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International Response to the Refugee Crisis: Challenges Faced By Ukrainian and Sudanese Refugees

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ABSTRACT

The global refugee crisis remains one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time, driven by conflicts, political instability, and economic disparities. The paper focuses on the specific challenges faced by refugees from Ukraine and Sudan, examining the role of the global system in both exacerbating and attempting to mitigate these crises. The study employs a comprehensive evaluation of the socio-political dynamics, legal frameworks, and international responses to these conflicts. By comparing the experiences of refugees from these two regions, the paper highlights the varying impacts of geopolitical interests, international policies, and humanitarian aid on displaced populations. The paper adopted the forced migration theory and refugee integration theory and used the secondary methods of data collection in addressing the work. The findings reveal the socio economic, legal and other challenges faced by refugees and underscore the need for more effective and equitable global strategies to address the refugee crisis, advocating for policies that prioritise human rights, sustainable integration, and international cooperation. The paper contributes to the broader discourse on refugee management and offers recommendations for improving the global response to such humanitarian emergencies.

1. Introduction

The global refugee crisis has emerged as one of the most pressing humanitarian challenges of our time. The forced displacement of millions of people worldwide has severe implications for International Relations, Politics, Human Rights, Security, and Global Economic Development (Castles & Millar, 2013). Understanding this crisis's root causes and dynamics is crucial for crafting effective solutions and policy interventions. This paper aims to investigate the role of the global system in the emergence and perpetuation of the refugee crisis, analysing how various factors within the international system contribute to forced displacement and the creation of refugee populations. Most especially, the work focuses on evaluating the role of the global system in amplifying the refugee crisis by analysing the challenges faced by the refugees from the conflicts in Ukraine and Sudan.

International system refers to the frameworks and institutions established to facilitate cooperation and manage relations between countries on global issues. These systems include international organisations like the United Nations, treaties, agreements and conventions that govern interactions among states. Their major aims are to promote peace, security, economic stability, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. It could also refer to the interconnected network of political, economic, social and environmental relationship among national and international actors. This will sometimes also be referred to as the Global System.

The crises in these countries produced basically the same effect of forced migration and also some external responses by both the international systems and neighbouring countries. But what is unique to the examination of the Ukrainian and Sudanese refugee issue is the level and dimension of response of the international system and the constraints of the neighbouring countries.

The conflict in Ukraine, which is a power struggle between Ukraine and Russia, escalated sharply in 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea and continued with the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, which has led to significant and widespread displacement of people. This has been both within Ukraine and across international borders, as individuals seek safety from the violence. The situation has evolved into a complex humanitarian crisis, with millions affected by the conflict. The international community's response to this crisis has varied, encompassing humanitarian aid, sanctions against Russia, and diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. The roles of neighbouring countries have been particularly crucial, as they have provided refuge to those fleeing the conflict and faced challenges associated with the integration and support of large numbers of displaced Ukrainians (Shevchenko, 2015).

This conflict has also had profound implications for European politics and policies. It has tested the European Union's capability to handle such crises, influenced its asylum and border control policies, and impacted the geopolitical landscape of the region. The involvement of NATO and the wider international response have highlighted the complexities of managing a crisis of this magnitude, with significant global attention and political ramifications (Council of the European Union, 2023).

In Sudan, the conflict has its origins in deep-seated ethnic, political, and economic issues. These long-standing tensions have erupted into violence, leading to the displacement of large populations within and outside the country (Jok, 2007).

The Sudanese situation presents a unique set of challenges, particularly given the region's economic constraints and political complexities. The response to the refugee crisis in Sudan involves a myriad of actors, including regional powers, neighbouring countries, and international organisations.

These actors play crucial roles in providing humanitarian aid, mediating the conflict, and attempting to foster stability. The impact of the Sudanese refugee crisis extends to the broader African geopolitical landscape. It influences regional politics, affects cross-border relations, and strains the resources of host countries, many of which are grappling with their internal challenges. The capacity of these countries to provide refuge and meet the basic needs of displaced Sudanese people is a significant concern, often leading to suboptimal living conditions for refugees.

Furthermore, the international response to the Sudanese crisis is noticeably different from that of the Ukrainian scenario. Factors such as global media attention, economic interests, and geopolitical strategies have influenced the scale and nature of international involvement. This contrast offers valuable insights into the dynamics of global humanitarian responses, underscoring the influence of regional characteristics and international perceptions on the mobilisation of aid and intervention.

