examine ways in which Russia's deployment of troops along Ukraine borders encouraged the activation of peacekeeping diplomacy against 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, how multiple intelligence warnings prevented horrific human casualties following the 2022 Russian

invasion of Ukraine, and how Russia's political ultimatums concerning NATO expansion averted immense refugee crisis as a result of 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Perspectives on Early Warning Systems

Early warning systems have attracted considerable attention in scholarship owing to their importance as a mechanism for conflict prevention. They are instruments for detecting and responding to indicators associated with conflicts for the purpose of preventing their escalation into actual violence. This, therefore, implies that they are more than mere technical instruments but represent institutional arrangements that seek to transform credible intelligence into timely preventive action for peace (Jallow, 2021). Their historical journey is traced to the field of risk management, although now adapted into contemporary peace and security practice. The growing interest reflects a shift from what has often been described as reactive crisis management to the much-desired proactive conflict prevention, particularly with the recognition that preventing violent outbreaks is less costly in several terms, including political, financial and human, than responding after violence has already broken out (Gnanguènon, 2021). A standard early warning system framework, therefore, consists of four interrelated stages, which are risk assessment, communication of findings, policy decision-making, and feedback for continuous improvement (Murithi, 2022).

Early warning system enjoys tremendous appeal in all regions of the world, including Africa, where the African Union has already established the Continental Early Warning System as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Economic Community of West African States, as a sub-regional organisation, has also developed the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network aimed to detect risks such as political instability, electoral violence, and social unrest, and to relay findings to decision-making organs for necessary preventive action. Besides, civil society organizations play a crucial role in strengthening the effectiveness of the system, together with grassroots' observers and local journalists who are often the first to detect signs of rising tensions usually classified into structural (long-term factors like poverty, inequality, or ethnic tensions) or operational indicators (short-term triggers like military activity, hate speech, or election-related unrest) (Barrett, 2011). For instance, in Eastern Ukraine, civil society groups reported rising tensions in the Donbas region long before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022. Nevertheless, regardless of the ability of early warning systems to detect threats, it is rendered powerless if the necessary governments or institutions fail to respond quickly; when global attention is elsewhere, they are often ignored, just as when power politics and strategic interests favour other priorities.

2.1.2 Usefulness and Historical Challenges of Early Warning Systems

International institutions such as the United Nations Organisation have long been recognised as central actors in conflict prevention globally. Its Charter spelt out maintenance of international peace and security as its core function and mandates the organisation to act on threats before they escalate into armed conflict. Thus, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) are key bodies through which potential crises and coordinated preventive actions are carried out.

According to Murithi (2022), UN-led preventive diplomacy has been effective in defusing tensions, such as in Kenya after the 2007–08 electoral violence, where the intervention of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was pivotal in averting an escalation into protracted conflict. At the regional level, the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union collects and analyses conflict data to support conflict preventive action.

International institutions offer legitimacy, coordination, and resources for conflict prevention, yet their effectiveness is constrained by several factors that include political considerations, resource limitations, and institutional fragmentation, which highlight the complex interconnectedness between intelligence and the political will, institutional readiness, and commensurate resources required for a timely response. The failure of the early warning system to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide remains indelible in the annals of history. Although the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) sent detailed cables warning of imminent massacres, geopolitical incapacitation exhibited through total lack of political will within the UN Security Council rendered the warnings ineffective (Barnett, 2021; Pogodda & Richmond, 2020). On the other hand, the Darfur Crisis (2003–2004) exposed how, despite the fact that both the United Nations and the African Union received warnings from humanitarian agencies and local monitors about escalating attacks against civilians, the AU Mission in Sudan failed in its mandate to intervene due to a lack of logistical capacity (Murithi, 2022). Other cases of failure of early warning systems in Africa were in the 2011 Libyan conflict and the Tigray crisis in Ethiopia in 2020. Outside the continent, the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 occurred despite repeated warnings about the municipality's vulnerability (Gowan, 2025). The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has also become a recent case which highlighted the fact that early warnings, although necessary, are not sufficient for conflict prevention owing to issues which may include analytical shortcomings, political hesitations, institutional rivalries, sovereignty sensitivities, and limited operational resources.

