

FACTORS INFLUENCING RELATIONS BETWEEN UKRAINE AND AFRICAN STATES, 2022–2025

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Abstract: This study examines Ukraine’s challenges in pursuing the African direction of its foreign policy during the Russian-Ukrainian war that began in 2014 and intensified in 2022. It analyses the processes of intensifying Ukraine’s cooperation with African states, evaluates the outcomes of the African vector of Ukraine’s foreign policy, and assesses future prospects for the development of Ukraine’s relations with African states in terms of existing obstacles and emerging opportunities. The article systematises the key problems that Ukraine faces in the development of relations with African states and investigates the factors that influence Ukraine’s cooperation with African states. For a long time, the African media space rarely focused on Ukraine. The study identifies the main barriers to a sustainable cooperation between Ukraine and African states, including the absence of a long-standing tradition of cooperation, limited mutual understanding of needs and priorities, differences in political regimes, and other constraints.

Keywords: African direction of Ukraine’s foreign policy, Global South, national interests, geopolitics, security challenges

Introduction

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has pursued the development of a global network of partnerships. However, for a long time, it has devoted limited attention and resources to relations with the Global South, particularly Africa. Due to domestic political and economic challenges, the solution of which was a priority in the early years of independence, together with the destructive influence of other states or other factors, for a long time Ukraine’s foreign policy was focused on only several areas. Africa was not among them. Another obstacle arose after the collapse of the USSR

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in 1991, when the newly established Russian Federation appropriated nearly all diplomatic ties with African states. Ukraine, therefore, had to independently develop communication channels with African partners, along with a system of foreign diplomatic institutions, etc.

The rapid growth of security challenges in the early 2020s prompted Ukraine to intensify relations with African states. After the full-scale invasion of Russia in February 2022, Ukraine felt the consequences of having neglected the African vector of foreign policy for many years. In contrast, Russia, China, India and other states have consistently expanded their influence on African states. Now, in this reality, Ukraine faces the task of building new and competitive partnerships.

In recent years, Ukraine has sought to rapidly fill the gaps in its foreign policy by developing an institutional framework to strengthen cooperation with African states. For example, it adopted the *Ukraine-African Countries Communication Strategy* (Ministry 2023b). This step has not produced immediate results but it did lay the groundwork for future relations. In addition, numerous obstacles to closer Ukraine-Africa cooperation have become evident. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to identify problems Ukraine has faced in implementing its African foreign policy direction in recent years. The analysis focuses on the period of 2022–25, as it is the factor of the Russian-Ukrainian war that accelerated the African direction of Ukraine’s foreign policy.

The issues of Ukraine’s relations with African states under new geopolitical and security challenges are currently under-researched. African scholars have not yet devoted systematic attention to the topic of Ukraine. Their focus lies primarily on the continent’s internal problems, relations with China, the USA, the EU or former colonial powers such as France and Great Britain. The few existing studies do not address Ukrainian-African cooperation but mainly the economic consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war for African states. These include rising inflation and food prices, commodity shortages, new threats to food security (Lopes 2022; Ndifon et al. 2024), slowing down the achievement of the *Sustainable Development Goals* by African states (Mhlanga and Ndhlovu 2023), etc. Notably, economic and humanitarian aspects are displacing the study of the problem from the perspective of geopolitics, values, etc. Moreover, African researchers rarely frame Russian aggression as a war (Manboah-Rockson et al. 2024), referring to it as a “conflict” or “crisis” in Russian-Ukrainian relations (Duho et al. 2022; Mhlanga and Ndhlovu 2024). Studies by African

scholars on the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on specific states of the continent remain scarce (Minja 2024). Instead, the emphasis is placed on the principle of neutrality, non-alignment of African states (Ajaja 2022; Ayodele 2024; Darkwa and Attuquayefio 2024), as well as a pragmatic approach to assessing foreign policy problems (Brosig and Verma 2024). Attention is drawn to the sensitive issues of differences in the attitude of European states towards refugees from Ukraine compared with those from African states (Iberi and Saddam 2023), reduction of aid to African states due to support for Ukraine, etc.

The case of Ukraine is studied only sporadically in the context of analysing broader geopolitical issues. Even the flagship publication of the African Association of Political Science, the *African Journal of Political Science*, practically does not cover the topic of cooperation between African states and Ukraine. Meanwhile, in Western, especially European, scientific publications the focus on the problems of African affairs appears more visible. For instance, the British journal *African Affairs* has published a study on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the African Union (Staeger 2023). Madalina Dobrescu (2023) in *Mediterranean Politics* highlighted the obstacles to developing a constructive dynamic in relations between Ukraine and the states of North Africa. Most often, however, the analytical focus remains socio-economic rather than political. The confrontation between Russia and Ukraine in covering African issues is attributed to the factors that exacerbate the problems of poverty, food shortages, and debt dependence of African states (Balma et al. 2024; Gallagher et al. 2024; Kedir et al. 2024; Mhlanga and Ndhlovu 2024).

Shortly after the onset of the full-scale Russian aggression researchers from central and eastern European states (Pardyak 2023) pointed out that Ukraine would compete for the support of African states. This observation gave rise to an analysis of Ukraine's foreign policy track in Africa (Atamanenko and Konopka 2024). Nevertheless, there remains a pressing need to systematise the challenges that Ukraine faces in its efforts to build partnerships with African countries. Existing studies on various aspects of the issue confirm the existence of debatable positions in assessing the state and prospects of Ukraine's relations with African states, especially in the light of global security challenges.