The concern lies in understanding the intricate interplay between the imbalanced global system and the forced displacement of individuals from these regions, specifically identifying and analysing the challenges these vulnerable populations face.

The following key terms as noted earlier will be coherent in the course of this work:

- The Global System refers to the interconnected network of political, economic, social, and environmental relationships among nations and international actors. This will sometimes also be referred to as the International System.
- Refugee Crisis: The refugee crisis pertains to the large-scale and protracted movement of people who are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in other

countries due to violence, persecution, conflicts, human rights abuses, poverty, environmental disasters, etc.

- Geopolitical Power Dynamics: Geopolitical power dynamics refer to the interactions and competition among states and other geopolitical actors for influence, control, and resources on the global stage.
- Human Rights Violations: Human rights violations encompass actions or policies by states or non-state actors that infringe upon the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and groups. These violations may include torture, discrimination, forced displacement, persecution, and denial of basic rights to life, liberty, and dignity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, provides a foundational framework for human rights protection.
- International Policies: International policies refer to the principles, regulations, and strategies adopted by countries and international organisations to address global challenges and shape state interactions. These policies can encompass various areas such as trade, security, humanitarian assistance, and environmental protection.

2. Materials and Methods

This paper adopts the qualitative research approach. It used secondary data, extracting information from sources such as reputable academic sources, reports, news, articles with verifiable data sources, relevant journals and publications as well as government data.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

To evaluate the global system's role in the refugee crises in Ukraine and Sudan, this paper adopts the Forced Migration Theory

and Refugee Integration Theory. These frameworks provide a comprehensive explanation of the multifaceted nature of forced displacement and the systemic challenges faced by refugees.

Forced Migration Theory

Forced Migration Theory explores the complex causes and dynamics of displacement, emphasising the political, social, economic, and environmental factors that compel individuals to flee their homes. According to this theory, displacement is often a result of conflict, persecution, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic inequalities (Castles, 2003; Zetter, 2015). In the context of Ukraine, the ongoing conflict with Russia has led to massive displacement due to violence, human rights abuses, and economic instability. Similarly, in Sudan, decades of political turmoil, civil war, and recent conflicts between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have driven millions from their homes (UNHCR, 2023).

The importance of this Theory is to help us understand the root causes of displacement and the interplay of various factors that lead to refugee crises. It also highlights the need for comprehensive approaches that address not only the immediate needs of displaced populations but also the underlying causes of displacement (Betts & Loescher, 2011).

Refugee Integration Theory

Refugee Integration Theory focuses on the processes and challenges of integrating refugees into host societies. Integration is a multifaceted process also that involves legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions (Ager & Strang, 2008). This theory emphasises the importance of access to rights, employment, education, and social networks in facilitating successful integration. It also recognizes the agency and resilience of

refugees in navigating their new environments.

This paper brings to focus that in Europe, Ukrainian refugees face significant integration challenges despite the EU's Temporary Protection regime. Legal uncertainties, housing issues, and barriers to education and employment hinder their ability to fully integrate into host societies (IRC, 2023). Similarly, Sudanese refugees in countries like Chad and South Sudan struggle with access to basic services, employment opportunities, and social inclusion, exacerbating their vulnerabilities (UNHCR, 2023).

Refugee Integration Theory underscores the importance of targeted support programs and policies that promote the inclusion and self-reliance of refugees. It also highlights the need to address social barriers such as discrimination and xenophobia that hinder integration efforts (Hynie, 2018).

Structural Violence Theory highlights the need for systemic changes and reforms to address the root causes of displacement and to create a more equitable and just global system. It also emphasises the importance of addressing the structural barriers that prevent refugees from accessing their rights and achieving long-term stability (Farmer, 2004).

Combining the Forced Migration Theory and Refugee Integration Theory, the paper offers a comprehensive framework to understand the global response to the refugee crises in Ukraine and Sudan. Notably, **Forced Migration Theory** highlights the root causes and dynamics of displacement in both contexts, emphasising the impact of conflict, political instability, and socio-economic factors. **Refugee Integration Theory** underscores the challenges faced by refugees in host societies, noting how geopolitical significance influences the level of support and resources available for integration and

also critiques the systemic inequalities that result in disparate global responses, revealing how geopolitical interests and global power dynamics dictate humanitarian aid distribution and media attention.

