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# Middle East and North Africa: Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War

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## Middle East and North Africa: Implications of the Russia-Ukraine War

The 118<sup>th</sup> Congress is examining the global implications of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine in terms of legislation, FY2024 authorization and appropriations proposals, and oversight of Biden Administration policies. This report provides information and analysis on the effects that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war are having on the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), a region of continuing strategic and foreign policy salience to Congress and to U.S. strategic interests.

Russia's war against Ukraine has both direct and indirect effects on the countries of the MENA region, imposing costs on the region's populations and posing dilemmas for its leaders. The Russia-Ukraine war and its side effects amplify the risk of instability in some MENA countries and introduce new complexities to some regional relationships. Since 2022, fiscal, societal, and humanitarian effects of the war have been observable in the MENA region, particularly because of increased volatility in energy and food commodity markets. MENA governments also have made decisions related to diplomacy, the provision of military support, energy production and purchases, and enforcement of sanctions.

- **Food:** Many MENA countries are net importers of food products and agricultural commodities, and several rely on imports from Russia and Ukraine. Russia's invasion, its imposition of limits on Ukraine's Black Sea ports, and its attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure have disrupted Ukraine's food and agricultural output, contributing to what Secretary of State Antony Blinken described in December 2022 as "a massive food insecurity crisis." Higher food prices and limited fertilizer and commodity availability have created economic, public health, and political challenges in some MENA countries. Food and agriculture input price inflation contribute to humanitarian needs in Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, and parts of Iraq. The Biden Administration has increased food and agricultural assistance for some affected MENA countries, including Yemen, Lebanon, and Syria. It also has issued food-related waivers on U.S. sanctions to support supply to other areas of the world.
- **Energy:** The Biden Administration has sought diplomatic and energy market support from MENA partners in responding to the war. These partners' responses have varied, as governments have considered their discrete interests, priorities, and ties to Russia and the United States. Some exporters such as Saudi Arabia have acted to maintain global oil prices at preferred levels for domestic fiscal purposes, while importers such as Jordan, Egypt, and Tunisia have faced fiscal and economic pressure from high commodity prices. The Administration's interest in supporting alternatives to Western Europe's reliance on Russian gas imports has led to high-level U.S. diplomatic engagement with Algeria, a top gas producer. Some regional governments may be using their relative coordination with or resistance to U.S. requests as leverage in discussions with the United States on other issues. Congress may assess the responsiveness, alignment, and needs of U.S. partners in the region as it considers the Administration's proposals for foreign assistance, defense aid, and arms sales.
- **Security Issues:** Russia's military presence and the operations of Russian private military companies in the MENA region reportedly have evolved since February 2022. Russia's war needs are limiting the availability of parts and equipment for MENA users of Russian-origin military systems. The Russian and Iranian governments have deepened their security ties into what U.S. officials now describe as a defense partnership. Congress and the Administration may continue to monitor the presence and operations of Russian forces, along with the war's second-order effects on Russia's defense exports and security ties to the MENA region.
- **Russia-MENA Relationships:** Russia's aggression against Ukraine and U.S. efforts to coordinate multilateral responses invite scrutiny of MENA countries' defense and security ties to Russia, their economic and energy cooperation with Moscow, their positions on sanctions against Russian targets, and their diplomatic posture in international institutions. Dynamics such as some U.S. MENA partners' continued energy policy coordination with Russia may be rooted in deeper shifts in priority and may outlast the immediate conflict.

Members of Congress may examine the relationships between U.S. policy goals in the MENA region and with regard to the Russia-Ukraine war when conducting oversight of Biden Administration policy, engaging foreign counterparts, and/or considering authorization or appropriations legislation. U.S. relationships with MENA states such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt remain multifaceted and characterized by the pursuit of multiple and at times competing objectives. Congress may engage Administration officials on strategies for best reconciling U.S. priorities in the MENA region and with regard to the Russia-Ukraine war.

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Overview and Possible Issues for Congress .....                    | 1  |
| Implications for the Middle East and North Africa .....            | 1  |
| Regional Security and Defense Relationships .....                  | 1  |
| Israel.....  | 4  |
| Iran.....  | 5  |
| Diplomacy.....   | 7  |
| Sanctions and Enforcement.....                                     | 10 |
| Energy Markets .....   | 11 |
| Economic and Fiscal Stability.....                                 | 14 |
| Addressing Food Insecurity .....                                   | 17 |
| Global Effects of Russia-Ukraine War and Responses .....           | 17 |
| Regional Implications and Specific Effects in MENA Countries ..... | 18 |
| U.S. Food Assistance .....   | 22 |
| Outlook and Possible Options for Congress.....                     | 22 |

## Figures

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1. Food Prices in Egypt..... | 16 |
|-------------------------------------|----|

## Tables

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table A-1. MENA Country Votes on Selected United Nations Measures Responding to the Russia-Ukraine War..... | 25 |
|---|----|

## Appendixes

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Appendix. MENA Country Votes on Selected United Nations Measures Responding to the Russia-Ukraine War..... | 25 |
|--|----|

## Contacts

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Author Information..... | 27 |
|-------------------------|----|

## Overview and Possible Issues for Congress

Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing war (hereinafter the Russia-Ukraine war) are affecting the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region directly and indirectly. The war poses strategic and diplomatic policy questions for MENA country leaders, and its second order effects on security relationships, energy markets, economic stability, and food security continue to have varying consequences for populations and governments in the region. The effects of the war challenge and/or benefit MENA countries differently; lower-income and conflict-affected countries face added pressures, while wealthier countries, including some energy producers, have adapted and are benefiting from higher export revenues.

U.S. officials and Members of Congress may examine how global security dynamics, strategic ties, and socio-economic conditions are shaping MENA counterparts' reactions. Congress may continue to weigh partner governments' policies and responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine when considering U.S. relations and programs with those governments. Congress may further consider whether or how authorizations and appropriations for FY2024 foreign assistance and defense activities in the MENA region might address conditions stemming from the war, including needs for humanitarian or food security assistance. U.S. sanctions relating to Russia, and how sanctions may be implemented in and affect the MENA region, represent other potential issues before Congress. The decisions of MENA region oil producers and consumers may receive continued congressional scrutiny in the context of concern over domestic fuel prices in the United States, global economic growth, and U.S. and ally efforts to maintain financial pressure on Russia. Congress also may consider how oversight practices and provisions developed to monitor and shape U.S. security assistance programs in the MENA region in recent decades might inform congressional oversight of expanding U.S. assistance to Ukraine and countries affected by the Russia-Ukraine war.

## Implications for the Middle East and North Africa

### Regional Security and Defense Relationships

Since 2013, Russia has intensified its security sector engagement in the Middle East; Moscow's military intervention in Syria from 2015 onward is the most prominent element. Successive U.S. administrations have elevated responding to strategic competition from both Russia and China as a U.S. regional objective.<sup>1</sup> Russia's stepped-up engagement appears to be the product of a sustained effort by Russian authorities, led by President Vladimir Putin, to restore Russia's economic, military, and geopolitical influence in a region once considered a key arena of U.S.-Soviet geopolitical competition. Other possible explanations for Russia's activities have included a) increasing alignment between Russia's military capabilities and its longstanding aspiration to conduct foreign relations befitting a great power; b) the Russian government's desire to diversify economic relations given U.S. and European sanctions; and c) a perceived opportunity by

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<sup>1</sup> In March 2023, U.S. Central Command commander General Michael Kurilla said, "Russia looks to aggressively expand its foothold of influence in the region amidst its war in Ukraine." U.S. Africa Command commander General Michael Langley said, "Russia is expanding its African operations, including via the Kremlin-supported private military company Wagner; destabilization, democratic backsliding, and human rights abuses follow in their wake." See Statement of General Michael "Erik" Kurilla, on the Posture of U.S. Central Command, and of General Michael Langley on the Posture of U.S. Africa Command, to the Senate Armed Services Committee and House Armed Services Committee, March 16, 2023 and March 23, 2023, respectively.

Russia's government to court regional leaders who seek leverage against U.S. pressures or, in the case of traditional U.S. partners, harbor concerns about the reliability of U.S. support.<sup>2</sup>

The Russia-Ukraine war may have implications for Russia's expanded regional presence. In 2013, Russia established a permanent naval squadron in the eastern Mediterranean, supported by its longtime naval base and logistics hub in Tartus, Syria, and under operational command of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.<sup>3</sup> Since 2015, Russian air and land forces have enabled the government of Syrian President Bashar Al Asad to contain the insurgency challenging his rule.<sup>4</sup> In the buildup to its 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia transited significant naval forces from its three other naval fleets through the Mediterranean into the Black Sea.<sup>5</sup> Since 2021, some U.S. officials have expressed concern about Russia's plans to establish a naval facility on Sudan's Red Sea coast.<sup>6</sup>

As Russia continues its attacks against Ukraine, it may restructure its expanded MENA presence. Reportedly, Russian forces in Syria repositioned and consolidated after February 2022 to enable possible redeployment to Russia, prompting Iranian and Iran-backed local forces that also back Asad to increase and shift their presence in Syria to compensate.<sup>7</sup> In March 2023, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) commander General Michael "Erik" Kurilla said Russian forces have "taken a small number of forces [out of Syria], some munitions, but generally, they stayed about the same."<sup>8</sup> General Kurilla also described "an increase recently in the unprofessional and unsafe behavior of the Russian air force in the region."