This study relies methodologically on theories of international relations that explain the motivation for the cooperation between states, the level of intensity of their interactions, etc. The question is which of the

contemporary theories of international relations can best explain why most African states remain cautious about intensifying cooperation with Ukraine today (during wartime), despite Ukraine's initiatives? A combination of neorealism and postcolonial theory (neo-Marxism) appears to offer the strongest methodological foundation:

- neorealism rests on geopolitical pragmatism and the principle of self-preservation. African states operate within a system of global anarchy, where each subject of international politics seeks to minimise their risks. They do not want to be subjected to Russian political or economic pressure, lose the necessary supplies or other preferences. Many African governments therefore view cooperation with Ukraine as carrying a potentially high strategic cost and offering limited benefits;

- postcolonial theory/neo-Marxism also holds methodological value for this study, since many African leaders and citizens of African states perceive Ukraine as part of the Western geopolitical bloc. There is a strong collective memory in African states that the West frequently ignored conflicts in Africa. Many focus on the fact that sanctions or other forms of international response never reached the same intensity when wars unfolded in Africa. At the same time, Ukraine, in its appeals to African states, also presents itself as a victim of colonialism, but only of Russian colonialism (*Kyiv Post* 2022). From the perspective of postcolonial theory/neo-Marxism, several African states hesitate to openly support Ukraine because they interpret such a step as a continuation of old patterns of international injustice.

Within the study of historiography, research that applies neorealism and postcolonial theory/neo-Marxism to relations between Ukraine and African states therefore draws particular interest. The direct applications of the aforementioned methodologies to the topic of relations between Ukraine and African states remain very limited in the scholarly literature, yet several works prove useful within a broader geopolitical context. For example, Elias Götz's (2016) approach to neorealism provides a theoretical framework that can be adapted to characterise the geopolitical behaviour of African countries towards Ukraine in the context of Russian aggression. African states pragmatically choose whom to cooperate with and whom to support in international organisations, weighing the balance of power against their potential losses.

Eric B. Niyitunga and Anslem W. Adunimay (2023) examined the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on international relations in Africa from a methodological perspective of realism. The researchers demonstrated how international anti-Russian sanctions, disruptions in supply chains, and changes in the economic and security situation shifted African states' interests.

Bonnie Ayodele (2024) applied a neorealist approach to assessing Nigeria's pragmatic foreign policy position regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war. The researcher argues that despite Western pressure, Nigeria adopted a pragmatic indifferent stance, avoiding open condemnation of Russia and demonstrating a tendency towards geopolitical balancing. The principle of non-alignment and an Afrocentric worldview are at the centre of the value paradigm. Ayodele's findings indicate that many states of the Global South found themselves caught between the West and Russia. Overtly backing either side could jeopardise their interests and economic ties. These states clearly seek to keep channels of communication open both with the West and with pro-Russian states and intergovernmental organisations such as BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa as well as Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates.

Although not directly focusing on neorealism, Joseph Kwabena Manboah-Rockson, Robert Yakubu Adjuik and Tanko Daniel Dawda (2024) present the logic of the crisis decision-making model, which is similar to the neorealist model. This model highlights how African leaders make decisions under the pressure of global conflict, taking into account above all the likely consequences of international wars and crises for their national interests.

Olena Khylyko and Maksym Khylyko (2024) applied the explanatory potential of a postcolonial approach to international relations, showing how this methodology can help analyse the factors shaping current relations between Ukraine and African states. These authors' findings contribute to an understanding of how leaders and the public in African states perceive various international armed conflicts through the prism of colonial history and the double standards of the West.

Peculiarities of Building Relations Between Ukraine and African States in the Context of Growing Security Challenges

Intergovernmental cooperation between Ukraine and African countries began in the early 1990s but remained limited. Representatives of

Ukraine and African states were often engaged in international forums, while meetings between Ukrainian and African heads of state remained rare. Overall, in the more than three decades of Ukraine's independence, Ukrainian presidents paid only a handful of visits to African countries, and African leaders likewise seldom visited Ukraine. Intergovernmental visits between Ukraine and African states have been relatively infrequent since the early 1990s. Ukrainian presidents undertook official visits to Egypt (in 1992 and 2008), Tunisia (in 1993), Libya (in 2003), and South Africa (in 2025). Ukrainian prime ministers likewise conducted official visits to Egypt (in 1997 and 2011). Conversely, visits by African heads of state to Ukraine have been limited. The only documented instances include those of the President of Equatorial Guinea (in 2004, with several defence-related visits recorded between 2005 and 2014) and the Libyan leader (in 2008).

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and the beginning of Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, Ukraine's diplomatic resources were directed at seeking external support and condemning Russia's actions at the global level. In this context, African states did not become strategic partners of Ukraine, although some of them openly supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine. It should be noted that Ukraine's aspirations to join the EU and NATO appeared distant and unfamiliar to African states, many of which had aligned with the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the most intensive areas of work of Ukrainian diplomats since 2014 has involved efforts to secure global condemnation of Russian aggression at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). Ukraine has sought the broadest possible support from African states when UNGA voted on resolutions related to the Ukrainian issue. However, these states often did not vote, abstained or voted against such resolutions, starting from 2014. The first resolution since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, *A/RES/68/262 Territorial integrity of Ukraine* of 27 March 2014 (UN General Assembly 2014), was only supported by 19 African states, 26 abstained, two voted against, and six did not vote. Annual UNGA resolutions from 2016 on human rights in temporarily occupied Crimea and the militarisation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov received even lower support from African states.

We assume that most African states did not view Ukraine's security problems as urgent issues requiring global involvement. This remained evident until 2022, when Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine increased the risks of

a food crisis in numerous African states. Several reasons explain this earlier lack of engagement: differences in values, the focus of African states lay primarily on countless conflicts within the continent, pragmatic interest in cooperation with Russia, etc. Until 2022 Ukraine's security problems did not directly affect the welfare of African countries and did not impact their existential interests. Consequently, there was no adequate support for Ukraine from African states.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine prompted some African states to revise their assessment of the Russian-Ukrainian war in the direction of increased support for Ukraine. This trend is reflected in the voting results on resolutions on the Ukrainian issue in the UN General Assembly between 2014 and 2025. Of course, certain countries, such as Eritrea, are steadfast in their allied position with Russia. At the same time, the majority of African states, as evidenced by the results of voting on UNGA resolutions, choose a convenient and supposedly neutral position for themselves. On the one hand, they usually support the UN normative principles (on non-aggression, non-interference, and inviolability of borders). On the other hand, African states avoid any practical steps to sanction violators, that is, the practical implementation of these same principles.