This integrated approach calls for a reimagining of global solidarity mechanisms that prioritise human rights and equitable development over geopolitical interests. It advocates for a balanced global system where the needs of refugees from both core and peripheral nations are addressed with equal urgency and compassion.

The Global System and its Role

The global system encompasses a vast and intricate network of actors, institutions, and processes that collectively shape interactions and outcomes at the international level. At its core, the global system represents the interconnectedness of states, international organisations, non-state actors, and transnational networks, all of which play pivotal roles in shaping global dynamics.

At its most basic level, the global system refers to the structure and framework through which international relations unfold. It encompasses not only sovereign states but also a myriad of other entities, including intergovernmental organisations like the United Nations, regional blocs such as the European Union, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), multinational corporations, and influential individuals. These components interact with each other across various domains, including politics, economics, security, and culture, creating a complex web of relationships and dependencies.

Within the global system, states remain the primary actors, wielding significant influence over international affairs through their political, economic, and military power. However, non-state actors, such as NGOs and multinational corporations, increasingly shape global outcomes through their

advocacy, economic activities, and influence on public opinion. Transnational networks, facilitated by advances in communication and transportation, further blur the boundaries between states and enable the rapid exchange of ideas, resources, and capital across borders.

Forced displacement is a multifaceted phenomenon resulting from the interplay of various political, social, economic, and environmental factors. At its core, forced displacement refers to the coerced movement of individuals or groups from their homes or habitual places of residence. This movement may occur within national borders (internally displaced persons, or IDPs) or across international borders (refugees and asylum seekers).

Within academic discourse, there are different conceptualizations of refugees. Refugees are typically defined under international law as individuals who flee their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion or forced displacement as a result of conflict, violence, environmental disasters, and other crises.

The root causes of forced displacement are complex and multifaceted, often involving a combination of political, social, economic, and environmental factors. Armed conflict is a primary driver of displacement, as civilians flee violence, persecution, and human rights abuses perpetrated by state and non-state actors. Persecution based on ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, or other identities can also force individuals to flee their homes in search of safety and protection.

Political conflicts, economic disparities, human rights violations and various environmental challenges are intertwined within the global system creating a complex web of drivers that lead to forced displacement. As a result, refugees from the conflicts in Ukraine and Sudan have and still

experience unique and specific challenges in their journeys, from dangers faced during their displacement to the difficulties encountered in their various host countries, which can vary significantly depending on the regional context and the receiving nations' policies and capacities (UNHCR, 2023).

To explain the above, this study explores the legal and ethical dimensions of the refugee crisis and the global system. This involves a thorough examination of how international laws and conventions, specifically designed to protect refugees, are implemented in reality. Key among these legal instruments is the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which lay down the rights of refugees and the obligations of states to protect them. The principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of refugees to places where they face serious threats to their life or freedom, is a cornerstone of these treaties (Loescher & Milner, 2008). This paper critically assesses the adherence to and application of these conventions in the context of the Ukraine and Sudan refugee situations.

This will involve analysing the extent to which political interests, national security concerns, and other factors influence states' compliance with their international obligations. The ethical implications of these legal frameworks, and their application in the current global landscape, where geopolitical dynamics often overshadow humanitarian needs, will also be a focal point of the study.

Additionally, the research will delve deeply into the socioeconomic impact of refugee flows on host countries.

This exploration will encompass a comprehensive understanding of the myriad challenges that host nations confront. One of the primary concerns is resource allocation, which includes the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare to refugees.

The role of the global system in the Ukraine and Sudan refugee challenges could be summarised as follows:

- Identify the key systemic factors within the global system contributing to the challenges faced by refugees from the Ukraine and Sudan conflicts. These include limited international cooperation, legal frameworks and host countries' challenges.
- Analyse how political conflicts, economic disparities, and human rights violations interact within the global system to amplify the challenges faced by refugees from these regions. The manifestation of these are well noted in the economic and social integration issues affecting refugees.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing international policies and responses in addressing the challenges faced by refugees from Ukraine and Sudan. Indeed, they have become less effective due to the large number of refugees and their inability to access basic facilities such as education, health care, work etc.
- Assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and policy responses in addressing the refugee crisis.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for improving refugee management and policy responses within the context of the global system.