Western officials and media reports have alleged that Russian private military company (PMC) personnel, including the Wagner Group, have relocated from Syria and multiple other conflict zones to participate in Russia's war in Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> In March 2023, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) commander General Michael Langley said that U.S. officials "have not seen a shift" in Wagner personnel from Africa to Ukraine.<sup>10</sup> A U.S. senior defense official said on background in May 2022, "we know the Wagner Group has been operating in the Donbas [eastern Ukraine]

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<sup>2</sup> This paragraph draws on CRS Report R46761, *Russia: Foreign Policy and U.S. Relations*, by Andrew S. Bowen and Cory Welt.

<sup>3</sup> Jonas Kjellen and Aron Lund, "From Tartous to Tobruk: The Return of Russian Sea Power in the Eastern Mediterranean," Swedish Defense Research Agency, February 2022; and Nicholas J. Meyers, "The Significance of the Turkish Straits to the Russian Navy," Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), March 4, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> CRS Report RL33487, *Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response*, by Carla E. Humud. For inquiries on Syria, please contact Christopher Blanchard, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> Paul McLeary, "Dangerous Moment: Russian Naval Buildup Hits Cold War Levels," *Politico*, February 10, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., House Armed Services Committee, "The FY2022 Defense Authorization Request for U.S. Africa Command," hearing, April 20, 2021; Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Sudan's Imperiled Transition," hearing, February 1, 2022; Michael M. Phillips and Nicholas Bariyo, "U.S. Worries Sudan Is Close to Leasing Russia a Red Sea Base," *Wall Street Journal*, March 2, 2022; and Reuters, "Hemedti says Sudan should be open to naval base accord with Russia, or others," March 3, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Walid Al Nofal, "Amid war in Ukraine, Russia withdraws and Iran expands in Syria," *Syria Direct*, May 4, 2022; Times of Israel, "Russia said to pull troops from Syria to bolster forces in Ukraine," May 8, 2022; Tiina Hyypä and Aaron Pilkington, "How the Ukraine crisis could make the Syrian civil war worse," Monkey Cage (blog), *Washington Post*, May 24, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Testimony of U.S. CENTCOM commander General Michael "Erik" Kurilla before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 16, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11650, *Russian Private Military Companies (PMCs)*, by Andrew S. Bowen. See also Samer Al-Atrush and Laura Pitel, "Russia Reduces Number of Syrian and Wagner Troops in Libya," *Financial Times*, April 28, 2022. One March 2022 report suggested a few hundred Syrian nationals had travelled to Russia in support of Russian operations. Ben Hubbard, Hwaida Saad, and Asmaa al-Omar, "Syrian Mercenaries Deploy to Russia en Route to Ukrainian Battlefields," *New York Times*, March 31, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Testimony of U.S. AFRICOM commander General Michael Langley before the House Committee on Armed Services, March 23, 2023.

and that they have recruited from places like Syria and Libya and that they use Syrian and Libyan fighters, but I couldn't give you an exact number or exactly where they're geolocated.”<sup>11</sup>

MENA region purchasers of Russian weapons may face adverse implications from stronger U.S. and ally sanctions on Russian arms sales, Russia's defense industry and Russian PMCs, including via acts of Congress.<sup>12</sup> Russia remains the second largest exporter of major weapons systems to the region, after the United States.<sup>13</sup> U.S. sanctions and Russia's inability to achieve its military objectives in Ukraine to date have not led Russian defense partners such as Algeria and Egypt to publicly question or alter their ongoing arms procurement relationships.<sup>14</sup> U.S. officials have reported that Russia's defense needs have constrained the ability of the Iraqi military to access spare parts for its helicopters and have delayed shipments related to fixed-wing aircraft.<sup>15</sup> In April 2023, CENTCOM reported, “Russian-made aircraft in the [Iraqi Security Forces] fleet remain in disrepair due to the inability to acquire parts because of the sanctions related to the war in Ukraine.”<sup>16</sup> Losses in Ukraine and related needs may continue to complicate Russian exporters' ability to meet production targets or fulfill arms contracts for MENA buyers.<sup>17</sup>

Ukraine's defense trade partners in the Middle East also may face challenges. In May 2022, Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve (the U.S. and allied command responsible for combatting the Islamic State) reported that the conflict in Ukraine would idle some Russian-built, Ukrainian-serviced military helicopters in **Iraq** that support Iraqi army operations and that Iraq “can expect reduced operational status commensurate with the duration of the Ukrainian conflict.”<sup>18</sup>

Russia's performance in the war and U.S. responses to Russia's campaign may have mixed effects on the MENA region and on the region's relations with the two competing powers. Any decline in the attractiveness or responsiveness of Russia as a military partner and source of arms could create opportunities for the United States. At the same time, closer U.S. security partnerships with some MENA region governments might spur additional attention to longstanding debates over democracy, human rights, and the regional military balance.

**Egypt** may provide one illustrative example of these dynamics. In 2015, Egypt purchased several dozen MiG-29 multirole fighters from Russia. Three years later, reports surfaced of Egyptian plans to purchase Russian Sukhoi Su-35 Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft, a move that could have potentially triggered U.S. sanctions targeting Russia under the Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017 (CRIIEA; Title II of P.L. 115-44, the Countering America's

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, “Senior Defense Official Holds a Background Briefing,” May 4, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Section 231 of the Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017, Title II of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA; P.L. 115-44; 22 U.S.C. §§9501 et seq.). For more see CRS Report R45415, *U.S. Sanctions on Russia*, coordinated by Cory Welt and CRS Report R46937, *Russian Arms Sales and Defense Industry*, by Andrew S. Bowen.

<sup>13</sup> See Table 1 in Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2022*, March 13, 2023.

<sup>14</sup> For one such argument, see Kirsten Fontenrose, “What Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Means for the Middle East,” *Defense One*, May 26, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (LIG-OIR), Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress, October 1, 2022–December 31, 2022, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> LIG-OIR citing US CENTCOM response, Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress, January 1, 2023–March 31, 2023, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Michaels and Matthew Luxmoore, “Russian Military's Next Front Line: Replacing Battlefield Equipment Destroyed in Ukraine,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 25, 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) views reported in LIG-OIR, Quarterly Report to the U.S. Congress, January 1, 2022–March 31, 2022, p. 35.

Adversaries Through Sanctions Act—hereinafter referred to as CAATSA). Subsequent reports suggest that, in part due to U.S. pressure, Egypt canceled the Su-35 contract; Russia now appears to be providing those planes to Iran as part of a wider military cooperation arrangement (see “Iran”, below).<sup>19</sup> Congress may weigh the value of seeking an Egyptian pledge to cancel procurement of Russian aircraft in exchange for being able to buy American ones against ongoing concern about Egypt’s poor human rights record.<sup>20</sup>

## Israel

Leaders in **Israel** appear to be calibrating their approaches to the Russia-Ukraine war carefully. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a January 2023 *CNN* interview that although Israel opposes Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and provides Ukraine with humanitarian support, Israel seeks to coordinate with Russia so that it can have freedom of action in the air to degrade Iran-backed forces in Syria. Russia’s military presence and air defense capabilities in Syria could affect Israel’s ability to conduct airstrikes there,<sup>21</sup> but Russia has reportedly generally refrained from seeking to thwart such airstrikes via a deconfliction mechanism with Israel.<sup>22</sup> Israel has regularly targeted Iranian personnel and equipment in Syria, including those related to the transport of munitions or precision-weapons technology to Hezbollah in Lebanon.<sup>23</sup> In May 2022, a Russian-origin S-300 air defense system in Syria reportedly fired on Israeli jets for the first time, raising questions about the status of Israel-Russia airspace deconfliction.<sup>24</sup>

Despite entreaties from U.S. and Ukrainian officials, Israel has shown reluctance to provide lethal assistance to Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> Starting in May 2022, Israel has sent some protective gear to Ukrainian rescue forces and civilian organizations.<sup>26</sup>

Once Russia began using Iran-made drones in Ukraine during the second half of 2022, Israel offered to help Ukraine develop an early-warning system for its civilians, and also began sharing basic intelligence with Ukraine aimed at helping its forces counter drone attacks.<sup>27</sup> In November 2022, one news outlet reported that Israel had funded the purchase of “strategic materials” by a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member, which then transferred the materials to Ukraine for its use.<sup>28</sup> According to one Israeli analyst, Iranian military aid to Russia concerns

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<sup>19</sup> Grant Rumley, “What the Russia-Iran Arms Deals Mean for the Middle East,” *Foreign Policy*, April 19, 2023.

<sup>20</sup> See U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Egypt, 2021; and CRS Report RL33003, *Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jeremy M. Sharp.

