



# WAR IN UKRAINE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## **About the CMA**

The goal of the CMA is to help make mediation efforts throughout Africa more effective. We do so by offering academic and practical courses in mediation, researching new and current best practices, and offering support to organisations and governments involved in mediation processes.

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## Seminar Summary

On 6 June 2022, the Centre for Mediation in Africa and the Department of Political Science at the University of Pretoria hosted a seminar on the War in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences, with Professor Hubert Zimmermann from the Philipps University of Marburg in Germany and Professor Chris Isike from the Department of Political Sciences, University of Pretoria.



*Professor Zimmermann presenting at the War in Ukraine Seminar*

Professor Zimmermann explored the causes of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and implications for the global system and order. He noted that the sources of the conflict stem back to the independence of Ukraine in 1991 and the end of the Soviet Union, including the unconditional sovereignty and self-determination of Ukraine and Russia's existential rejection of western expansion. In other core developments, he noted the Proclamation of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Mink I Agreement both in 2014, and the Mink II Agreement in 2015.

With the escalation of the sophistication of weapons being supplied by Ukraine's allies, acute concerns on the potential of a nuclear war arise. This not only poses a threat to Europe but the international community as well. Not only is there a nuclear threat, there has also been a global increase of food and energy supplies, which have economic, political, and social implications for countries.

In charting a way forward, Prof Zimmermann acknowledged the high probability of an escalation if nothing changes, and decreased United States (US) engagement due to the US-

China trade war priority. He noted that European engagement will remain although with possible divisions, and resulting in limited prioritisation of other global challenges. Most worryingly, Prof Zimmerman did not see much of a chance for mediation at this stage in the conflict.



*Professor Chris Isike presenting at the War in Ukraine Seminar*

From Prof Isike, a pertinent question from a global south and African perspective was offered about why the Russia-Ukraine conflict matters (or should matter) to us, whereas conflicts of the global south do not matter to the west. He argued that the United States and Europe expect African countries to understand the Ukrainian crisis from their perspective, which is problematic. Prof Isike further called on African leaders and scholars to address these perceptions, as well as their internal challenges that hinder meaningful contribution to global issues. Corruption, intra-conflicts and governance challenges and weak democratic institutions and the current calibre of leaders pose more of an existential threat to African lives than issue of food insecurity, which can in fact be addressed were African leaders to do better. This further demands a democratic order based on social and not liberal democracy.



*Audience at the War in Ukraine Seminar*