Ukraine and Sudan Crises in Perspective

The historical roots of the conflict in Ukraine can be traced back to a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and political factors. Ukraine's strategic location and fertile lands have made it a crossroads of empires and ideologies, contributing to a rich yet turbulent history, especially with its sister country, Russia.

Ukraine and Russia share a complex history, with centuries of cultural, religious, and political ties. The relationship has been marked by periods of unity and conflict, significantly influencing the modern dynamics between the two nations.

The Russo-Ukrainian War, also known as the Ukrainian Crisis or the War in Donbas, is an ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russian-backed separatists in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. The conflict began in 2014, following the Ukrainian Revolution and the removal of President Viktor Yanukovich, who had strong ties with Russia.

By 2023, the conflict has escalated into a full-scale war following **Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022**. This marked one of the most significant military conflicts in Europe since World War II. The war has resulted in massive destruction, loss of life, and a humanitarian crisis, with millions of Ukrainians displaced internally and millions more seeking refuge abroad.

The conflict in Ukraine is not just a regional issue but has significant implications for international security, global economic stability, and the broader humanitarian landscape. As of 2023, the situation remained fluid, with ongoing efforts by the international community to provide humanitarian aid, negotiate peace, and address the wide-ranging impacts of the conflict. The Russo-Ukrainian war has been marked by numerous ceasefires, peace talks, and diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. However, the situation remains tense, with frequent outbreaks of fighting and violations of ceasefires. Both sides have been accused of human rights abuses, including the use of torture, extrajudicial killings, and the displacement of civilians. The conflict has had a profound impact on the lives of millions of people, with many forced to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.

Sudan's history on the other hand, is characterised by its diverse ethnic makeup, colonial legacies, and a long history of conflict. The country's geopolitical significance, coupled with its complex social fabric, has made it a hotspot for prolonged instability.

Sudan was subject to colonial rule by both the British and the Egyptians in a condominium arrangement. The country gained independence in 1956, but the post-independence period was marked by a lack of effective governance structures and conflict between the northern and southern regions. The cultural, religious, and economic disparities between these regions fuelled tensions and led to protracted **civil wars**.

Sudan experienced two devastating civil wars, **the first from 1955 to 1972** and **the second from 1983 to 2005**. These wars were primarily fuelled by central government neglect, religious and ethnic differences, and disputes over natural resources. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 ended the second civil war and set the stage for South Sudan's eventual independence in 2011.

The conflict in Darfur, which began in 2003, further highlighted the deep-seated issues within Sudan. The crisis stemmed from ethnic, political, and economic grievances and was marked by severe human rights violations and the mass displacement of several people. Despite various peace agreements and international interventions, periodic violence and humanitarian crises continue to plague the region.

The Sudanese Revolution in 2019 marked a significant turn in the country's political landscape. The ousting of President Omar al-Bashir after three decades of rule led to the establishment of a transitional government. However, achieving stable governance and peace within the country still seemed nigh impossible and came with several challenges, including power-sharing between civilians

and the military, economic reforms, and addressing the needs of displaced populations.

In April 2023, Sudan was plunged into another devastating conflict that marked a significant escalation in the country's long history of internal contention and political turmoil. This conflict, which erupted between **the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)** and, the immediate successor organisation to the Janjaweed militia, **the Rapid Support Forces (RSF)**, two integral components of Sudan's military apparatus, has led to widespread humanitarian crises and massive displacement, fundamentally altering the socio-political landscape of the country.

The conflict's origins lay in deep-seated power struggles within Sudan's military government. The SAF and RSF, initially allies in the transitional military government brought about by the removal of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019 and the military coup that took place in 2021, found themselves at odds over issues of governance and control. The tension reached a boiling point on **April 15, 2023**, resulting in violent clashes. These clashes were not merely isolated incidents of military rivalry but were indicative of broader issues within Sudan's political system, marred by a lack of cohesive governance and a history of autocratic rule.

The Ukraine and Sudan Refugee's Challenges

The challenges faced by refugees from the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Sudan are severe and deeply intertwined with the global system's ability—or inability—to address the refugee crisis effectively. These situations illuminate both the limitations of international cooperation, legal frameworks, and the capacity of host countries and the international community at large. Some of these challenges are:

Economic and Social Integration Challenges: Refugees from Ukraine, numbering in the

millions across Europe, face significant economic and social integration challenges. Despite the EU's Temporary Protection regime facilitating rights to work, health, education, shelter, and financial support, the sheer scale of the influx presents a logistical and coordination challenge. Countries like Poland, Germany, Czechia, and others have hosted large numbers of refugees, necessitating substantial economic resources for housing and integration efforts. Estimates suggest an annual cost of around €10 billion for taking in a million refugees, which could translate into significant expenditures for Europe.