<sup>21</sup> Ehud Eilam, “The Friction Between Israel and Russia, Following the War in Ukraine,” *Real Clear Defense*, March 1, 2023; Arie Egozi, “Israel Shifts to Standoff Weapons in Syria as Russian Threats Increase,” *Breaking Defense*, July 27, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Jacob Magid, “Russia says military coordination with Israel in Syria will continue as usual,” *Times of Israel*, February 27, 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Bassem Mroue and Josef Federman, “Israeli strikes on Syria intensify, raise tensions with Iran,” *Associated Press*, April 5, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Dan Parsons and Tyler Rogoway, “S-300 Surface-To-Air Missile Fired at Israeli Jets over Syria for First Time: Report,” *The Drive*, May 16, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Arie Egozi, “As Iranian munitions kill in Ukraine, pressure builds for Israel to reassess its Russian balancing act,” *Breaking Defense*, October 18, 2022.

<sup>26</sup> “Zelensky ‘shocked’ by lack of Israeli defense support: ‘They gave us nothing,’ *Times of Israel*, September 23, 2022; “In first, Israel sends 2,000 helmets, 500 flak jackets to Ukraine,” *Times of Israel*, May 18, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> “Israel offers help with air-attack alerts, but Ukraine wants interceptors,” Reuters, October 19, 2022; “Israel giving intel on Russia’s Iranian drones to Ukraine – report,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 24, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Yossi Melman, “Under U.S. Pressure, Israel Funded ‘Strategic Materials’ for Ukraine,” *Haaretz*, November 17, 2022.

Israel because Russia's use of Iranian missiles and drones could help Iran learn how to improve or adapt these weapons for future use against Israel.<sup>29</sup>

In 2022 and 2023, the United States reportedly withdrew 300,000 155-millimeter artillery shells from War Reserve Stocks for Allies (WRSA) stockpiles in Israel to send to Ukraine.<sup>30</sup> According to multiple reports, Israeli officials acceded to the Pentagon's request in order to avoid confrontation with the United States and because, according to one Israeli official, "it's their ammunition and they don't really need our permission to take it."<sup>31</sup>

In early 2023, Israel reportedly approved export licenses for the possible sale of anti-drone jamming systems that could help Ukraine down drones.<sup>32</sup> Israeli officials reportedly have claimed that this step does not change Israel's policy against providing lethal assistance because the systems are defensive and do not target Russian soldiers.<sup>33</sup> While Ukrainian officials appear interested in the systems, they seem to view them as less critical than air defense systems that can counter ballistic missiles.<sup>34</sup> In May 2023, Ukraine's Ambassador to Israel said Ukraine had begun testing an Israeli anti-missile detection system to extend warning times.<sup>35</sup>

## Iran

Perhaps no regional bilateral relationship has been more significantly impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine than that between Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Russian and Iranian governments have deepened their security ties considerably in the context of the war, with U.S. officials describing Iran as Russia's "top military backer" and their relationship as "a full-fledged defense partnership."<sup>36</sup> In May 2023, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said, "Russia has been offering Iran unprecedented defense cooperation," and that, in addition to Su-35s, Iran is seeking "attack helicopters, radars, and Yak-130 combat trainer aircraft" from Russia.<sup>37</sup>

Indications that Russia and Iran were deepening security ties began in summer 2022, when, weeks after President Putin visited Tehran, media outlets reported that Iran had begun transferring to Russia "hundreds" of drones.<sup>38</sup> Iranian officials also stated that Iran would provide Russia with surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missiles.<sup>39</sup> According to press reports citing foreign

<sup>29</sup> Eilam, "The Friction Between Israel and Russia, Following the War in Ukraine," *Real Clear Defense*, March 1, 2023.

<sup>30</sup> See "Emergency U.S. Stockpile in Israel" in CRS Report RL33222, *U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel*, by Jeremy M. Sharp. See also, Eric Schmitt, Adam Entous, Ronen Bergman, John Ismay, and Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "Pentagon Sends U.S. Arms Stored in Israel to Ukraine," *New York Times*, January 17, 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Barak Ravid, "U.S. sends weapons stored in Israel to Ukraine," *Axios*, January 18, 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Barak Ravid, "Scoop: Israel approves export licenses for anti-drone systems for Ukraine," *Axios*, March 15, 2023.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Dan William, "Ukraine hopes to protect Kyiv with Israeli alert system by summer," Reuters, May 4, 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Czulda, "Is Iran going on an arms shopping spree in Moscow?" Atlantic Council, November 10, 2021; "Russia and Iran Military Ties Deepening Into Partnership, Biden Administration Warns," Wall Street Journal, December 9, 2022; U.S. Department of State, "New sanctions targeting Iran's UAV and ballistic missile industries," January 6, 2023.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Rozen, "White House: Iran and Russia in talks on more advanced drones," *Diplomatic* (blog), May 15, 2023.

<sup>38</sup> David Ignatius, "Beware the emerging alliance between Russia and Iran," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2022; Ellen Nakashima and Joby Warrick, "Iran sends first shipment of drones to Russia for use in Ukraine," *Washington Post*, August 29, 2022. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had previously, in July 2022, made public an assessment that Iran was preparing to transfer hundreds of UAVs to Russia "on an expedited timeline." Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, White House, July 12, 2022.

<sup>39</sup> "Iran agrees to ship missiles, more drones to Russia," Reuters, October 18, 2022.



officials and unnamed officials not identified by nationality, in November 2022, the two countries reportedly finalized a deal to jointly manufacture Iranian drones in Russia; in January 2023, Iranian officials reportedly traveled to Russia to visit the planned factory site, which could produce over 6,000 Iranian-origin drones for Russia.<sup>40</sup> Russia has deployed Iranian-origin drones against a variety of targets in Ukraine. Iran has also reportedly provided artillery and ammunition to Russia.<sup>41</sup> The Biden Administration has designated for sanctions a number of entities responsible for the transfer of Iranian weaponry to Russia. According to one media report, U.S. and European officials “concede that there are no realistic avenues to stem the flow of Iranian military goods into Russia.”<sup>42</sup>

In exchange for the drones Iran has provided, Russia has reportedly transferred various “digital-surveillance capabilities” to Iran,<sup>43</sup> as well as U.S.-origin materiel captured in Ukraine, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems.<sup>44</sup> Iran may also purchase Russian Su-35 fighter aircraft, which could represent the most significant upgrade of Iran’s air capabilities in several decades; in March 2023 testimony, CENTCOM commander General Kurilla said of the Su-35 transfer, “We think that will happen at some point this year.”<sup>45</sup> Some Members of Congress have called on the Administration to impose sanctions under Section 231 of CAATSA, in response to such a transaction.<sup>46</sup>

Interpretations of enhanced Russia-Iran security ties vary, but many observers characterize the relationship as one of convenience, motivated more by shared opposition to the United States than by a deeper alignment of strategic interests.<sup>47</sup> Russia and Iran have a long history of mutual distrust, rivalry, and antagonism, but their antipathy toward and alienation from the United States appears to have compelled them to seek closer ties.<sup>48</sup> In the words of one analyst, “as long as the West builds on its pressure campaign against Russia and Iran, Moscow and Tehran are likely to pursue further integration as a collective response.”<sup>49</sup>

While increased dependency on the other for defense materiel has potential pitfalls for both Russia and Iran, the benefits of those transfers appear to have considerable material and strategic advantages for both countries. For Russia, Iran represents one of the few countries from which Russia can obtain advanced weaponry at a time of reported materiel shortages, and Iranian

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<sup>40</sup> Joby Warrick et al., “Iran will help Russia build drones for Ukraine war, Western officials say,” *Washington Post*, November 19, 2022; Dion Nissenbaum and Warren Strobel, “Moscow, Tehran advance plans for Iranian-designed drone facility in Russia,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Deborah Haynes and Adam Parker, “Iran’s alleged ammunition for Russia’s war in Ukraine: The secret journey of the cargo ships accused of supplying invasion,” *Sky News*, March 8, 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Robbie Gramer, “Iran doubles down on arms for Russia,” *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Dov Lieber et al., “Russia supplies Iran with cyber weapons as military cooperation grows,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 27, 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Natasha Bertrand, “Russia has been sending some US-provided weapons captured in Ukraine to Iran, sources say,” CNN, March 14, 2023.

<sup>45</sup> CQ Congressional Transcripts, “House Armed Services Committee holds hearing on the greater Middle East and Africa security challenges,” March 23, 2023.

<sup>46</sup> See letter from Representatives McCaul, Wilson, and Kean at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/mccaull-wilson-kean-urge-mandatory-sanctions-against-russia-iran-amid-significant-defense-transactions/>.

<sup>47</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “Drones embody an Iran-Russia alliance built on hostility to the U.S.,” *New York Times*, October 17, 2022; Dina Esfandiary, “Axis of Convenience,” *Foreign Affairs*, February 17, 2023; Michael Scollon, “Can Iran and Russia’s arms swapping sustain a lasting defense partnership?” RFE/RL, April 2, 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Dave Lawler, “U.S. pressure drives Russia, China and Iran closer together,” *Axios*, September 1, 2022; John Raine, “Iran and Russia: Unsteady axis,” International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 23, 2023; Daniel Drezner, “Is the United States creating a ‘legion of doom?’” *Politico*, March 19, 2023.