There has been a perennial gap between early warning and early action, often also described as the warning–response dilemma (Murithi, 2022). Often, preventive action demands difficult political choices which leaders may choose to avoid if the crisis does not directly affect their strategic or economic interests. As Gnanguènon (2021) argues, decision-makers tend to act only when the costs of inaction outweigh the risks of intervention, as was the case in Guinea-Bissau (2012) and South Sudan (2013) in Africa. Fragmentation within and between institutions responsible for conflict prevention remains another major challenge in utilising early warning intelligence for conflict prevention, often manifested in an obvious lack of a single unified structure to guide a coordinated and timely response. Another challenge is the absence of clear action thresholds that subjects risks to diverse interpretation by concerned stakeholders. Yet others are limited funding (which adversely impacts actions such as the deployment of diplomatic teams, launching of mediation efforts or preparing peacekeeping forces) and the selective nature of international responses such that when the Russian invasion of Ukraine occurred, the response was reactive and focused on sanctions, defense support, and humanitarian aid, rather than stopping the conflict before it started thereby making the conflict to become one of Europe's deadliest since World War II.

Nevertheless, the growing sophistication of data analytics, satellite technology, and artificial intelligence has expanded the scope of what early warning systems can achieve (Borger, 2022).

2.1.3 Understanding Conflict Prevention, Evolution and Prospects

Conflict prevention has continued to generate interest from global peace advocates and broadly refers to a wide range of strategies and mechanisms that aim to anticipate, reduce, and manage tensions before they degenerate into open violence (Murithi, 2022). The core concern of the concept is the de-escalation of crises. It aims at stopping the triggers and purveyors of violence from degenerating into actual conflicts and works, either by addressing issues such as weak governance, economic inequality, ethnic exclusion, and human rights violations or activating instruments that include preventive diplomacy, early mediation, and peacekeeping deployments, aimed at de-escalating crises before they explode (Williams, 2020). The focus is on proactive engagement, rather than reactive intervention in conflict situations.

Conflict prevention gained traction after the end of the Cold War and became a core mandate of the United Nations Organisation. It got prioritised in view of the monumental casualties of the previous wars and the potentialities of evolving conflicts in many regions, which include Africa. Specifically, during the Cold War era, superpower rivalry shaped international interventions to align more with strategic interests rather than humanitarian or peacebuilding concerns (Murithi, 2022). However, the post-Cold War era, with its plethora of devastating conflicts in places such as Rwanda, Bosnia and Liberia, elevated conflict prevention to the status of concern in academic and policy circles (Williams, 2020).

The United Nations Agenda for Peace report of 1992 primarily laid the foundation for preventive diplomacy, while the UN Secretary-General's 2001 report on the prevention of armed conflict introduced additional impetus to the framework. The UN's Sustaining Peace agenda has further institutionalised conflict prevention by linking it to long-term peacebuilding, inclusive governance, and sustainable development framework (United Nations, 2018). The import of this steady evolution reflects a belief that conflict prevention is not a one-off intervention but a continuous process requiring multi-level engagement. It is in this light that the prospects have become real, such that faith-based organisations, local communities and civil society actors currently play a critical role in identifying risks and mediating disputes before they spiral into violence. Such frameworks as local peace committees as well as grassroots mediation forums have proven particularly effective in contexts where state institutions are either weak or lack public legitimacy as agents which not only provide early solutions to disputes but also foster social trust (Jallow, 2021). This further demonstrates a gainful shift from state-centric approaches to more inclusive, multi-actor strategies. In fact, with artificial intelligence and geospatial technologies, preventive actors now detect risks earlier and design more targeted, result-oriented interventions (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2024).

