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Editorial

The world in 2023: continuing uncertainty

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The war started by Russia against Ukraine has many negative consequences both for Ukraine and for the world in general. In particular, it is about food security. The president of Russia, having realized that he is not able to take over the country quickly, decided to take the whole world hostage and blocked the export of food through Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea. Of course, hundreds of tons of grain crops and other food, which were in the Russian-occupied territories, were mostly taken by force and exported to Russia. In the summer of 2022, during a speech at the G20 foreign ministers' meeting, the High Representative of the EU Josep Borrell noted that the aggressive war against Ukraine has dramatically exacerbated the food crisis. In just two years, the number of people who are severely food insecure has doubled, from 135 million before the COVID-19 pandemic to 276 million in early 2022 and 323 million now. Now, with this war, 1.2 billion people – one in six people in the world – are in dire straits due to rising food and energy prices and tighter financial conditions (Voytiuk, 2022). Thanks to the incredible efforts of world leaders, in the summer of 2022 it was possible to establish a "grain corridor", within which Ukrainians got the right to export their grain from their ports and not be killed by the Russians, who control the waters of the Black Sea along the coast of Ukraine.

And if the problem of global hunger receded somewhat after the opening of the "grain corridors", other economic problems that lead to the impoverishment of millions of people both in Ukraine and in many other regions of the world have not gone anywhere. According to Professor Oleksandr Petryk, the war hit not only Ukraine – its shock waves spread like circles on the water throughout the world. With the global economy

still recovering from the devastating impact of Covid-19, Russian aggression is once again dragging it into a maelstrom of economic crisis. Global economic growth, which accelerated in post-Covid year 2021, began to wane rapidly. According to IMF estimates, world economic growth will slow to 3.2%, from 6% in 2021. It is the lowest figure in the last twenty years, except for the 2008 crisis and the «Covid» year 2020. Meanwhile, high inflation has made a comeback to the world economy and is the main challenge for the central banks. A hybrid energy war waged by Russia against Europe has pushed energy prices higher. Destructions in Ukraine's agricultural sector and food industry and the blockade of Ukraine's exports are the primary reasons for the rise in food prices worldwide. According to the IMF, global inflation will reach 8.8% in 2022 compared to 4.7% in 2021. A number of poor countries, especially from Central and South America and also from Africa directly or indirectly dependent on grain imports and food prices, have ended up on the verge of poverty. In other words, Russia's war on Ukraine has slowed down world economic development and nearly doubled the growth of world prices. Therefore, Russia's actions provoked a global economic crisis, as well as a number of other crisis phenomena, including a humanitarian crisis, a migration crisis associated with the departure of millions of Ukrainians outside their country, a demographic crisis, an environmental crisis, and other crisis phenomena (Petryk, 2022). As well as the massive exodus of people from South America and Central America to the United States of North America in search of better life and employment opportunities. The remittances in money that migrants make to their relatives become the largest source of resources for Latin American countries.

Russia's war with Ukraine also demonstrated the inefficiency of the institutional security system in Europe and the world in general. In her speech at the time of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, Oleksandra Matviychuk noted that the UN system, created after the World War II by its winners, provides for some unjustified indulgences for individual countries. If we don't want to live in the world where rules are set by states with stronger military capabilities, this has to be changed. We have to start reforming the international system to protect people from wars and authoritarian regimes. We need effective guarantees of security and respect for human rights for citizens of all states regardless of their participation in military alliances, military capability or economic power. This new system should have human rights at its core. (Matviychuk, 2022).

Understanding the instability of the world order, authoritarian regimes in various parts of the planet have stepped up to achieve their domestic and foreign policy goals. Literally before our eyes, a military alliance of the authoritarian regimes of Iran and Russia was formed. The first of them dreams of the physical destruction of Israel, spreading its influence over the entire region and causing maximum damage to its ideological enemy - the United States. At the same time, any manifestations of democratic freedoms are being suppressed within the country, and the ruling regime is increasingly using the repressive apparatus against its citizens every day. After the start of Russia's terrorist war against Ukraine, Iran began mass deliveries of its drones to Russia, officially denying this fact. In addition, according to the intelligence of a number of countries, Iran is going to transfer missiles of various ranges to Russia for use in Ukraine. In other words, the authoritarian regime of the Ayatollahs of Iran decided to strengthen its position by entering into an alliance with Russia. As for Russia itself, it dreams of the physical destruction of Ukraine, to spread its influence over the countries of the former socialist camp and to cause maximum damage to the most powerful country in the world so far - the USA. It is not even accepted to talk about democratic freedoms inside Russia, because they have been successively destroyed during the last twenty years. Anyone who disagrees with the regime, or anyone in general, can be imprisoned for a long time on a fabricated sentence or simply killed. At the same time, a distinctive feature of the Russian regime is the use of lying and sometimes absurd propaganda on an unprecedented scale. Crazy informational influence is exerted both on the outside and on the residents of Russia