An analysis of the voting results for UNGA resolutions on the Ukrainian issue since 2014 has led to the following conclusions: (1) declarative resolutions (e.g., calls for a ceasefire, respect for international law, etc.) received much more support from African states; (2) when voting for resolutions of a specific nature, African states mostly abstained from voting (such as restrictions on Russia's activities in UN bodies, the creation of mechanisms for compensation for damages caused by Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, the protection of nuclear power plants, etc.). This behaviour reflects African states' commitment to neutrality. Thus, many African states distance themselves from responsibility for decisions that may have negative consequences for their national interests; (3) the voting results of African states are influenced by the nature of ties with Russia and their importance for the life of a particular state; and (4) the comparatively higher support for Ukraine in recent years is due not only to the challenges to the food security of African states (Ukraine being an important producer of grain), but also to the intensification of the African track of Ukraine's foreign policy.

Visits by African leaders during the full-scale invasion were sporadic. In October 2022, the President of Guinea-Bissau *Umaro Mokhtar Sissoco*

Embaló, who also chaired the ECOWAS union of West African countries, visited Ukraine. The presidents and special representatives of the Republic of South Africa, Zambia, the Union of the Comoros, Senegal, Egypt, Congo, and Uganda visited Ukraine to promote the African Peace Initiative in 2023. However, the latter visit was combined with a visit to Russia. The interest of African leaders was not so concerned with establishing long-term cooperation with Ukraine, but with resolving a specific food problem. We agree with the assessment of Miłosz Bartosiewicz and Krzysztof Nieczytor (2023), that “the African delegation’s main objectives were to draw attention to the problem of the war’s negative consequences for the food security of their countries and to lobby for the de-escalation of the conflict.”

It should also be noted that the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy has not addressed the parliament of any African country online, although in 2022-2023, there were dozens of such speeches (Official web site of the President of Ukraine 2023). The exception was *Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s* collective appeal to the leaders of the African Union in connection with the food crisis and other challenges caused by the Russian aggression (CGTN Africa 2022). Furthermore, no Ukraine-Africa summits have been held to date, although Ukraine initiated the possibility of holding them.

Since 2023, Ukraine has been arranging meetings with groups of African media representatives to counter the narratives spread by Russia in the information space of Africa. At the same time, Ukraine’s efforts cannot be considered systematic. Clearly, much greater efforts are needed to effectively confront the consequences of Russia’s many years of expansion into the information space of African states.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, communications with African countries have intensified significantly since 2022. These processes have been referred to as the “Ukrainian-African Renaissance” (Ministry 2023a). Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Dmytro Kuleba, Andrii Sybiha) have made five tours of African countries: (1) October 2022 (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Kenya); (2) May 2023 (Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Nigeria); (3) July 2023 (Equatorial Guinea, Liberia); (4) August 2024 (Malawi, Zambia and Mauritius); (5) October 2024 (Angola, Egypt, South Africa). Visits to individual countries (such as Ghana, Rwanda, Mozambique, Equatorial Guinea, and Liberia) took place for the first time in the history of bilateral relations between the countries. The work of the Institution of the Special Representative of

Ukraine for the Middle East and Africa has also been activated. Among the major results of African tours and other visits are agreements on the opening of diplomatic institutions in Ukraine. In April 2025, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy paid a visit to Africa, including the Republic of South Africa. At the head of state level, this was the only visit to the African continent during the full-scale war.

It is noteworthy that no African state has imposed sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. Generally, sanction instruments are rarely used by African states. African diplomats try to avoid the topic of Russian aggression against Ukraine. This reflects the position of African countries on neutrality, non-alignment, etc., as well as their attempts to maintain relations with all those with whom they have pragmatic national interests. Obviously, Ukraine must take this feature into account when building relations.

Thus, it is against the background of full-scale Russian aggression in Ukraine that Ukraine's interactions with African states have intensified, strategic communications have begun to be established, and a network of Ukrainian diplomatic missions on the continent is developing. However, there remains a set of problems that Ukraine must solve to have an effective presence in Africa. In particular, most African states have long-established close trade and security ties with Russia, which they do not want to disrupt. Given the problems with the quality of democracy, economic arguments and long-standing dependence on Russia determine the choice of foreign policy priorities. Certainly, this does not apply to all African countries, but Ukraine is currently dealing with a very complex geopolitical landscape that requires long-term and consistent steps. It is also crucial that Ukraine's interest in Africa maintains an upward momentum and does not become undulating. This conclusion is substantiated by the observation that, in 2025, Ukraine's diplomatic initiatives and the expansion of its diplomatic network shifted their focus from Africa to Latin America.

Results and Prospects for Intensifying Ukraine's Relations with African States

Despite the intensification of relations between Ukraine and African states, many foreign policy successes are situational. Only initial steps are being taken for possible sustainable partnerships. Let us illustrate the peculiarity of the situation with an example. A significant number of African states

supported resolution *A/RES/ES-11/1 Aggression against Ukraine* (UN General Assembly 2022), which called upon Russia to cease the illegal use of force and withdraw troops from Ukraine. However, the Summit on Peace in Ukraine (15-16 June 2024) highlighted the lack of adequate support for this initiative by African states. Only a small number of African states (18 out of 54) attended the summit (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs 2024), and not all of them signed the Joint Communiqué, which outlined a path to peace for Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter. For example, Libya, Mauritania, South Africa, and Rwanda did not sign the joint document.

Over the three years of actively pursuing its African foreign policy vector, Ukrainian diplomacy has achieved certain results. Among the most notable achievements is the increased visibility of Ukraine in the information space of African countries. Yet, Russian-funded propaganda media outlets are undermining these efforts. It seems that Ukraine has not developed its foreign broadcasting network. Consequently, for a long time, the African media space rarely focused on Ukraine. This was probably due to the lack of influence of events in Ukraine on the states of the continent. The situation changed in 2022 when African countries felt the threat of a food crisis following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as a decrease in funding from European and other funds due to the redirection of part of their resources to support Ukraine. In the latter context, some African states interested in Western aid began to view Ukraine as a competitor, which did not contribute to the establishment of relations. It is noteworthy that the issue of international financial support is actively exploited by Russian propaganda to create negative sentiments among the elites and public of African countries towards Ukraine.