2.1.4 Empirical Review

Attempts had been made in scholarship to investigate the Russia/Ukraine war. For instance, Ikyase, Timi & Kadiri (2024) in a study titled *Understanding the Russia/Ukrainian War and International Trade* examined the effect of Russia and Ukraine

war on international trade, exploring the global economic consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian War in the area of international trade. The study employed descriptive analysis and used an ex-post facto research design. Primary and secondary data sources were used to find out that the Russia-Ukraine war has a negative impact on international trade, especially the shipping industry, which plays a major role in international trade. It also found that the global economic consequence of the invasion hit strongly on the global supply chain, which manifested through energy supply shocks and trade supply shocks, leading to rising energy prices, commodity prices, and food prices. The paper concludes that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has shown that sanctions against a warring country is not an optimal solution because it has spillover effects into other countries that are not part of the conflict, especially when the warring countries are trade partners. It is recommended that international law needs to be revisited, especially on issues of war between one state and another so as to streamline the activities of war for economic flow.

Sajadi (2024), in a study titled *The Russia-Ukraine war: Causes, Consequences and Solutions* examined the historical, geopolitical, and ethnic tensions that have played a significant role in escalating hostilities between Russia and Ukraine, with a central focus aimed at untangling the intricate web of interests and power dynamics that are influencing the conflict. The study utilised a qualitative method to analyse diverse secondary sources, including academic literature from reputable journals as well as news articles sourced from various government agencies. With a focus on identifying key themes and patterns associated with the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it employed a thematic analysis approach in this study. Careful selection ensured that only relevant and reliable data sources were used to give a comprehensive overview of the conflict from multiple viewpoints with different opinions. It found out that the conflict's ongoing nature creates an endless cycle of violence, instability, and economic hardship not only for the parties who are directly involved but also for countries nearby and the worldwide community as a whole, disrupting the dynamics of geopolitics. It also found that the war has already resulted in thousands of deaths, the displacement of millions of people, and serious humanitarian consequences. It is therefore recommended that giving precedence to diplomatic initiatives, open dialogue, and mediation is essential to effectively conclude hostilities and reinstate stability in the region.

Elbakidze, M., et al (2025), in a study titled *Understanding the Impact of the War on People-nature Relationships in Ukraine* investigated the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the relationship between people and nature in three settlements in the Kyiv Region that were occupied by Russian forces and later liberated by the Ukrainian Army. Using semi-structured interviews with local inhabitants, it documented the ecosystem services that people relied on before the war and the changes that occurred after deoccupation. The findings reveal a significant reduction in access to essential ecosystem services, exacerbated by new disservices such as flooding and environmental contamination. The study underscores the vital role of cultural ecosystem services, with many respondents expressing deep emotional and spiritual connections to their natural environment. It is recommended that a forward-looking, community-inclusive approach to ecological restoration will be critical for Ukraine's recovery, supporting both environmental sustainability and human resilience.

Pynnöniemi & Parppe (2024) in a study titled *Understanding Russia's War against Ukraine: Political, Eschatological and Cataclysmic dimensions* applied Anatol Rapoport's typology of war to reconstruct how Russian research communities explain war against Ukraine. It argued that the initial three-dimensional framework can be divided into two explanatory models: military-political and eschatological-cataclysmic. The first model explained the war with reference to classical calculus about military threats and national interests. The second model interpreted war as an act of creating a new world order and as an existential for Russia. These two models were not mutually exclusive, yet they illuminated the evolution of meanings given for the war during the first two years of Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Complex Interdependence Theory propounded by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (1977) in their classic work titled *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* as a framework of analysis. The theory emphasises the relevance of cooperation, interdependence, and the role of multiple actors in shaping global politics. At the core of the theory are three assumptions. The first is that global politics is not restricted to state-to-state diplomacy but rather involves multiple channels of interaction that include international organisations, non-governmental bodies, multinational corporations, and civil society actors. The second is that there is no fixed hierarchy of issues, as economic, environmental, humanitarian, and political concerns can compete with or even override military priorities. The third assumption is the declining role of military force in relations among interdependent states, given that the costs of armed confrontation often outweigh its benefits (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