<sup>49</sup> Alex Vatanka, “Can the West stop Russian-Iranian convergence?” Middle East Institute, April 3, 2023.

weapons are relatively low-cost and easily replaceable. For Iran, the transfer of weaponry to Russia gives it the opportunity to test and calibrate the battlefield capabilities of its platforms against Western systems.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, their use in the conflict serves as an “important propaganda opportunity” for Iran to demonstrate its drone capabilities for “potential future clients,” according to one observer.<sup>51</sup>

## Diplomacy

Governments in the MENA region have adopted varying diplomatic positions toward the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing war. As in other regions, individual MENA governments may share U.S. and allied concerns for preserving international norms against aggression, but also may accept Russia’s stated rationale about potential security threats from Ukraine and/or may seek to preserve their own defense prerogatives or to maintain ties with Moscow.<sup>52</sup>

An Arab League statement released on February 28, 2022 called for dialogue to preserve security and end the fighting and did not condemn Russia’s invasion.<sup>53</sup> The Arab League subsequently offered to mediate between Ukraine and Russia and sent a delegation to Moscow and Poland for consultations in April 2022. In November 2022, the concluding statement of the Arab League summit underscored the League members’ commitment

to the principles of non-alignment and the common Arab position vis-à-vis the war in Ukraine, which is based on the rejection of the use of force and the adoption of peaceful solutions through effective adherence of the Arab League ministerial contact group to international efforts aimed at finding a political solution to the crisis in line with the principles of the U.N. Charter and taking into account the security concerns of stakeholders, while rejecting the politicization of international organizations.<sup>54</sup>

Gulf state officials have called for dialogue to resolve the war and have pursued varying engagement strategies with both Russian and Ukrainian counterparts. UAE President Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited Moscow in October 2022 and offered continued support for mediation, while in September 2022, Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abd al Aziz Al Saud reportedly negotiated the release by Russia of foreign fighters captured in Ukraine, including U.S. citizens. **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE** have remained aligned with Russia on oil production decisions under the auspices of the OPEC+ group (see “Energy Markets” below), while reaping enhanced revenues from oil price increases attributed partly to the war. They and other Gulf states also have contributed to humanitarian efforts to support Ukrainians through deliveries of goods and financial contributions.

Among Arab states, only **Syria** has voted with Russia consistently in United Nations bodies (see **Appendix**). Others have voted against Russia, abstained, or chosen not to vote on various questions. The UAE, while holding the U.N. Security Council presidency in February 2022,

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<sup>50</sup> Dion Nissenbaum and Benoit Faucon, “Iranian drones in Ukraine project Tehran’s power beyond Mideast, testing U.S., Europe,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 28, 2022.

<sup>51</sup> Steven Feldstein, “The larger geopolitical shift behind Iran’s drone sales to Russia,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 26, 2022.

<sup>52</sup> For discussion, see Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, “The GCC and the Russia-Ukraine Crisis,” Arab Center in Washington, DC, March 22, 2022; and Hudhaifa Ebrahim, “Saudi Arabia Offers To Mediate Russian-Ukrainian Crisis,” *themedialine.org*, June 1, 2022.

<sup>53</sup> Mohammed Abu Zaid, “Arab League following Ukraine developments with ‘great concern,’” *Arab News*, February 28, 2022.

<sup>54</sup> CRS edited machine translation of Algérie Presse Service, “31e Sommet Arabe: ‘Déclaration d’Alger,’” November 2, 2022. The Arab League ministerial contact group on Ukraine includes representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to the Arab League Secretary General.

notably abstained in the Council vote that month on convening a special emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly to address the situation in Ukraine. The UAE later voted to condemn Russian aggression but joined Saudi Arabia and several other MENA region states in abstaining in the vote on suspending Russian participation in the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Officially, **Egypt** has stressed the need for a political solution to end the military conflict in Ukraine “in a way that meets the interests of all parties.”<sup>55</sup> Beyond its official position, Egypt has continued to retain its relationship with Russia. Egypt relies heavily on Russian grain imports, tourist visits, nuclear cooperation, and arms sales (**see text box below**). In March 2023, Egypt hosted Russian senior officials for talks on advancing civilian nuclear cooperation and Egyptian grain procurement.<sup>56</sup> Egyptian President Sisi participated in a May 2023 mediation delegation of African leaders to Russia and Ukraine.

### **Egyptian-Russian Relations under President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi**

Since President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi came to power in 2014, he has strengthened Egypt’s relationship with Russia. President Sisi turned to Russia during the Obama Administration, when the U.S.-Egyptian relationship became more strained.<sup>57</sup> Egypt and Russia have deepened their ties in a number of ways, including through arms deals and joint military exercises. To bolster Russia’s support for political forces in eastern Libya, Egypt and Russia reportedly have a basing agreement allowing reciprocal access to airfields and airspace.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, Egypt and Russia reportedly have expanded their cooperation on nuclear energy. In 2015, Egypt reached a deal with Russian state energy firm Rosatom to construct a 4,800-megawatt nuclear power plant in the Egyptian Mediterranean coastal town of Daba’a, 80 miles northwest of Cairo. Construction efforts began in mid-2022.<sup>59</sup>

Various reasons could explain why Egyptian-Russian relations have improved under President Sisi, none of which are mutually exclusive. For one, President Sisi appears to have determined that Egypt’s national security interests are best served by having global powers compete for Egypt’s favor. As a lower-middle-income country with relatively high poverty and a military that relies on the appearance of strength for deterrence, Egypt seeks cost efficiencies for its military acquisitions. Part of Egypt’s rebalancing of its foreign policy may be seen as a quest to secure the most advanced military hardware on the most generous financing terms available. Egypt has turned to Russia and France to source naval and air force acquisitions (including fourth-generation fighters, such as the Rafale from France), while using U.S. assistance to maintain its existing stocks of U.S. materiel.

**Israel** has publicly condemned Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine through statements and votes in international fora, while seeking to retain constructive bilateral relations with Russia. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said in January 2023 that Israel would “talk less” about the war.<sup>60</sup> However, in February, Cohen visited Ukraine and pledged unequivocal Israeli support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, while also discussing cooperation with Ukraine against Iran, and promising \$200 million in loan guarantees for healthcare facilities in Ukraine.<sup>61</sup> A week later, Israel voted in favor of U.N. General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/6, which reiterated a demand for Russia to withdraw its military forces from Ukraine and called for a cessation of hostilities.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, Israel’s government appears to remain unwilling to provide lethal

<sup>55</sup> “Lavrov praises Egypt’s 'balanced stance' after FM Shoukry delivers Blinken message on Ukraine crisis,” *Al Ahram*, January 31, 2023.

<sup>56</sup> “Egypt’s Sisi discusses nuclear plant, grains trade with Russian officials,” Reuters, March 19, 2023.

<sup>57</sup> “Analysis: Egyptian Air Force Modernization,” *Jane’s International Defence Review*, November 10, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Adam R. Grissom, Samuel Charap, Joe Cheravitch, Russell Hanson, Dara Massicot, Christopher A. Mouton, and Jordan R. Reimer, *Russia’s Growing Presence in Africa*, RAND Corporation, 2022.

<sup>59</sup> Mirette Magdy, “Russia’s Nuclear Giant Starts Building of Egypt’s First Reactors,” July 20, 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Lazar Berman, “Back on track: FM Cohen overcomes diplomatic hurdles en route to thaw with Ukraine,” *Times of Israel*, February 17, 2023.

<sup>61</sup> “Israel promises cooperation with Ukraine against Iran after high-profile visit to Kyiv,” *Israel Hayom* (with content from *Reuters* and *Associated Press*), February 16, 2023.

<sup>62</sup> Text of resolution available for download at <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4003921?ln=en>.

military assistance to Ukraine,<sup>63</sup> but has sought to license the transfer of some defensive equipment. Meanwhile, in addition to providing various means of political support and humanitarian relief, Israel has allowed around 50,000 Ukrainian refugees to enter Israel, with about 14,000 of these refugees still in the country as of March 2023.<sup>64</sup> Israel-Russia diplomatic tensions spiked in May 2022 over comments by Russian officials suggesting that Israel was supporting neo-Nazis in Ukraine,<sup>65</sup> though leaders of the two countries later appeared to have moved past the controversy.

### Russian Actions Toward Jewish Agency for Israel

In July 2022, Russia's Justice Ministry signaled to Israel that it was seeking to close the Russian branch of the Jewish Agency for Israel, an entity that has branches around the world to facilitate emigration to Israel and run cultural and language education programs in coordination with Israel. Russia claimed that the agency violated privacy laws by storing personal information about emigration applicants, but many Israelis suspected that Russian concerns about Israeli policy on Ukraine and possibly Syria and Jerusalem may have motivated the pending legal action.<sup>66</sup> As of early 2023, the agency has reportedly frozen most activities related to promoting Jewish emigration to Israel from former Soviet Union countries (except Ukraine).<sup>67</sup>

While expressing support, in principle, for Ukraine's territorial integrity, and opposition to the use of force to settle international disputes, **Morocco** through mid-2022 declined to participate in some U.N. General Assembly votes on resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and suspending Russia from the U.N. Human Rights Council.<sup>68</sup> In October 2022 and again in February 2023, Morocco voted yes on resolutions critical of Russia, and in January 2023, reports described Morocco's decision to supply 20 refurbished T-72 tanks to Ukraine. Morocco's evolving approach may reflect a desire to balance economic and military ties with Russia, Europe, and the United States; Moroccan reliance on Russian coal and wheat exports; and/or concerns about potential fallout for U.N. Security Council resolutions on the disputed territory of Western Sahara, which Morocco claims.<sup>69</sup>

**Algeria** has close historic and defense ties with Russia, while its foreign policy emphasizes independence and sovereignty, including opposition to unilateral foreign military interventions.<sup>70</sup> Algeria has continued to abstain on U.N. General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion and voted against the resolution suspending Russia from the U.N. Human Rights Council.