Thanks to the efforts of Ukrainian diplomats, several African states changed their positions when voting for resolutions on the Ukrainian issue in the UN General Assembly. Before 2022, many African states either abstained or did not vote for such resolutions at all. However, the first UN General Assembly resolution since the full-scale Russian invasion, *Aggression against Ukraine* of 2 March 2022, was supported by 28 (out of 54) African states. In 2023, 30 African states voted in favour of resolution *ES-11/6 Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine* (UN General Assembly 2023). Within one year of the war, Egypt, Madagascar, and South Sudan abandoned their previously neutral stance on resolutions concerning Ukraine. At the same time, opposite trends emerged. For instance, Gabon supported the aforementioned resolution in

2022, but abstained from voting in 2023; notably, during 2023–24 Gabon became the largest supplier of sanctioned spare parts for Russian aircraft, while Russia began using Gabonese ports to hide tankers of its shadow fleet (Grau 2025). The occurrence of military coups, such as happened in Gabon during the summer of 2023, has the capacity to effect rapid alterations in the realm of foreign policy. Consequently, the establishment of Ukraine's partnerships with several African nations is hindered by the political instability within these countries and Russia's overt support for local military juntas. Gabon's case illustrates the situational nature of African states' support for Ukraine, despite Ukraine's diplomatic efforts to secure every vote.

A key achievement of Ukraine's foreign policy in Africa has been the opening of new diplomatic missions across various regions of the African continent. In 2023–24, Ukraine opened embassies in Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, and other states, and received authorisation to establish an embassy in Sudan. As a result, Ukraine has expanded its diplomatic presence in every part of Africa. The importance of opening embassies lies in maintaining strategic interaction with African partners. Nevertheless, Ukraine's current diplomatic network on the continent remains insufficient.

A crucial step in Ukraine-Africa relations has been the implementation of a humanitarian initiative to deliver Ukrainian grain and other critical products to African countries. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, launched in 2022 as a quadrilateral agreement among the UN, Ukraine, Turkey, and Russia, aimed to guarantee the safe export of Ukrainian grain and prevent famine, particularly in Africa. Despite the shelling of Ukrainian seaports by the Russian army, Ukraine resumed the transportation of food unilaterally within the framework of the humanitarian initiative *Grain from Ukraine*. As part of this initiative, Ukrainian grain was delivered to Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, and other countries. As of the beginning of 2025, three international food security summits *Grain from Ukraine* (Ministry 2024f) were held, which fostered dialogue not only with international food security organisations but also with the leaders of African countries (Ministry 2024c). Importantly, in the context of humanitarian cooperation with Africa, Ukraine initiated the construction of grain hubs in African countries, from which agricultural products could be transported across the continent. This would reduce the dependence of African countries on supply disruptions provoked by Russia. The implementation of grain hub projects is being considered jointly with Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, and other countries

with access to the sea, but as of early 2025, no concrete agreements have been reached. To achieve tangible progress in Ukraine-Africa relations, visits at various levels, the signing of memoranda, and other documents must result in concrete projects; otherwise, real advancement will remain elusive.

Ukraine and Russia possess unequal capacities, resources, and leverage in bilateral interactions with African states. Russia has long entrenched itself across much of the continent, investing heavily in its presence. It has established networks of formal and informal contacts, cultivated the image of a “reliable partner of Africa” among many African leaders and communities, maintained a lasting presence in the continent’s information space, and built an extensive network of diplomatic institutions, etc. Given Russia’s strong diplomatic positions in African states, Ukraine must complement traditional diplomacy with new creative tactics of foreign policy influence (Morrow 2024).

Expanding interstate partnerships and integrating Ukrainian expertise in information technologies have the potential to establish a foundation for long-term collaboration between Ukraine and African states. Despite the ongoing war, Ukrainian information technologies continue to be one of the principal areas of national export, as exemplified by the *Diiia* digital application. Demand for such systems exists in African states, although until recently the implementation of Ukrainian *Diiia* analogues relied on funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (EU4Digital 2024). In 2025, the Trump administration suspended these programs. Ethiopia, Zanzibar, and Zambia had previously negotiated with USAID about adopting *Diiia* and adapting it to their populations’ needs. The suspension of U.S. support thus constitutes an external factor that may affect Ukraine’s cooperation with African states.

Another area in which Ukraine attracts the interest of African countries is the management of energy systems and overcoming energy deficits. Against the backdrop of constant Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy systems, the experience of Ukrainian energy specialists and their skills in quickly restoring networks offer valuable expertise for African professionals. Ukraine’s assistance in the development and maintenance of the African electricity infrastructure could become an important dimension of bilateral cooperation.

In the sphere of trade, Ukraine engages with various regions of Africa to differing extents. Historically, trade with East African countries has been

markedly lower than that with North Africa. However, since the launch of the *Grain from Ukraine* humanitarian programme, East Africa has emerged as a principal focus of attention. This suggests that the situation remains dynamic and does not yet exhibit stable, long-term patterns. African states are chiefly interested in cooperation with Ukraine in the spheres of agriculture and technology. Promising avenues for partnership include: (1) technology transfer, particularly in precision agriculture and irrigation systems; (2) investment projects within the food industry; (3) exports of Ukrainian agricultural machinery and equipment; and (4) collaboration in the information technology sector. It may be contended that Ukraine is most likely to strengthen its relations with African countries through economic cooperation, as this constitutes a domain in which African partners display both interest and willingness to engage.

Ukraine retains the ability to influence those African states that express a pro-Ukrainian stance in the context of the war against Russia but do not consistently support Russia, remain independent from the aggressor state, maintain certain relations with Western countries, and demonstrate some progress in democratic transformation. Active interstate dialogue with these states could lead to future changes in their support for Ukraine.

Ukraine faces a particular challenge in developing relations with African states that pursue a firm policy of neutrality while carefully balancing diplomacy between the West and Russia. Angola illustrates this case. Ukraine is well known there because Ukrainian troops participated in UN peacekeeping missions in 1996–99 (UNAVEM III), 1997–99 (MONUA), 2002–03 (UNMA). Angola's current foreign minister, Tete António, has studied in Ukraine. Although Ukraine and Angola marked the thirtieth anniversary of their diplomatic relations in 2024, only recently did Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrii Sybiha make the first official visit to Angola. Despite Angola's close ties with Russia, Ukraine seeks to deepen its partnership with this country and offers specific initiatives: modernisation of Angola's energy and transport infrastructure, introduction of high-tech agriculture (such as the use of drones in farming), participation in the Lobito Corridor railway project, and others (Ministry 2024a).