themselves, who are ready to fight with the whole world and die en masse, without even understanding why. Authoritarian tendencies are also strengthening in China, however, this country is currently refraining not only from occupying rebellious Taiwan, but even from openly supporting Russia's actions in Ukraine, as it is wary of US sanctions, on the cooperation of which it is completely dependent. Surprisingly, autocratic populist forces are gaining popularity even within the European Union. In particular, Hungary, being a member of the EU, has been trying to implement a nationalist and sometimes anti-Western policy for a long time. It is logical that in Russia's war against Ukraine, Hungary de facto supports the aggressor and tries to play the role of a kind of Trojan horse within the European community. A similar role, but within NATO, is played by Turkey, which in recent years has increasingly resembled an Eastern autocracy rather than a Western-style democracy. In particular, blocking the entry of Sweden and Finland into NATO due to the desire to bargain for more preferences in the West is outright blackmail and a dangerous geopolitical game. So, being at a point of complete uncertainty, we are witnessing an active phase of the struggle between authoritarian and democratic regimes, on which the future of our world depends. If Western democracies dare to defend their values with all the means available to them, humanity has a chance for a dignified existence, and if not, our world can turn into an arena of constant wars.

Another problem related to the war in Ukraine concerns local and global ecology. In the summer of 2022, the whole world experienced abnormal weather phenomena. Europe faced the worst drought in the last 500 years. High temperatures were also recorded in other countries. All these problems are caused by climate change, the cause of which is human activity. And the worst thing that people can do in this difficult time is to start an invasion of a neighboring country, thereby increasing greenhouse gas emissions many times over, creating hype around carbon fuels, and calling into question the goal of achieving climate neutrality. This is exactly what Russia did in February 2022 and continues to destroy with its actions everything that has been done by the world community to adapt to climate change in recent years. For example, in 2021, about 2 tons of toxic substances were released into the atmosphere in Ukraine. During the six months of the war in Ukraine in 2022, emissions into the atmosphere amounted to 46 million tons (Melnyk, 2022).

In the same way, the beginning of migrations due to the climate crisis and the disappearance of water sources is evident. Citizens of the African continent today are in displacement from their countries in search of land to cultivate and water to live. Situation that is not alien to other countries and continents. Of course, the biggest migration crisis today is the migration of Ukrainians fleeing the war. According to unofficial data, up to 20 million people left the territory of Ukraine. This is an unheard of number since World War II. But even without taking into account the migration of Ukrainians caused by the Russian attack, the global migration crisis in the world is not abating. Mostly people migrate to more prosperous countries, looking for a better fate. For example, the flow of migrants to the United States from Latin American countries, mainly from Mexico, reached such a level that the Americans declared the migration crisis a threat to national security, and the former populist president Donald Trump even decided to wall himself off from neighboring countries. At the same time, the desire of people to change their place of residence and earn more is justified, because they want to feed themselves and their families. At the same time, the cost of food in the world is constantly increasing. Accordingly, people need a job with a decent wage to be able to provide for themselves and their families. And if the migration crisis related to Ukrainian refugees can be resolved after Ukraine's victory over Russia and the return of Ukrainian territories, then the migration related to the search for well-being will not stop until the level of well-being in most regions of the world increases.

Therefore, taking into account the trends that formed during 2022 and taking into account the

dynamics of events in Ukraine and the world, with a high degree of probability, the world in 2023 will continue to be in a zone of uncertainty, with a large number of risks of a diverse nature that can potentially destroy humanity. However, with the joint efforts of the entire world community, it is still possible to change negative trends for the better. But there is not much time left.

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