Official **Iranian** government statements (and Iran's U.N. votes) have supported Russia, including by blaming the United States and NATO for the conflict. This support reflects close Russia-Iran bilateral ties, though some figures within Iran's tightly-controlled political system are reportedly

<sup>63</sup> Barak Ravid, "Scoop: Israel approves export licenses for anti-drone systems for Ukraine," *Axios*, March 15, 2023.

<sup>64</sup> Bar Peleg, "Israel to Extend Aid to Ukrainian Refugees by One Year," *Haaretz*, April 9, 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Reuters, "Russia says Israel supports neo-Nazis in row over Ukraine," May 3, 2022.

<sup>66</sup> Anton Troianovski and Isabel Kershner, "Russia Moves to Shut Down Agency Handling Emigration to Israel," *New York Times*, July 22, 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Zvika Klein, "Jewish Agency lowers profile in Russia, less activity in FSU countries – exclusive," *Jerusalem Post*, February 21, 2023.

<sup>68</sup> Statement by Moroccan Foreign Ministry on Twitter, March 2, 2022, 3:13pm.

<sup>69</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), "The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa," April 14, 2022; and Francisco Serrano, "War in Ukraine and drought at home: A perfect storm in the Maghreb," Middle East Institute, March 21, 2022.

<sup>70</sup> See CRS In Focus IF11116, *Algeria* and CRS Report R46937, *Russian Arms Sales and Defense Industry*.

wary of full Iranian alignment with Russia.<sup>71</sup> Bilateral Iran-Ukraine tensions also persist over Iran's 2020 shooting down of a Ukrainian civilian airliner.<sup>72</sup>

Russia was a part of indirect multilateral negotiations over a mutual U.S. and Iranian return to compliance with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA). As of May 2023, those negotiations appear stalled and U.S. officials maintain that the JCPOA is “not on the agenda” given a shift in U.S. focus since fall 2022 to Iran's provision of weaponry to Russia as well as the violent crackdown on popular protests.<sup>73</sup> In the context of closer Iran-Russia ties since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russia could also provide some support to Iran's nuclear program. Iran has reportedly sought material support for its nuclear activities from Russia, though Russia is arguably more likely to provide diplomatic backing (by supporting Iran at the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency).<sup>74</sup>

## Sanctions and Enforcement

Most MENA countries have not enacted their own economic sanctions against the Russian government or Russian business leaders. Oil production and purchase decisions by some MENA countries such as **Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** have attracted scrutiny and criticism from observers who contend that oil production cuts and the storage and purchase of Russian oil and oil products provide financial support that aids the Russian war effort and dilutes the effect of other countries' sanctions.<sup>75</sup>

The UAE also has been subject to U.S. and European official attention because of the transshipment of sanctioned goods such as electronics and UAVs to Russia, and because of financial flows involving Russian nationals and entities.<sup>76</sup> In March 2023, a U.S. Treasury Department official called the UAE a “country of concern” and said, “we are concerned that between July and November of 2022 UAE companies exported over \$18 million worth of goods to U.S.-designated Russian entities. Also, between June and November of 2022, UAE companies exported over \$5 million worth of U.S.-origin, U.S.-export controlled goods to Russia, including but not limited to semiconductor devices, some of which can be used on the battlefield.”<sup>77</sup> UAE officials say they recognize the country's “critical role in safeguarding the integrity of the global financial system” and have “clear and robust processes in place to deal with sanctioned entities.”<sup>78</sup> In March 2023, the UAE revoked the operating license for the U.S.-sanctioned MTS Bank of Russia.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Robbie Gramer and Amy Mackinnon, “Iran and Russia are closer than ever before,” *Foreign Policy*, January 5, 2023.

<sup>72</sup> Nicole Grajewski, “As the world shuns Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, Iran strengthens its ties with Moscow,” Atlantic Council, March 7, 2022.

<sup>73</sup> Ali Hashem, “Iran deal becomes latest casualty of Russia's war in Ukraine,” *Al-Monitor*, January 4, 2023.

<sup>74</sup> Natasha Bertrand, “Exclusive: Iran is seeking Russia's help to bolster its nuclear program, US intel officials believe,” CNN, November 4, 2022; Louis Dugi-Gros et al., “After Ukraine: Russia's potential military and nuclear compensation to Iran,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 20, 2023.

<sup>75</sup> Benoit Faucon and Summer Said, “Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. Scoop Up Russian Oil Products at Steep Discounts,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Sam Fleming, et al., “West presses UAE to clamp down on suspected Russia sanctions busting,” *Financial Times*, March 1, 2023.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, Remarks by Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Rosenberg for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes at the Association of Women in International Trade, March 2, 2023.

<sup>78</sup> Fleming et al., *Financial Times*, April 17, 2023, op. cit.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew England, “UAE cites ‘sanctions risks’ as it cancels licence for Russia's MTS Bank,” *Financial Times*, March 31, 2023.

The government of **Iran**, which has been subject to comprehensive U.S. direct and secondary sanctions for decades, has reportedly met with the Russian government to collaborate on the shared goal of evading U.S. and European sanctions.<sup>80</sup> Some observers have speculated that as part of this collaboration, the Iranian government may share with Moscow some of its sanctions evasion techniques, including the use of front companies and money exchange houses to move funds and the use of ship-to-ship transfers and blending to disguise the origin of Iranian oil.<sup>81</sup> Some Iranian vessels that previously had engaged in illicitly exporting Iranian oil switched in early 2023 to carrying Russian oil, according to one media report.<sup>82</sup>

More openly, an Iranian official said in January 2023 that the two countries have linked their banking systems through the Russian Central Bank’s System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS), which Russia developed as an alternative to the Western-based SWIFT international financial messaging system.<sup>83</sup> Iranian and Russian officials have also discussed and made some progress in developing the long-planned International North-South Transportation Corridor, which would provide Russia with access to markets in South and East Asia via Iran’s Persian Gulf ports, routes that bypass Europe.<sup>84</sup> In a December 2022 briefing, State Department official James O’Brien said of increased Russia-Iran trade via the Caspian Sea, “We’re concerned with any sort of effort to help Russia evade the sanctions....So it is an area where we’re watching carefully, both that route but just generally the Iranian-Russian connection as we go forward.”<sup>85</sup>

## Energy Markets

Russia’s prominent position in international oil and natural gas markets has led to uncertainty in the wake of its invasion of Ukraine, with existing energy trade flows and transactions receiving new scrutiny. With prices rising steeply for both commodities in the months before and after the invasion, the Biden Administration sought greater cooperation with certain MENA states in increasing global oil and natural gas supplies. While global oil prices have retreated—as of May 2023—from post-invasion highs, uncertainties with respect to the outlook for both oil supply and oil demand create the potential for price volatility. Natural gas prices in Europe and Asia surpassed historical highs, but in 2023 have come down to more normal rates. Russia and MENA countries’ decisions are a focal point in global energy discussions.

Russia and several other nations are party to an oil production agreement with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)—OPEC includes several, but not all, MENA producers. Russia, OPEC members, and some others—collectively known as OPEC+—had continued through May 2022 with planned gradual oil production increases agreed to initially in April 2020, although many members were producing below their OPEC+ quota levels.<sup>86</sup> In June 2022, OPEC+ members agreed to raise the target volume of production increases planned for July and August, including expanding Russia’s production quota under the agreement. In October

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<sup>80</sup> Matthew Karnitschnig, “Iran teaches Russia its tricks on beating oil sanctions,” *Politico*, November 9, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Nadeen Ebrahim, “If Russia wants to evade sanctions, it could learn from Iran’s playbook,” CNN, April 15, 2022.

<sup>82</sup> Chris Cook and David Sheppard, “Iran’s ‘ghost fleet’ switches into Russian oil,” *Financial Times*, February 7, 2023.

<sup>83</sup> Maziar Motamedi, “What’s behind Iran and Russia’s efforts to link banking systems?” *Al Jazeera*, February 8, 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Emil Avdaliani, “Iran and Russia seek new sanctions evasion corridor,” Center for European Policy Analysis, September 22, 2022; Jonathan Tirone and Golnar Motevalli, “Russia and Iran and building a trade route that defies sanctions,” *Businessweek*, December 21, 2022; Shuntaro Fukutomi, “Russia and Iran eye trade route with India to bypass sanctions,” *Nikkei Asia*, January 11, 2023.

<sup>85</sup> “Special online briefing with Ambassador James O’Brien, head of the Office of Sanctions Coordination,” U.S. Department of State, December 15, 2022.

<sup>86</sup> “Saudi Arabia is increasing supply—so why is the oil price holding firm?” *Financial Times*, June 7, 2022.

2022, OPEC+ announced that its members would reduce oil production targets by 2 million barrels per day, drawing criticism from U.S. officials who said it would “increase Russian revenues and blunt the effectiveness of sanctions.”<sup>87</sup> Prices declined in the wake of the decision in light of lower economic growth and demand projections.