A destructive factor undermining Ukraine's efforts in Africa is the presence of Russian military formations (The Africa Corps) in several states, including Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali. These groups destabilise the continent, threaten regional security, and violate human rights (Bryjka and Czerep 2024). At the same time, Ukraine has gained substantial experience in countering the

Wagner Group and can share its knowledge with African states regarding the tactics of Russian mercenaries and effective strategies to resist them.

Through interstate communication at multiple levels and on various platforms, Ukraine has begun to promote its own agenda in Africa's information space. Yet, progress will become noticeable only if Ukraine engages in consistent, daily work to advance its position and neutralise Russian propaganda. To achieve this, Ukraine needs to expand its foreign-language broadcasting network despite the high costs involved.

It should be noted that the aforementioned *Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy* outlined Ukraine's intention to move away from the principle of situational cooperation and ensure consistent and comprehensive diplomatic coverage of each region in Africa (Ministry 2023b). The Strategy was adopted for a three-year period (2024–26) and underscores the importance of abandoning outdated perceptions of Africa, taking into account the continent's multifaceted and mosaic character. It seeks to present Ukraine as a reliable partner to African states while countering misinformation and propaganda.

However, certain strategic objectives appear highly ambitious within the three-year timeframe, given the current state of Ukraine–Africa cooperation. Notable examples include efforts to “ensure the official condemnation of Russian armed aggression by as many African states as possible” and “ensure a favourable attitude of internal and external audiences to Ukraine's policy towards African countries” (Ministry 2023b). Given Ukraine's difficulties in adequately financing its foreign policy, it is challenging to fulfil the task of maintaining “a consistent, strong Ukrainian presence in Africa at both official and unofficial levels, including media engagement” (Ministry 2023b). This challenge is compounded by Russia's entrenched economic, military, and diplomatic ties with African states. One factor complicating Kyiv's ability to communicate its objectives to African elites and publics is Ukraine's success in garnering broad support from Western partners. While the *Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy* sets important and legitimate goals, their practical implementation appears rather fragmented. It is unlikely that African leaders could be persuaded to abandon their long-standing partnerships with Russia within a short timeframe.

From a neorealist perspective, African states aim to cultivate relations with actors capable of guaranteeing their security and enhancing the stability of their regimes. The foreign policy of most African countries is primarily driven by the imperative to survive within an international system in which

they are not dominant actors. Motivations for inter-state engagement are shaped by security and economic considerations, as well as by the desire to engage in soft balancing vis-à-vis influential international actors such as Western states, China, and Russia. Ukraine is not perceived as a sufficiently strong actor whose cooperation would fulfil the strategic requirements of most African states. Decisions by African leaders and governments concerning the extent of engagement with Ukraine are largely determined by structural factors, including the distribution of power, external pressures, and resource dependencies. Within the neorealist paradigm, inter-state cooperation globally is thus understood as a consequence of structural inequalities and the pursuit of security and autonomy through balancing among centres of power.

From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, the reluctance of many African states to develop relations with Ukraine can be explained by the fact that Ukraine is not one of the “centres of power around which global political and economic interactions are built” (Ministry 2023b). This shapes the selection of partners with whom African states choose to cooperate, which typically include China, Russia, the United States, and the EU. African states are oriented towards these centres of power because they control financial flows, provide security guarantees, and facilitate diplomatic engagement.

At present, many African countries are economically dependent on states that are either engaged in armed conflict with Ukraine, such as Russia, or experiencing latent tensions, such as China. Enhancing relations with Ukraine could therefore entail risks for African countries in terms of access to financing, political support, and military assistance. Consequently, the foreign policy of peripheral states is heavily influenced by external factors. African leaders do not perceive Ukraine as possessing significant economic resources or institutional levers of influence, nor as a source of loans. From a postcolonial perspective, Ukraine is not considered a “centre of power,” and there is currently little incentive for African states to reorient their cooperation towards it.

From a postcolonial perspective, the role of discourse is equally significant. Information systems shape both African elites and the media, within which Russia, as the successor to the USSR, continues to be perceived as a power that has supported African states in their struggles against the West and colonialism. By contrast, Ukraine is largely absent from these discourses and is often viewed primarily as an ally of the West. Among the political

elites and publics of African countries, there is little recognition of Ukraine as a state that has also suffered from colonialism.

Factors Affecting Ukraine's Relations with African States

Although Ukraine has activated the African vector of foreign policy, rapprochement with African states remains difficult. Ukraine's initiatives do not always receive the expected support from African states, and discussions of cooperation often fail to progress to a higher level. These dynamics reveal persistent problems that slow the advancement of the African vector of Ukraine's foreign policy.

Several factors explain the current instability of Ukraine's positions in Africa: geographical and cultural remoteness; lack of historical continuity in the development of relations; long-term neglect by Ukrainian governments of the development of relations with the states of the continent; and passive observation by the Ukrainian authorities of Russia's expanding influence on the continent (Dobrescu 2023). In striving to deepen relations with the states of the Global North, Ukraine has long underestimated the importance of allies within the Global South. No proactive policy was pursued either in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, or other regions. Today, Ukraine attempts to accelerate bilateral and multilateral cooperation with African states, but this process faces major obstacles due to the destructive and often latent interference of third parties, primarily neo-authoritarian states (Khoma and Nikolaieva 2023; Khoma and Vdovychyn 2024).

Thus, the problems that shape Ukrainian-African relations can be grouped into three categories. The first group includes problems that are caused by Ukraine's activity/inactivity on the African continent. The second includes problems caused by the perception of Ukraine by African political elites and communities. The third includes the influence of external geopolitical players who are also interested in Africa.