Education and Employment: The integration into educational systems and the labour market poses particular challenges. Only half of school-age refugee children are enrolled in schools in host countries, and a quarter of refugees struggle to access health care. Employment rates among refugees vary, with 40 to 60 per cent employed, often below their qualifications, indicating a mismatch between the skills of refugees and the opportunities available. This situation underscores the need for targeted support to enable refugees to utilise and build their talents, preparing them for eventual voluntary return when conditions allow.

Housing and Legal Uncertainties: Housing remains a critical issue, with a significant number of refugees relying on unsustainable housing solutions and needing humanitarian assistance to survive. Legal uncertainties, such as the potential expiration of aid provisions and refugee hosting laws intensify these challenges. For instance, in countries like Poland, Ukrainian refugees face legal uncertainties about their status and aid provisions. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) highlighted concerns over labour market discrimination, negative changes in household behaviour, and the risk of premature returns to Ukraine due to loss of housing or withdrawal of humanitarian aid.

Psychosocial Impact and Community Tensions: The psychological toll of displacement, stress, and trauma, particularly on children and adolescents, cannot be underestimated. Tensions within the refugee community itself, issues linked to refugee protection status, and labour market exploitation have been identified as significant concerns. These factors highlight the complex interplay of social, economic, and psychological challenges refugees face and the critical role of the global system in providing comprehensive support.

Humanitarian Challenges: In Ukraine, 14.6 million people require humanitarian aid due to continuous conflict, with families living in damaged houses lacking basic utilities and children unable to attend school. The UN's response plans aim to support millions in Ukraine and the region, yet the need overwhelms available resources.

Humanitarian and Security Challenges: The conflict in Sudan has resulted in a dire humanitarian situation, with half of the country's population requiring assistance and protection. The crisis has led to extreme shortages of food, water, medicine, and fuel, with nearly 18 million people facing acute food insecurity. The displacement has affected nearly 8 million people, including over 1.5 million who have fled to neighbouring countries such as Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan, seeking refuge from violence and scarcity.

Dire Conditions in Host Countries: Sudanese refugees face security threats, humanitarian challenges, and legal issues in their various host countries. Reports highlight fears of Janjaweed militia invasion and dire living conditions, with refugees struggling to access necessities and facing discrimination in host countries like Chad and South Sudan.

Vulnerable Populations: Women and children are particularly vulnerable in this crisis, facing heightened risks of gender-based violence and lack of access to essential health

care. The conflict has disrupted the education of around 12 million children, adding to the long-term challenges of rebuilding Sudanese society. The healthcare system is overwhelmed, with nearly three-quarters of health facilities out of service, exacerbating the spread of diseases in a population already.

3. Results and Discussion

This paper observed that the primary systemic factors contributing to the refugee crisis on a global scale include political conflicts, economic disparities, and the policies of host countries. The Ukraine conflict, significantly escalated by Russia's invasion in 2022, has led to a vast humanitarian crisis. With nearly 3.7 million internally displaced and approximately 6.5 million having sought refuge abroad as of February 2024 (UN Refugee Agency, 2024), the situation underscores a dire need for international aid. Poland has become a major host country, hosting nearly 60 per cent of all refugees from Ukraine, reflecting Europe's substantial role in offering refuge (UN Refugee Agency, 2024).

Available data so far reveals that the situation has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, necessitating a response from international entities like the UNHCR and UNICEF, which have established "Blue Dots" safe spaces across eight countries to provide comprehensive support for refugees. The conflict's broader impact includes severe infrastructural damage and a deepening humanitarian need among 14.6 million Ukrainians, highlighting the urgency of global support and attention. The Russo-Ukrainian conflict has also significantly disrupted global supply chains, affecting food and fuel prices worldwide, emphasising the interconnectedness of global systems and local crises.

In front-line towns and villages, such as the Donbas region, people have exhausted their meagre resources and rely on aid to survive.

In the Donetsk and Kharkiv regions, families shelter in damaged houses with no piped water, gas or electricity. Constant bombardments force people to spend their days in basements. Children cannot play outside, let alone attend school.