Spare crude production capacity in the MENA region and globally is generally concentrated in **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE**. Officials in these countries reportedly declined some requests from U.S. officials in 2022 to engage in discussions on increasing production more rapidly, and both countries acted along with other major MENA producers such as **Kuwait** and **Iraq** to reduce oil output under the auspices of the OPEC+ group in the latter half of 2022 amid concerns about projections for lower global economic growth and reduced energy demands in 2023.<sup>88</sup> Saudi officials have called for expanded global investment in production to ease what they say are systemic limits that contribute to higher prices and constrain emergency spare capacity.<sup>89</sup>

In April 2023, officials from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, Oman, Gabon, and Russia announced a further unilateral output cut of 1.6 million barrels per day through the end of 2023 in a bid to maintain oil prices at then-current levels, which exceeded pre-February 2022 levels.<sup>90</sup> Analysts posit that Saudi Arabia and other oil producers will continue to act to support oil prices in light of lower growth projections, interest rate pressures, and inflation in prices for imports of commodities, goods, and services. Media reports in April 2023 cited oil industry executives and analysts in reporting that Saudi Arabia and the UAE import discounted Russian oil products for internal consumption and refining and export domestically produced oil at a higher premium, increasing their revenues, but also providing a market (and revenue) for Russia.<sup>91</sup> Storage and trade of Russian oil through the emirate of Fujairah in the UAE has increased.<sup>92</sup> The G7+Australia initiative to set a price cap on seaborne Russian oil reflects participants’ intent to limit, but not eliminate, trade in Russian oil and oil products.<sup>93</sup>

There are some indications that Russia and **Iran**, which have the world’s first and second largest natural gas reserves, may be increasing cooperation on energy issues in parallel with their deepened defense ties (see above). In July 2022, Iran’s national oil company signed a \$40 billion memorandum of understanding with Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom to develop oil and gas fields in Iran. While the agreement appears to confirm Russia and Iran’s shared goal of orienting their economies toward Asia, it is unclear whether Russia has the resources or strategic interest in developing Iran’s natural gas export capabilities, which remain extremely limited.<sup>94</sup> Historically, Iran, despite being the world’s second largest reserve holder, has been a

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<sup>87</sup> Jackie Northam, “The White House accuses Saudi Arabia of aiding Russia and coercing OPEC oil producers,” *NPR*, October 13, 2022. At the time producers were producing less than their then-target levels, and the actual effect may have been approximately one million barrels per day in supply reduction.

<sup>88</sup> Dion Nissenbaum, Stephen Kalin, and David S. Cloud, “Saudi, Emirati Leaders Decline Calls with Biden During Ukraine Crisis,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 2022.

<sup>89</sup> Phil Rosen, “Saudi Arabia warns that the world is running out of energy capacity,” *Business Insider*, May 10, 2022; and, Energy Intelligence Group, “Q&A: Saudi Energy Minister Highlights Oil Market Risks, March 14, 2023.

<sup>90</sup> OPEC, 48th Meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, Release No. 02/2023, Vienna, Austria, April 3, 2023.

<sup>91</sup> Benoit Faucon and Summer Said, “Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. Scoop Up Russian Oil Products at Steep Discounts,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 2023.

<sup>92</sup> Jeslyn Lerh, “UAE’s Fujairah port set for robust growth as Russian oil trade reshuffles,” *Reuters*, March 14, 2023.

<sup>93</sup> See Statement of the G7 and Australia on a price cap for seaborne Russian-origin crude oil, Berlin, Brussels, Canberra, London, Ottawa, Paris, Rome, Tokyo, Washington, December 2, 2022; and, Andrea Shalal, “Exclusive: G7 coalition to keep Russian oil price cap at \$60 per barrel,” *Reuters*, April 17, 2023.

<sup>94</sup> Vali Kaleji, “Iran and Russia: from ‘oil-for-good swap’ to ‘oil-gas swap,’” *Central Asia-Caucas Analyst*, January 17, (continued...)

minor exporter of natural gas, primarily to Turkey and Iraq, while importing some natural gas from Turkmenistan. With regard to oil, Iranian officials reportedly expressed optimism about Iran's exports in light of the war in Ukraine, but the war's effect on Iran's oil production and export volumes seems limited, especially compared to the potential effects of a revived nuclear deal.<sup>95</sup>

Discord in **Libya** disrupted oil production there in 2022, even as uncertainty about Russian exports and other market factors increased the potential importance of stability in Libya to energy markets. Production and exports have been stable in 2023, but remain vulnerable to potential interruption for political reasons.

While some European countries have engaged gas producers in the MENA region in search of alternative supplies, Europe's flexibility on natural gas supply is limited because most of Russia's gas exports to Europe, its largest market, are by pipeline. Some MENA pipelines are constrained by their landing point in Europe. Construction of new liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminals, including floating storage and regasification terminals (FSRUs), and associated pipelines—along with the availability of alternative supplies for contract—could increase European countries' flexibility over time, but current options remain limited and costly.

**Algeria**, already the EU's third-largest natural gas supplier, has drawn increased engagement from U.S. policymakers since early 2022.<sup>96</sup> Algiers has agreed to increase supplies to Italy via the Transmed pipeline, but exports to Spain via the Medgaz pipeline have fluctuated since mid-2022, amid diplomatic tensions regarding Spain's position on the disputed territory of Western Sahara. Despite Algeria's apparent willingness to expand gas exports overall (and thus reap a fiscal windfall from global energy price hikes), several factors have limited Algeria's capacity to do so in the short-term, including production constraints, a challenging business environment for energy firms, and high domestic demand.<sup>97</sup> Spain, which has the most LNG import capacity of any EU country, and France have agreed to increase pipeline flows to other EU members.

**Qatar**, which holds the world's third largest natural gas reserves, has announced plans to expand its gas output and LNG exports in coming years and has discussed new long-term purchase agreements with European customers.<sup>98</sup> Qatari officials have said they will not divert to Europe gas already contracted for delivery to Asia, emphasizing that, "Qatar is absolutely committed to the sanctity of contracts."<sup>99</sup> Entities purchasing Qatari gas may have discretion to divert gas to Europe, which Qatari officials have not said they oppose.

Qatari energy officials have stressed that no combination of major gas exporters can supply enough natural gas to Europe, on short notice, to compensate completely for a shutoff of gas supplies from Russia. Qatar's Minister of Energy warned in October 2022 that while European gas storage may prove sufficient through early 2023, European countries may face significant challenges after that in replenishing stocks and providing gas for current use until more global

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2023; Nikita Smagin, "Could a Russia-Iran gas partnership bear fruit?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 28, 2022.

<sup>95</sup> "Iran ramps up oil exports as China pulls back on Russian crude," *Wall Street Journal*, April 28, 2022; Alex Lawler et al., "Iranian oil exports end 2022 at a high, despite no nuclear deal," Reuters, January 16, 2023.

<sup>96</sup> State Department, "Secretary Blinken's Meeting with Algerian President Tebboune," March 30, 2022.

<sup>97</sup> Fuad Shahbazov, "Algeria Makes for a Risky Partner to Help Solve Europe's Energy Crisis," *World Politics Review*, May 11, 2022; Heba Saleh, "Algeria Struggles to Meet Rising Demand for its Gas After Russian Invasion of Ukraine," April 20, 2022.

<sup>98</sup> "Germany agrees gas deal with Qatar to help end dependency on Russia." *The Guardian*, March 20 2022.

<sup>99</sup> QatarEnergy CEO Saad Al Kaabi quoted in Andrew Mills, "QatarEnergy expanding in LNG, won't divert supplies to Europe," Reuters, October 18, 2022.



supplies come online.<sup>100</sup> In January 2023, Qatar announced it would replace a Russian firm in a joint natural gas exploration venture in Lebanese waters in partnership with ENI of Italy and TotalEnergies of France.<sup>101</sup>

On June 15, 2022, **Israel, Egypt**, and the EU signed an agreement that will allow for Israeli natural gas liquefied at Egyptian processing plants to be exported to Europe. Egypt currently imports Israeli natural gas (at 85bcm over a 15-year period) and will liquefy Israeli gas at its two LNG terminals at Damietta and Idku for re-export to Europe (in 2021 Israel exported 5bcm to Egypt).<sup>102</sup> Lack of transport and processing capacity is a major challenge for Israel and Egypt in becoming significant suppliers to Europe. There are only two pipelines capable of transporting Israeli gas to Egypt, and Egypt's LNG facilities are working at maximum capacity to meet foreign demand.<sup>103</sup> The companies responsible for Israeli natural gas exports are reportedly working to boost exports to Egypt to 8bcm/year by the end of 2023, and planning to construct a new onshore pipeline to Egypt with 6-8bcm/year capacity.<sup>104</sup> The same companies have approved investment in a project that could expand production and exports further in coming years, including via a floating LNG terminal off Israel's coast with a 6.5bcm annual capacity.<sup>105</sup>

## Economic and Fiscal Stability

The Russia-Ukraine war affects global markets and presents an additional challenge to MENA countries already grappling with pandemic recovery needs, high inflation, volatile financial conditions, and slowing global growth. For most of 2022, energy price increases relative to the pre-war period imposed an additional fiscal and economic burden for MENA importers, while delivering a fiscal and economic boon to the region's energy exporters. In April 2023, the World Bank reported that in the MENA region during 2022, "financial conditions for oil exporters remained unchanged or improved as oil and gas prices surged" while projections for non-oil exporters were more negative given a range of spillover effects.<sup>106</sup>

Like other oil exporters, **Saudi Arabia** and **Iraq** benefitted from higher oil prices following the invasion. In Saudi Arabia, dividends from state-owned Saudi Aramco helped generate a nearly \$28 billion national budget surplus and created fiscal options for Saudi leaders.<sup>107</sup> **Iraq** posted a comparable surplus in 2022, easing short-term pressure on its state finances. Iraq's decisions on spending surplus revenues may shape its ability to escape what the IMF described in February 2023 as "a self-perpetuating cycle of fragility" and a "social compact based on government provision of jobs and subsidies which, in turn, is entirely dependent on oil revenues."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Andrew England, "Europe at risk of 'much worse' energy crisis next year, warns Qatar," *Financial Times*, October 18, 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Bassem Mroue, "Qatar boosts influence in Lebanon amid multiple crises," Associated Press, February 4, 2023.