First, let us consider the problems caused by Ukraine's activity/inactivity. The key problem preventing African states from offering stronger support for Ukraine lies in the insufficient experience of cooperation between Ukraine and African states. This problem affects all areas and aspects of cooperation: political, diplomatic, economic, cultural, social, interpersonal contacts, etc. Building trust and partnerships requires time, during which these ties strengthen, networks of contacts are formed, and social capital is accumulated. At the political level, this problem is manifested in the

lack of stable traditions of personal contact between the elites of Ukraine and African states. This limits the process of persuading African states to support Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression. Of course, the lack of sustained cooperation and established contacts between Ukraine and African countries is not the only factor that has influenced the low level of involvement of African countries in Ukraine's peacebuilding initiative. Still, this is a negative factor for accelerating the development of bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and African countries.

At the diplomatic level, the lack of continuity of Ukrainian-African interactions manifests itself in Ukraine's limited diplomatic presence in African states and in the weak representation of African states in Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, Ukraine has taken visible steps in recent years, including the opening of new embassies in Africa and plans to further expand its diplomatic network. These efforts aim to establish systematic dialogue with African states and societies and to foster cooperation in areas of shared interest. However, such processes cannot deliver results as quickly as Ukraine currently needs. In addition, Ukraine struggles with limited human and financial resources to expand its diplomatic institutions. Establishing new missions requires budgetary funding, which is difficult to allocate while defence expenditures continue to rise.

It should be noted that, following an intensification in 2024, the development of Ukraine's network of diplomatic missions in Africa has recently slowed. This is primarily due to Ukraine's limited diplomatic presence both in Africa and on other continents. Ukraine is seeking to expand its network of diplomatic missions in multiple directions simultaneously, which constrains its capacity to concentrate on African countries. For instance, in 2025, Ukraine focused on Latin America, where several diplomatic missions were established.

African states also hesitate to expand their diplomatic representation in Ukraine. Due to financial constraints for the development of a network of diplomatic institutions and the priority of resolving internal problems over a global diplomatic presence, a significant number of African states are not considering opening diplomatic missions in Ukraine. Only a few states have maintained embassies in Ukraine (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, South Africa) amid the war. In recent years, no African country that previously did not have a diplomatic representation in Ukraine has opened its embassy. The sole exception is the opening of the honorary consulate of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2024. There are also embassies that ceased work in Ukraine in 2022 and have not yet resumed it, despite ongoing dialogue (Morocco).

Another particularly serious issue is that many African states not only lack diplomatic representation in Ukraine, but their embassies in the Russian Federation are responsible for Ukrainian issues. Examples include Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Chad, etc. As long as the Russian Federation is the diplomatic core of relations, it is complicated for Ukraine to build open partnerships. However, certain positive developments have occurred. For example, in 2025, Gambia and Mozambique appointed non-resident ambassadors to Ukraine. These are now diplomats serving as ambassadors to Turkey and Germany, respectively, rather than as diplomats in Russia.

The events of 2024 in Mali (Battle of Tinzawaten) tested Ukraine's efforts to establish relations with African states. Despite the Ukrainian government's denial of assistance to the Tuareg rebels, the governments of Mali and Niger broke off diplomatic relations with Ukraine (Ministry 2024d). To some extent, this may affect Ukraine's efforts to gain the support of African states. Some African states have perceived Ukraine's actions as the beginning of a hybrid war between Ukraine and Russia on the territory of Africa and are fearful of disastrous consequences for themselves. For the elites and communities of many African countries, contemporary processes are associated with the events of the Cold War and the damage caused to their continent by the rivalry between the USSR and the USA.

Another challenge for Ukrainian-African relations lies in the absence of high-quality communication between the parties. The adopted *Ukraine-African Countries Communication Strategy* has not yet improved the situation. In the resulting information vacuum, misconceptions and stereotypes continue to hinder Ukraine's interaction with African countries. Ukraine could resolve many of these communication problems more effectively if it developed its own media channels and international broadcasting platforms for African audiences. The lack of Ukrainian media resources that would disseminate accurate information about Ukraine to African societies creates an additional obstacle to productive intergovernmental relations. Information about the true state of affairs in Ukraine has begun to penetrate the information field of the African continent, thanks to materials by local journalists who visited Ukraine, in particular the de-occupied territories, and met with government representatives and victims of Russian crimes. As of the end of 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine organised six press tours for journalists from a number of African countries. Nevertheless, the scale of Russian media activity outweighs the positive impact of individual publications with a pro-Ukrainian view of events.

To foster a positive attitude of the public in African countries towards Ukraine and to establish interstate dialogue, Ukraine needs to strengthen its media presence. However, financial constraints hinder Ukraine's ability to sustain foreign-language broadcasting abroad. Budget reductions in this sphere began as early as the mid-1990s, not only during the war. A limited number of foreign-language editorial offices and Ukraine's weak presence across radio frequencies have further restricted its outreach to African audiences.

Ukraine recognises the importance of engaging with audiences in African states to raise awareness about Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine and the war crimes committed by Russian forces on Ukrainian territory. However, the resources currently available are insufficient to mitigate Russia's destructive influence on the elites and public opinion in African countries. Ukraine's efforts are complemented by projects led by international partners. An example of this is the *Ukraine Communications Group (UCG)* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland 2024). This institution was established in 2024 by the United States and Poland, with the participation of other partners, with the aim to "promote accurate reporting of Russia's full-scale invasion, amplify Ukrainian voices, and expose Kremlin information manipulation" (U.S. Embassy in Poland 2024). Such forms of support for Ukraine are highly important. However, Russia invests substantial resources in Africa's information space, creating networks of media partners and similar structures. Artificial intelligence, the use of social media, and other technological innovations accelerate the dissemination of pro-Russian narratives (Ministry 2025b). At present, significantly greater efforts by democratic actors are required to counter Russian informational influence in Africa.

The most significant factor within the second group of problems that negatively affect the dynamics of the development of Ukrainian-African relations is the divergence in political regimes and values between the states. Most African states are hybrid or neo-authoritarian. In recent years, the overall quality of democracy across the continent has declined. Also, the growth of violence and coups d'état in some African states has not helped the development of democracies on the continent.