2.2.1 Theory Application

The Complex Interdependence Theory adopted in this study as a framework of analysis provided the context of understanding why warnings on the impending full-blown armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine did not come from a single state actor but from a wide network of organisations, intelligence agencies, and civil society groups, reflecting the theory's assumption of multiple channels of interaction. The theory equally helps to explain why preventive action was not immediate or unified. It was obvious that European states balanced the threat of invasion with their dependence on Russian energy. This demonstrated that economic concerns competed with security imperatives. In addition, organisations such as the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation faced structural limitations that also restricted decisive action. The implication is clear that even in the face of clear early warnings, conflict prevention is shaped by several factors that include interdependence, competing interests, and institutional realities.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted an ex-post facto research design to interrogate the nexus between early warnings, international responses, and conflict outcomes. It enabled the study to analyse how early warning systems may or may not have influenced the actions taken before and during the invasion. Documentary method was utilised to collate secondary data from a wide range of institutional documents from

organisations such as the United Nations (UN), NATO, the European Union (EU), and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Academic sources such as books, peer-reviewed journals, and policy reports were also extensively consulted. Credible media reports and open-source intelligence were reviewed for necessary data. Data collected were analysed using the content analysis method, leveraging on systematic examination of the documents to identify recurring themes and patterns.

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Russian Troop Deployments and the Failure of Peacekeeping Diplomacy

Prior to Russian full-blown armed conflict with Ukraine, specifically from late 2021 through early 2022, Russia undertook its most extensive military build-up near Ukraine where approximately 112,000 to 150,000 Russian troops, supported by armoured units, air-defence systems, and logistic infrastructure, were deployed near Crimea, Kharkiv, and northern Ukraine (Institute for the Study of War, 2022; Congressional Research Service, 2023). Records show that satellite imagery released by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and independent observers revealed long convoys of tanks and tactical support vehicles moving into targeted areas (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022). Precisely by January 2022, Western intelligence sounded an alarm of an imminent invasion (Time, 2022; North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022). These triggered consequential diplomatic interventions in some forms, including NATO–Russia Council meetings, for the de-escalation of the heavily built-up tensions. There were obvious mounting concerns about the fragility of peace and the urgent need for intervention, particularly as Russia was unfavourably disposed to these initiatives, judging NATO's expansion as constituting a grave threat to its security (Centre for Naval Analyses, 2024). A major stumbling block to the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy was Moscow's veto of the United Nations Security Council's draft resolution condemning Russia's military build-up. This major huddle, orchestrated by the often counter-productive veto to sound a resolution by an interested party, wrecked the peacekeeping intervention (United Nations Security Council, 2022).

However, seemingly undeterred in the commitment to prevent the escalation of the imminent crises, the United Nations General Assembly convened its eleventh emergency session and passed Resolution ES-11/1 on 2 March 2022, calling for Russia's immediate withdrawal (United Nations General Assembly, 2022). Regardless, the resolution could not muster the necessary enforcement mechanisms against the looming conflict, and ultimately, no preventive peacekeeping mission was deployed. On account of these preventive diplomatic failures, Russian forces launched a full-scale invasion into Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Desperate responses in the face of the failure thereafter gave way to economic sanctions, military aid to Ukraine, and humanitarian assistance (Institute for the Study of War, 2023).

4.2 Multiple Intelligence Warnings and the Failure to Prevent Human Casualties

From late 2021 to early 2022, Western intelligence agencies issued several intelligence-driven warnings revealing potential Russian invasion of Ukraine based on preponderance of satellite imagery, intercepted communications, and troop movement analyses (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2022).