<sup>102</sup> John Ainger and Alberto Nardelli, "EU, Egypt Near Gas Supply Deal in Shift Away From Russia," *Bloomberg*, June 3, 2022.

<sup>103</sup> Marc Espanol, "Egypt's Gas Imports from Israel Hit all-time High," *Al Monitor*, June 7, 2022.

<sup>104</sup> Dania Saadi, "Israel's NewMed eyeing Leviathan expansion, floating LNG terminal decision by 2024-25," *Platts European Gas Daily*, February 14, 2023.

<sup>105</sup> "Leviathan group starts plans for Israeli floating LNG terminal," Reuters, February 21, 2023.

<sup>106</sup> See "Propagation Channels of the War in Ukraine and Sanctions" in IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook - Middle East and Central Asia - Divergent Recoveries in Turbulent Times*, April 2022.

<sup>107</sup> Abeer Abu Omar and Matthew Martin, "Saudi Arabia Rewrites Playbook for How to Spend Oil Windfall," *Bloomberg*, May 26, 2022; and, Rachna Uppal, "Saudi finmin sees decision soon on \$28 bln 2022 budget surplus," Reuters, March 15, 2023.

<sup>108</sup> International Monetary Fund, Iraq: Article IV Consultation - Press Release and Staff Report, February 3, 2023.

State spending on food and fuel subsidies poses a fiscal and political tradeoff for MENA region governments. International financial institutions have long recommended subsidy reforms that would better target subsidy spending and/or reduce it for select goods, but subsidy cuts or adjustments carry the risk of provoking political opposition and potential unrest.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, unaddressed or growing subsidy costs could pose mounting deficit and debt challenges for net energy and food importers.<sup>110</sup> In April 2023, the World Bank reported that in the MENA region during 2022, “almost every middle-income or lower-income oil-importing country announced increases in consumption subsidies” in response to factors affecting global prices for food and energy imports.<sup>111</sup> Among these factors were the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war. The World Bank report observed, “Although the enhanced subsidies depress domestic prices, they carry substantial fiscal costs, which might have large consequences for economies with pre-existing fiscal and public-debt vulnerabilities.”

In contrast, in **Tunisia**, the government has progressively increased domestic fuel prices at the pump, placing new strains on households already battered by high inflation, severe drought, and a 9% economic contraction in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>112</sup> Economic grievances initially helped generate support for President Kaïs Saïed’s decision in July 2021 to suspend parliament and assert sweeping executive powers; price inflation and other worsening hardships may fuel increased instability.<sup>113</sup>

Looking ahead, projected global economic growth deceleration and energy demand uncertainty suggest that oil exporters could face tighter fiscal conditions in the absence of developments that lead to increases in global oil prices, including intensification of the Russia-Ukraine war. The IMF projected in May 2023 that “an escalation of the war in Ukraine could lead to high volatility in commodity markets, shortages, and renewed price increases for energy, food, and fertilizers, fueling additional inflationary pressures” in the MENA region.

### Spotlight on Egypt

The international effects of Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine have been one major catalyst for the downturn in **Egypt**’s economy. Prior to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Egypt had been considered a leading destination for emerging market capital due to its high yields on foreign currency-denominated and local bonds.<sup>114</sup> Changing risk calculation among foreign investors has been evident amid the war’s fallout, inflation concerns, and slower global economic growth. The Egyptian government estimates that at least \$20 billion in foreign capital fled the Egyptian bond market in early 2022, as investors moved money out of emerging markets and into U.S. Treasury bonds.<sup>115</sup>

By late 2022/early 2023, Egypt faced shortages of hard currency and a serious fiscal gap. The government’s external debt had reached \$155 billion with one financial firm estimating that Egypt would need to repay nearly \$100 billion in foreign and domestic debts over the next four years.<sup>116</sup> Servicing Egypt’s debt consumes 45%-50% of the state’s budget. In fall 2022, the IMF extended a \$3 billion, 46-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Egypt

<sup>109</sup> Justin Ho, “The war in Ukraine is pushing bread prices higher in the Middle East. That could lead to unrest.” Marketplace.org, March 28, 2022.

<sup>110</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit projects that in Egypt, “Elevated prices for essentials will be testing for the regime in a country historically accustomed to state largesse. We had expected subsidy reform, but not on the accelerated timeframe that now appears necessary.... The risk of unrest has consequently risen, which the regime would respond to with force.” Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Egypt*, May 4, 2022.

<sup>111</sup> World Bank Group, *Altered Destinies: The Long-Term Effects of Rising Prices and Food Insecurity in the Middle East and North Africa*, MENA Economic Update, April 2023.

<sup>112</sup> *Al Arabiya*, “Tunisia will raise local fuel prices every month this year,” April 14, 2022.

<sup>113</sup> *The National*, “Tunisian Union Announces General Strike Amid Economic Turmoil,” May 31, 2022.

<sup>114</sup> Mirette Magdy, “Egypt Keeps the World’s Highest Real Interest Rate,” *Bloomberg*, April 28, 2021.

<sup>115</sup> “ANALYSIS-Egypt faces sharp rise in costs to finance proposed \$30 bln deficit,” Reuters, May 16, 2022.

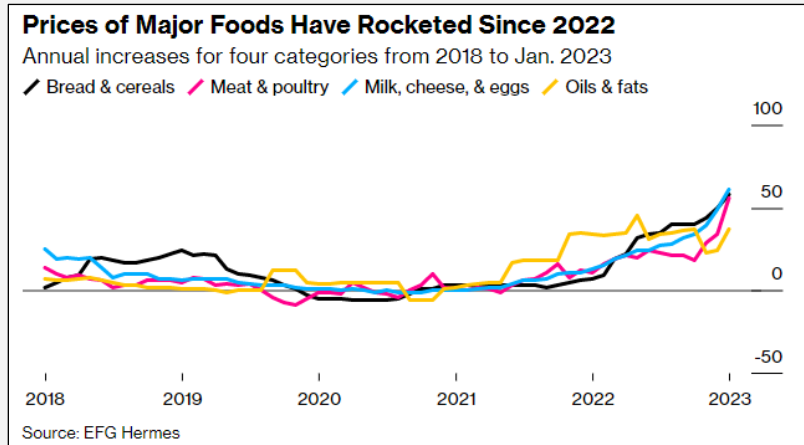
<sup>116</sup> Chao Deng, “Egypt Plans Spending Cuts as It Faces Economic Crisis,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 2023.

requiring a number of key reforms, such as the privatization of state-owned companies, including military-run corporations.

In early 2023, Moody's downgraded Egypt's sovereign credit rating to B3 from B2. As of March 2023, Egypt is the second largest IMF debtor (with \$13.4 billion outstanding IMF credit) after Argentina.<sup>117</sup>

Despite IMF lending, Egyptians are experiencing financial hardships across income levels. Over the past year, the Egyptian currency (pound) has depreciated 50%, and annual headline inflation reached 32.7% in March 2023, just short of an all-time record.<sup>118</sup> In order to comply with IMF-mandated reforms, the Egyptian government also has raised some fuel prices by nearly 10%. Although the government has retained certain social-welfare programs for the 30% of the population in poverty, Egypt's poor and middle class have been particularly hard hit by cost-of-living increases (see Figure I).<sup>119</sup> According to the World Bank, 60% of Egyptians can be classified as poor or vulnerable.<sup>120</sup>

**Figure I. Food Prices in Egypt**



**Source:** Bloomberg, February 16, 2023.

**Note:** Y-axis values are percentage.

The IMF warned in May 2023 that Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, the West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen continue to have “limited fiscal space and a high dependency on energy and food imports.”<sup>121</sup> The IMF said these conditions make these countries “vulnerable to further deteriorations in food security, including from renewed increases in food prices, persistent drought, and further disruptions to food supplies. This could stoke social tensions and weigh negatively on growth, especially” in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen, “where food insecurity is already elevated.”<sup>122</sup>

<sup>117</sup> International Monetary Fund, Total IMF Credit Outstanding Movement from March 01, 2023 to March 07, 2023.