Mutual understanding between Ukraine and African states on important strategic issues suffers from the widespread narrative of a proxy war between the West and Russia, which is present in leadership circles of certain African states. For these governments, the war in Ukraine appears as the result of

a struggle between the West and Russia for spheres of influence. Specific historical hostility toward Western regimes reinforces this perspective. Many African countries remain influenced by disappointment over unequal access to vaccines, masks, and ventilators during the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, a considerable number of African governments continue to view Russian aggression in Ukraine as a problem generated by the collective West. In each new problem, African states feel vulnerable due to a lack of solidarity (Lopes 2022: 21). In this context, African states are primarily concerned with protecting their own national interests and reducing the impact of external problems on domestic stability, the well-being of the population, and the ability to receive external assistance. Support for Ukrainian peace initiatives and condemnation of Russian aggression under such conditions are not relevant for most African governments.

The positions of African political elites may also hinder the active development of Ukraine's relations with African states due to the scale of assistance to Ukraine from Western partners. Until 2022, the EU allocated extensive funding to African states to support peace and humanitarian initiatives. Starting from 2022, however, the bulk of the European Peace Facility budget is directed to support Ukraine; only a small share of the funding was allocated to African states (European Union Websites 2023). This shift of EU support away from the African continent to Ukraine has generated dissatisfaction among African elites. After the termination of U.S. assistance programs under USAID in 2025, the competition between African states and Ukraine for assistance from various sources will become even more pronounced.

In African states, there is a growing perception that the continent's problems (security, economy, healthcare, etc.) are being neglected. The leaders of African states interpret the change in the scale of support as a policy of double standards, inferior perception by Western partners, and disregard for the international principle of equality among states and peoples. Such sentiments are reinforced by the unequal treatment of refugees from African states, the Middle East, and Ukrainian refugees since 2022 (Mickelsson 2024: 8).

Actions by some African officials have also undermined closer ties with Ukraine by contradicting the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. For example, at the end of 2024 members of parliament from twelve African states (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, South Sudan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Djibouti, Eswatini, Zambia, Somalia, and Mozambique)

visited the occupied part of Ukraine. They expressed solidarity with Russia. Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs assessed this visit as a manifestation of gross disrespect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and a violation of the fundamental principles of international law (Ministry 2024b). Another example is the visit of the ambassadors of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to the temporarily Russian-occupied Crimea in September 2025 (Ministry 2025a). By undertaking this visit, the African diplomats grossly violated international law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as several UN General Assembly resolutions, in particular Resolution No. 68/262, "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine," which reaffirms the non-recognition of any changes in the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. Such actions also contravene Ukrainian legislation, which clearly defines the procedure for entering the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine.

Let us turn to the third group of factors that influence Ukraine's relations with African states: the role of external players. Since modern international relations are dominated by the deep interdependence of subjects and their interactions, the dynamics and nature of Ukrainian-African relations depend significantly on other global and regional players and processes. Among the key actors influencing Ukraine's engagement with African countries are Russia (most prominently) followed to a lesser extent by China, the United States, and EU member states. The nature of these countries' relations with both Ukraine and African states directly affects the success of Ukraine's initiatives on the continent.

Russian influence poses the greatest obstacle to the advancement of Ukraine–Africa relations. Analysts differ in their assessment of the strength of this influence. For example, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace expert Gopaldas Ronak (2023) suggests that support for Russia on the continent may be exaggerated. Russian influence is often limited to the extent to which it can influence the political elite of a particular state and, in some cases, co-opt that elite into a patronage network. Instead, according to Omar Raafat (2023), Africa has become an arena of geopolitical rivalry, characterised by Russia's resurgence, as its influence is steadily growing in contrast to the influence of the United States, the EU countries, and others.

Russia has maintained a presence in the internal space of many African countries since the mid-1950s. It secured positions in the defence, economic, information, and other sectors. After the collapse of the USSR in 1990-91, Russia quickly resumed an active expansionist policy. Following the annexation of Crimea

in 2014, the Kremlin redoubled its diplomatic efforts in Africa, since, under Western sanctions, new partners and sales markets were needed. Although Russia's economic presence in Africa is not as extensive as that of China or India, some Russian goods and services are in demand in a number of African countries. Russia serves as a major supplier of weapons and equipment to various African regimes and has deployed a large-scale presence of private military campaigns on the territory of the continent. This motivates many African governments to maintain positive relations with Russia, and to this end, to refrain from criticising Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Russia regularly hosts high-profile events involving African states, including the Russia-Africa summits in 2019 and 2023. In contrast, Ukraine has not yet developed such communication platforms, although it has proposed holding the Ukraine-Africa and Ukraine-African Union summits. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has held more than sixty contacts with the leaders of African countries. Still, many initiatives currently remain at the discussion level and require funding for implementation. A common platform for Ukraine's dialogue with African states has not yet been created.

Consequently, regardless of how intensive Ukraine's actions in Africa are today, they have a much weaker impact on the political elite and communities of African countries than the long-term systemic and financially costly influence of Russia, China, etc. A large group of African states continue to regard Russia as a reliable friend and ally. At the same time, they welcome Ukrainian delegations and, from a pragmatic standpoint, remain open to potential cooperation with Ukraine.

Conclusion

Ukraine's initiatives to intensify diplomatic relations with African states are significant in two respects:

- (1) within the current moment of the Russian-Ukrainian war, Ukrainian political elites are seeking diplomatic support for their resistance to Russia's illegal invasion in 2022. These processes concern the entire world, but the states of the Global South have been in the focus of attention since 2022. In fact, it was the emergency situation of a full-scale invasion that contributed to this. In 2014–22, when Russia was carrying out armed aggression, the Ukrainian government sought support primarily from the collective West, while the Global South was underestimated. Obviously,

Russia took advantage of this moment to continue building new and strengthening old networks of ties throughout the Global South, primarily in Africa;

(2) within the broader perspective, which is related to the post-war development of Ukraine, cooperation with African states is very important. Although Ukraine's hopes for post-war reconstruction are predominantly linked to Western countries, numerous areas of cooperation with African countries are opening up, as Ukraine seeks new markets and partners. Potential areas include agricultural products, technologies in the agricultural sector, mechanical engineering, energy, security technologies, etc.