The United States, the United Kingdom, and NATO allies also repeatedly hinted of Russia's military preparedness (White House Briefing, 2022). Ordinarily, these intelligence alerts ought to have galvanised preventive action against full-blown conflict. A striking feature of these intelligence-based warnings is their precision in terms of correctly-identified Russian troop build-up patterns as well as potential invasion routes and likely targets such as Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Mariupol. Even NATO surveillance aircraft and AWACS missions reportedly undertook surveillance operations along the eastern flank and unambiguously confirmed real-time troop movements (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2023). Also, records show that the surveillance reports were shared with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which had monitoring missions in eastern Ukraine, yet these actions failed to translate into preventive measures

By 24 February 2022, catastrophic missile strikes began to rain on Ukraine on the heels of the obvious failure of preventive diplomacy, wherein the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission documented widespread civilian casualties in the first week of the war (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023). By mid-2022, it was reported that over 11,700 civilians were already casualties, while more than 24,600 were reported (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023).

The figures escalated steadily as the conflict advanced, with children making up a significant proportion of casualties. Between December 2024 and May 2025, civilian casualties rose sharply, with 968 deaths and 4,807 injuries recorded (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2023). Since the start of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (2025) has documented at least 14,116 civilians killed, including 733 children, and 36,481 injured, including 2,285 children. In September 2025, at least 214 civilians were reportedly killed and 916 injured, similar to August 2025, with most deaths and injuries (69 per cent) occurring near the frontline, with particularly high casualties reported in Donetsk and Kherson regions. Civilian casualties were recorded across 16 regions of Ukraine and the city of Kyiv. Total civilian casualties from January to September 2025 remain 31 per cent higher than the same period last year (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2025).

For military casualties, more than 790,000 Russians have been killed or injured, according to an April 2025 estimate, while 400,000 Ukrainians have been killed or injured, according to a January 2025 estimate by Zelenskyy. With regards to civilian fatalities, 652 Russians have been killed, and 14,383 Ukrainians have been killed. In terms of military vehicles and equipment, Russia has lost 23,169, comprising 13,445 tanks and armoured vehicles, 332 aircraft, and 22 naval vessels. On its part, Ukraine has so far lost 10,165, comprising 5,135 tanks and armoured vehicles; 188 aircraft and 35 naval vessels (Harvard Kennedy School for Science and International Affairs, 2025). Figure 1 shows attacks and disruption to key civilian and healthcare infrastructure across Ukraine, 24 February to August 5, 2022.

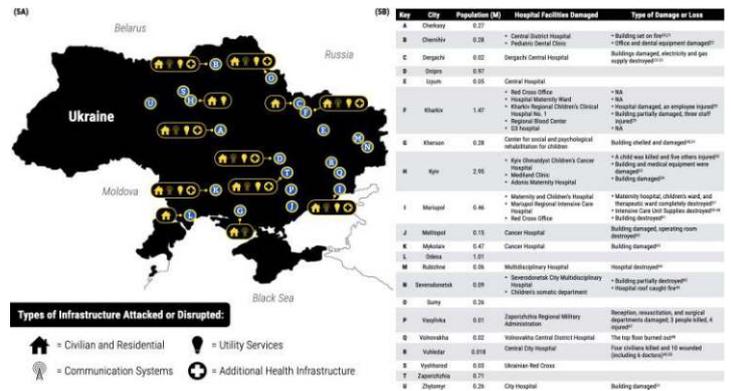


Figure 1: Attacks and disruption to key civilian and healthcare infrastructure across Ukraine, 24 February to August 5, 2022

Source: National Library of Medicine (2023)

4.3 Russia's Political Ultimatums, NATO Expansion, and the Refugee Crisis

Prior to 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia issued a series of political ultimatums, including a formal halt to NATO's eastward expansion, the removal of alliance military infrastructure from Eastern Europe, and legally binding assurances that Ukraine would never join NATO and presented these demands as preconditions for avoiding military escalation (Charap & Priebe, 2019; Centre for Naval Analyses, 2024). Apparently, NATO's open-door policy was a major obstacle that eventually resulted in the trigger of the full-blown armed conflict (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 2023). On the other hand, the ultimatums heightened mistrust, with Western powers perceiving them as insensitive to European security policy (United Nations Security Council, 2022).