"Hundreds of thousands of children live in communities on the front lines of the war, terrified, traumatised and deprived of their basic needs. That fact alone should compel us to do everything we can to bring more humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Homes, schools and hospitals are repeatedly hit, as are water, gas and power systems. The very fabric of society is under attack with devastating consequences. Our response plan, implemented with national NGOs and volunteers, includes the full range of assistance," said **Martin Griffiths (head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, in a recent interview** (UN-Ukraine Press Release, 2024).

By rigorous fact checks, this paper noted that Ukrainian refugees in neighbouring countries also need increased and sustained support. For instance, despite efforts for inclusion, only half of school-age refugee children are enrolled in schools in host countries, while a quarter of refugees indeed struggle to access health care. Only 40 to 60 per cent are employed, often below their qualifications, and many remain vulnerable with no means to support themselves.

"Although their plight is no longer in the headlines, millions of refugees from Ukraine still need urgent support. Host countries continue to extend protection and include them in society, but many vulnerable refugees still need help. They shouldn't feel pressed to return because they cannot make ends meet in exile. All refugees must be helped and given opportunities to use and build their talents to prepare them for eventual voluntary return when the situation allows," said the **UN High**

Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, (UNHCR/OCHA press release, 2024).

"Missile and rocket attacks have caused widespread death, destruction of homes and businesses and severely damaged energy infrastructures across Ukraine. The energy crisis is disrupting public access to water, electricity, heating, healthcare, education and social protection. Many Ukrainians are living in damaged homes or buildings ill-prepared for life-threatening freezing temperatures. As the war continues, humanitarian needs are multiplying and spreading. An estimated 14.6 million people in Ukraine will need?"

In response to the escalating needs in Ukraine, the United Nations and its partners have called for a combined US\$4.2 billion to support war-affected communities within Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees within and outside the region for the year 2024, nearly two years since the war's rapid escalation. This financial plea aims to address the needs of approximately 14.6 million people - - a staggering 40 per cent of the population - requiring humanitarian assistance due to the conflict, highlighting the war's devastating civilian costs and the exacerbated conditions during the winter months.

Also, available data shows that some 6.3 million people have fled the country and remain refugees, mostly across Europe. Efforts to reach nearly 11 million people in Ukraine with humanitarian aid in 2023, despite significant challenges, reflect some international strategies to mitigate the impacts of the war (UN-Ukraine Press Release, 2024).

This work has revealed through findings that systemic factors such as the lack of basic necessities, combined with violence and uncertainty, have forced many people to flee their homes in Sudan. More than one year since the crisis began, over 10 million people have been displaced. This includes more than 7.9 million people displaced within Sudan and more than 2 million people who fled to

neighbouring countries. Chad has received the largest number of people (629,524), followed by Egypt (500,000), South Sudan (166,955), Libya (96,061), Uganda (49,500), and Ethiopia (37,124). (UN Refugee Agency, 2024). In South Sudan, most of those arriving are returning nationals (596,503) who had been living in Sudan as refugees. Without a resolution to the crisis, hundreds of thousands more people will be compelled to flee in search of refuge and basic assistance (UN Refugee Agency, 2024).

Furthermore, this paper noted that Sudan has also been heavily impacted by severe weather events linked to climate change, including floods and droughts. These events have adversely affected hundreds of thousands of individuals throughout the country, leading to crop and livestock destruction and exacerbating food insecurity for families. Since the recent clashes began on April 15th 2023, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated. Half of Sudan's population – some 25 million people – need humanitarian assistance and protection. The country is facing extreme shortages of food, water, medicine, and fuel and nearly 18 million people are facing acute food insecurity.

Before the current conflict, Sudan had already been grappling with violence and displacement since the onset of the Darfur crisis in 2003. Sudan was home to more than 1 million refugees — the second-highest refugee population in Africa — most of whom were from South Sudan and Northern Ethiopia, with many fleeing conflicts in Tigray.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan is having a devastating impact on women and children and the role of the global system has come to question. According to UN estimates, even before fighting broke out, more than 3 million women and girls in Sudan were at risk of gender-based violence, including intimate-partner violence.