We believe that the main factors that currently determine the condition and prospects of Ukraine's relations with African countries are: (1) Ukraine's long-standing failure to develop relations with countries of the African continent; despite efforts of recent years and a certain progress in relations, it is not possible to achieve significant success in the short time; (2) problems in the perception of Ukraine by both African political elites and communities in African countries; (3) the influence of powerful external geopolitical players (mostly neo-authoritarian) with interests on the African continent. To this end, interested actors are investing in infrastructure projects, the media space, the military sphere, etc. of African states.

Currently, it is difficult for Ukraine to counteract Russian influence in Africa. Moscow's power is rooted primarily in: (1) networks of connections inherited from the USSR; (2) many years of large-scale arms sales; (3) a strong propaganda machine supported by the Russian regime; and (4) support for military juntas willing to accept mercenaries from private military companies such as the Wagner Group.

For a long time, Ukraine lacked a clear strategy for building relations with African states. Interaction basically took the form of trade and economic cooperation as well as humanitarian aid.

The consequences of this became acutely manifest during the full-scale war with Russia when only a few states of the Global South supported Ukraine. Foreign policy contacts between Ukraine and African states have intensified tremendously since 2022, thanks to Ukraine's initiatives. Apparently, stable partnerships cannot emerge quickly, given the starting positions and external factors. In 2024, two African states (Mali and Niger) severed diplomatic relations with Ukraine, yet this setback did not halt Ukraine's efforts to expand its presence in Africa. Strengthening ties with

African countries has become one of Ukraine's strategies to counter Russian neocolonial influence and remove African states from Russian control. Figuratively, these processes of geopolitical confrontation can be described as the "battle for Africa."

Within a short time and under wartime conditions, Ukraine has managed to intensify contacts with individual African states. However, numerous internal and external factors continue to constrain the implementation of specific initiatives. The current historical moment is critically important for Ukraine to establish relations with African states in order to secure their support and develop broader partnerships with the Global South as a whole. It is obvious that in the case of African states, Ukraine needs to strengthen the pragmatic component of its arguments for cooperation rather than rely solely on appeals to values.

Over the past three years, Ukraine has established communication with several African states and expanded its diplomatic presence on the continent. Nevertheless, Ukrainian diplomatic missions in African states need to be reinforced with material and human resources, and the overall network of diplomatic institutions needs further growth. In most cases, Ukraine initiates efforts to intensify relations, while African states tend to adopt a more passive and observational stance.

The legal and regulatory framework of Ukraine-Africa relations also requires greater precision, shifting from declarations of intent to concrete agreements. Many signed intergovernmental documents have not yet been translated into practical projects. Concurrently, from the perspective of pragmatism and national interests, African states need a clear understanding of the tangible benefits of cooperation with Ukraine.

Ukraine's positions in the countries of the Global South, in particular Africa, remain unstable. Adoption of appropriate strategies, opening of new diplomatic missions, official visits, etc. will not change this situation quickly and fundamentally. Several factors hinder the transformation of Ukraine's cooperation with African states: the character of Ukraine's policy towards Africa in previous years; the interests of major non-democratic powers (Russia, China, first and foremost); and the stance of African political elites, who often prefer neutrality and adopt a pragmatic approach in choosing international partners, etc.

It is crucial to understand the problems that Ukraine faces in implementing the African vector of its foreign policy. Formally, Ukrainian-African contacts have intensified. A series of visits have been made, significant funds (which are noticeable for the state budget in the context of the war) have been invested

in expanding the network of diplomatic institutions, etc. However, there has been no visible increase in political support for Ukraine from African states. Even if Ukraine managed to enlist the support of an African state during the vote for one of the resolutions on the Ukrainian issue, this did not imply that this particular state would support Ukraine in other cases. In other words, this is situational support that dynamically changes under the influence of a system of factors at a specific historical moment. Under circumstances other than those in which Ukraine has been operating in recent years, the development of interstate cooperation would be seen as a gradual process, the results of which are not expected by the Ukrainian government in the shortest possible time, as required by the war situation. Nevertheless, in the context of a full-scale war, Ukraine's expectations are very high, and the issue of support in the war with Russia is extremely sensitive.

It should be borne in mind that not only the political, but also the economic influence of Ukraine on African states is currently limited. This does not mean, however, that there are no prospects, because the African continent as a market is rapidly growing both demographically and economically. Definitely, the success of Ukrainian-African relations in the long term depends on the transition from crisis diplomacy to systemic, mutually beneficial cooperation. It should cover both politics and the sphere of food security, as well as investments, innovations, cultural exchanges, and the development of interpersonal contacts. Only through such comprehensive efforts can Africa become a reliable partner for Ukraine in the international arena. There is an obvious need for a complex approach to the development of relations, clear investment projects and strategies for their implementation. At present, the African response to the idea of a Ukrainian-African renaissance in relations is mostly symbolic, and the concrete results are rather limited. Long-standing economic and investment projects, from which African leaders and the public will see long-term benefits, can contribute most to the development of sustainable relations with African countries. Certain initiatives are coming from Ukraine, for example, the creation of a hub for the production and transportation of fertilizers in cooperation with the Republic of South Africa, as well as energy projects. However, important is a real transition from initiatives and discussions to implementation and tangible results.

Thus, the major problems that hinder the establishment of stable cooperation between Ukraine and African states, as revealed in 2022–25, include:

(1) the absence of a tradition of sustainable cooperation between Ukraine and African states, and therefore insufficient understanding of each

other's problems and needs; (2) differences in political regimes, the nature of political culture, and politico-legal values; (3) limited financial capabilities of both Ukraine and most African states for expanding the network of diplomatic missions; (4) passivity or even disinterest of some African states in intensifying relations with Ukraine; (5) the absence of quality communication at various levels; (6) frequent internal political changes in many African states, as well as the Russian-Ukrainian war; (7) stagnation of democratic processes and the strengthening of pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian propaganda narratives in the information space of African states.

Therefore, Ukraine faces the difficult task of countering an entire system of factors that hinder cooperation with African states while seeking to change their neutral stance toward a pro-Ukrainian position. Since the policies of many African states often rest on pragmatic rather than value-based considerations, Ukraine can adopt an effective strategy by demonstrating to African partners the concrete benefits of developing relations with Ukraine.

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