The eventual invasion resulted in one of the largest refugee crises in Europe since the Second World War. Millions of Ukrainians have so far fled to neighbouring Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova. A few months after the outbreak and precisely by mid-2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that over 6 million people fled Ukraine, with an additional 3.7 million internally displaced persons (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2023). Such huge displacement has continued ever since. By early 2025, cumulative refugee numbers have already surpassed 7.5 million, straining the capacities of host nations and international aid agencies (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2025a). Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022, nearly 11 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes and are now either displaced within their own country or living as refugees abroad (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2025b). Even in the face of the refugee crisis, persistent missile and drone attacks have continued. Obviously, Russia's political ultimatums failed to prevent human displacement. It failed to produce concessions to avert the war. In fact, the refugee crisis exposed vulnerabilities of international response mechanisms. Rather, they escalated the tensions and failed to generate preventive humanitarian action.

5.0 Conclusion

The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 presented a serious concern about the effectiveness of the early warning system as an instrument for conflict prevention in the face of the abundance of clear intelligence signals on Russia's military build-up and the role of NATO expansion as a potential trigger of a large-scale conflict. Ukraine's geo-spatial location between Russia and the West serves both as a buffer and a contested space of influence, such that the move to integrate it with Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union was perceived by Russia as a direct threat to its existence. Overall, Russia's demand for written guarantees against NATO's eastward expansion, accentuated with its mobilisation of over 100,000 troops along Ukraine's borders were evident warning sign of escalation in the face of the failure of preventive diplomacy. Notwithstanding, international responses were rather tilted towards cautious diplomatic engagements, rhetorical condemnations, and threats of sanctions, none of which proved sufficient to deter Russia from launching its invasion in February 2022.

The study's objectives were to examine ways in which deployments of troops encouraged the activation of preventive diplomacy, to examine how multiple intelligence warnings prevented horrific human casualties, and to evaluate how Russia's political ultimatums concerning NATO expansion averted a refugee crisis as a result of the 2022 Russia invasion of Ukraine. Findings reveal that, regardless of the clarity of the early warning indicators, international response was devoid of strong mediation frameworks and enforceable security guarantees. Such was equally the case with Russia's ultimatum on NATO expansion, interpreted by the West as a breach of the sovereignty of Ukraine, and so failed to generate conflict preventive actions. The aftermath of the outbreak of armed conflict was massive human casualties and a refugee crisis.

6.0 Recommendations

In view of the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

1. There is a need for transformation of early warning systems from advisory to mandatory procedures for instant and preventive response against escalation of conflicts. This means that early warning systems must be institutionally tied to enforceable preventive action for them to become relevant as a conflict-prevention mechanism. International institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and others need to strategically adopt enforceable and binding frameworks that automatically trigger preventive steps against conflicts.
2. Reformation of the veto powers within the United Nations Security Council has become necessary if the goals of leveraging on early warnings for the de-escalation of conflicts can ever be achieved. This requires that superpowers demonstrate greater enthusiasm for collective security far above narrow national interests.
3. There is a need to leverage contemporary tools for early warning, such as faith-based organisations, local communities and civil society actors for critical roles in identifying risks and mediating disputes before they spiral into violence. Such frameworks as local peace committees as well as grassroots mediation forums can prove particularly effective in contexts where state institutions are either weak or lack public legitimacy. Therefore, their capacity to contribute to global security can be strengthened through capacity building and mainstreaming into early warning efforts against conflicts.

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