“Our teams in the region describe horrific ordeals being faced by forcibly displaced women and girls when fleeing Sudan. This shocking array of human rights violations must stop. Help to support survivors and those at risk is urgent, but so far, funding is falling extremely short,” reports **Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency, 2024).**

Attacks on healthcare facilities, equipment, and workers are further depriving women and girls of lifesaving care, with pregnant women hardest hit. According to the World Health Organization and UNFPA, nearly three-quarters of health facilities are out of service and diseases including cholera, measles, and malaria are spreading at a time when two-thirds of the population lack access to health care.

The conflict has also deprived about 12 million children of education since April, with the total number of children in Sudan who are out of school reaching 19 million (UN Refugee Agency, 2024).

The Problematic of Global System Response

– Disparities in Global Response

The analysis reveals stark disparities in the global response to the Ukrainian and Sudanese refugee crises. These disparities are emblematic of the core-peripheral dynamics outlined by the World-Systems theory, where geopolitical interests and global power structures disproportionately influence aid distribution and media attention.

The Ukrainian crisis, due to its geopolitical significance to Western core nations, has garnered substantial international aid and coverage. Conversely, the Sudanese crisis, despite its severity, has received relatively limited attention, illustrating how peripheral crises are often marginalised in the global agenda.

– The Impact of Geopolitical Interests

Geopolitical interests play a pivotal role in shaping the international response to refugee crises. The analysis indicates that strategic interests, rather than humanitarian needs, often dictate the level of support and visibility given to different crises. This finding underscores the need for a more equitable approach to international aid, one that prioritises humanitarian needs over geopolitical considerations.

– Refugee Agency and Resilience

Critical Refugee Studies highlight the resilience and agency of refugees facing crises in both Ukraine and Sudan. Despite systemic barriers and the challenges of displacement, refugees demonstrate remarkable strength and the capacity to contribute positively to their host communities. These findings challenge prevailing narratives of refugees as passive victims, advocating instead for policies that recognize and leverage the capabilities and rights of refugees.

– The Need for Equitable and Inclusive Policies

Current policies often fail to fully recognize or leverage the agency of refugees, underscoring the importance of developing participatory and inclusive approaches that respect refugees' dignity and contributions. This is why the paper advocates for a re-evaluation of global refugee policies to ensure they are more equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the actual needs of displaced individuals

– The Burden on Host Countries

The distribution of refugees is highly skewed towards developing countries, which host 84% of the world's refugees. This creates immense pressure on these countries' resources and infrastructure. The protracted nature of conflicts means that what may have been envisaged as temporary refuge becomes

long-term or indefinite, compounding the challenges for host communities.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper unravels the complexities of the global system's role in the refugee crises, with a focus on the predicaments faced by refugees from Ukraine and Sudan. Through the application of combined theories and Critical Refugee Studies, it illuminated the stark disparities in international responses to refugee crises and highlighted the paramount importance of recognizing the agency and resilience of refugees.

As a way forward and out of the current state of the global refugee crisis, the following recommendations are proffered:

- Enhanced International Cooperation: Foster stronger collaboration among host countries, donor nations, and international organisations to streamline resources and ensure a coordinated response to refugee crises.
- Legal Framework Strengthening: The paper advocates for the reinforcement and strict adherence to international conventions on refugees, emphasising the principle of non-refoulement and ensuring the protection of refugee rights across all nations.
- Comprehensive Support Systems: Develop policies that address the economic, social, and psychological needs of refugees, facilitating their integration into host communities and providing pathways to education, employment, and mental health services.
- Increased Funding for Humanitarian Aid: Encourage donor countries and international bodies to allocate more resources towards humanitarian assistance for refugees, focusing on long-term development projects alongside immediate relief efforts.

- Climate Change Mitigation: Integrate environmental considerations into refugee response strategies, acknowledging the role of climate change in displacement and supporting sustainable development initiatives in vulnerable regions.
- Promotion of Social Integration: Implement community-based programs that foster understanding and cooperation between refugees and host communities, reducing stigma and facilitating cultural exchange.
- Empowerment of Refugee Voices: Ensure that refugees are actively involved in decision-making processes affecting their lives, recognizing their agency and contributions to society.
- Global Policy Reform: Call for the reform of international refugee policies to better reflect the realities of global displacement, including revising criteria for refugee status to account for climate change and other non-conflict-related causes of displacement.
- Integration Programs: Develop comprehensive integration programs that support refugees in gaining language skills, employment, and access to education, thereby facilitating smoother transitions into host societies.

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