<sup>118</sup> “Egypt's headline inflation rate increased to 32.7% in March,” Reuters, April 10, 2023.

<sup>119</sup> Samy Magdy, “In Egypt, government and poor struggle with troubled economy,” Associated Press, March 1, 2023.

<sup>120</sup> Heba Saleh, “Egypt's economic woe spreads across all classes,” *Financial Times*, February 16, 2023.

<sup>121</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Regional Economic Outlook. Middle East and Central Asia: Safeguarding Macroeconomic Stability amid Continued Uncertainty*, May 3, 2023.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

## Addressing Food Insecurity

### Global Effects of Russia-Ukraine War and Responses

Russia and Ukraine respectively were the first and sixth largest exporters of wheat worldwide in 2021; many countries in the MENA region rely heavily on both countries for their wheat and vegetable oil imports, though the share of imports in overall supply varies among MENA countries.<sup>123</sup> Declines in food commodity exports because of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine reduced supplies of some goods in international markets and led to temporary large increases in prices for commodities and derived products.<sup>124</sup> Higher energy prices (discussed above) and competition for reduced supplies also contributed to price increases. The World Bank reported in April 2023 that, "international prices of agricultural commodities—such as wheat, corn, and vegetable oils—have declined since their peak in mid-2022."<sup>125</sup>

In particular, Ukraine's agricultural sector has suffered from the war. For months, Russian forces hindered Ukraine from exporting grain by blockading Ukraine's maritime shipping routes. Russian forces also destroyed, mined, or occupied Ukrainian farmland and agricultural and port facilities, and seized, looted, and/or illegally sold Ukrainian agricultural products and equipment.<sup>126</sup> To facilitate Ukrainian agricultural exports, the European Union (EU) agreed to a temporary liberalization of trade with Ukraine and established land corridors for Ukrainian agricultural exports known as EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes.<sup>127</sup>

International pressure led to successful efforts in July 2022 to restore maritime-based Ukrainian agricultural exports in an arrangement known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), facilitated by the United Nations and Turkey.<sup>128</sup> The initiative provides "safe navigation" for the maritime export of Ukrainian grain and related foodstuffs and fertilizers. The parties have twice extended the agreement, most recently on March 18, 2023; the extensions are formally for 120 days. In March 2023, Russian authorities said they would agree only to a 60-day extension, but in mid-May U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres announced that Russia had agreed "to continue its participation ... for another 60 days."<sup>129</sup>

As a result of the BSGI, three Ukrainian seaports resumed agricultural export operations. Ukrainian agricultural exports have been on the rise since the BSGI began, although they remain

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<sup>123</sup> U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for Global Agricultural Markets and the Risks Associated with the Current Conflict*, March 25, 2022.

<sup>124</sup> See monthly reports from the FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) available at <https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>.

<sup>125</sup> World Bank Group, *Altered Destinies...*, April 2023, op.cit.

<sup>126</sup> See, for example, Mark Landler, et al., "War Raises Famine Fears as Russia Chokes Off Ukraine's Farms and Exports," *New York Times*, May 24, 2022; Declan Walsh and Valerie Hopkins, "Russia Seeks Buyers for Plundered Ukraine Grain, U.S. Warns," *New York Times*, June 5, 2022; and U.S. Department of State, "Russia's Disinformation Cannot Hide its Responsibility for the Global Food Crisis," June 22, 2022.

<sup>127</sup> On May 2, 2023, the European Union (EU) agreed to adopt "exceptional and temporary" measures allowing for the continued import of Ukrainian wheat, maize, rapeseed, and sunflower seed "other than [within] the five frontline Member States: Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia." The EU adopted these measures in response to the establishment of unilateral trade barriers by all these countries except Romania, due to concerns that Ukrainian imports were undermining their domestic agricultural markets. European Commission, "Commission Adopts Exceptional and Temporary Preventive Measures on Limited Imports from Ukraine," May 2, 2023.

<sup>128</sup> *UN News*, "The Black Sea Grain Initiative: What It Is, and Why It's Important for the World," September 16, 2022.

<sup>129</sup> Susannah Savage, "Russia Agrees to Extend Black Sea Grain Deal, but Only for 60 Days," *Politico*, March 13, 2023; and United Nations Secretary General, "Secretary-General's Press Encounter on the Black Sea Initiative," May 17, 2023.

below prewar levels.<sup>130</sup> Ukrainian officials have stated that Russian authorities often seek to slow down inspections; in May 2023, U.S. and Ukrainian officials noted that Russian authorities were impeding transit to the largest of the three ports included in the BSGI.<sup>131</sup> Under the BSGI, Ukrainian agricultural shipments (corn, wheat, and other products) have been sent to most countries in the MENA region, mainly Egypt, Israel, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>132</sup> Shipments to Turkey may support onward trade into Syria and Iraq.

Separately, the Russian government has alleged complications in the global export of Russian agricultural products (including fertilizers) due to difficulties with shipping, logistics, and financial transactions that arose with the expansion of international sanctions against Russia in 2022.<sup>133</sup> In response, Western officials underline that U.S. and European sanctions explicitly permit transactions related to the export of Russian agricultural commodities, including grains and fertilizers.<sup>134</sup> In addition, Russia and the U.N. Secretariat concluded a Memorandum of Understanding that accompanied the Black Sea Grain Initiative to facilitate “unimpeded access to global markets for food and fertilizers ... originating from the Russian Federation.”<sup>135</sup>

## Regional Implications and Specific Effects in MENA Countries

The Middle East and North Africa region is vulnerable to the food security disruptions created by the Russia-Ukraine war for several reasons. In general, the MENA region is among the top food importing regions in the world, with more than 50% of its food coming from imports. According to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), high population growth, low agricultural productivity, and scarce resources contribute to import dependency; U.N agencies and the World Bank also report that wide income disparities, commodity price changes, and currency depreciation are amplifying the vulnerability of segments of the MENA region population experiencing food insecurity and malnutrition.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> From July 2022 through April 5, 2023, total grain and flour exports were about 15% lower than during the same period the year before; wheat exports were about 29% lower. Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, “Export of Cereals, Legumes (with Products of Their Processing) and Flour,” as of May 4, 2023. Also see John Paul Rathbone and Ben Hall, “Saving Ukraine’s Economy: The Grain Giant Fighting for Survival,” *Financial Times*, March 22, 2023.

<sup>131</sup> Pavel Polityuk, “Ukraine Says Russia Prevents Black Sea Grain Deal Port Operating,” Reuters, May 23, 2023; and U.S. Department of State, “Department Press Briefing,” May 23, 2023. Also see Michelle Nichols, “UN Concerned by Lack of Grain Ships Going to One Ukrainian Port,” Reuters, May 22, 2023.

<sup>132</sup> United Nations, Black Sea Grain Initiative Joint Coordination Centre, “Vessel Movements,” accessed May 4, 2023 at <https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/vessel-movements>.

<sup>133</sup> Camille Gijs, “Russia Threatens to Limit Agri-food Supplies Only to ‘Friendly’ Countries,” *Politico*, April 1, 2022; Reuters, “Russian Ministry Recommends Fertilizer Producers Halt Exports,” March 4, 2022; Agence France-Presse, “Russia Halts Grain Exports to Some Countries to Secure Food Supply,” March 15, 2022; and Jack Nicas and Andre Spigariol, “Good News for Food, Bad News for War: Brazil Buys Russian Fertilizer,” *New York Times*, May 8, 2022.

<sup>134</sup> See Office of Foreign Assets Control, Russian Harmful Foreign Activities Sanctions Regulations (31 CFR part 587), General License No. 6A, March 24, 2022, at [https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/126/russia\\_gl6a.pdf](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/126/russia_gl6a.pdf). See also Giorgio Leali and Jacopo Barigazzi, “Don’t Fall for Russian Lies on Food Crisis, EU Warns Africa,” *Politico*, May 31, 2022; Associated Press, “US Backs Shipment of Russian Grain Exports amid Global Food Insecurity,” June 1, 2022; and David M. Herszenhorn, “At UN, EU’s Michel Blames Russia for Food Crisis,” June 6, 2022.

<sup>135</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the United Nations on Promoting Russian Food Products and Fertilizers to the World Markets*, July 22, 2022, available at [https://news.un.org/pages/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/MOU\\_21\\_July\\_UN-Secretariat86.pdf](https://news.un.org/pages/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/MOU_21_July_UN-Secretariat86.pdf).

<sup>136</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO & UNESCWA, *Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition: Trade as an Enabler for Food Security and Nutrition*, April 2023, at <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/CC2302EN>; and, World Bank Group, *Altered Destinies...*, April 2023, op. cit.

The Russia-Ukraine war “poses a severe supply side challenge to Arab countries” due to direct disruptions of supply chains for commodities and agricultural inputs, but also imposes secondary costs.<sup>137</sup> In February 2023, WFP reported that, “the ripple effects of the Ukraine conflict, combined with the impacts of other protracted armed conflicts, economic stagnation, currency depreciation, and food inflation, are triggering high levels of acute food insecurity across the region.”<sup>138</sup> According to WFP, “53 million people are currently food insecure across the region, marking a 50 percent increase since 2020.”<sup>139</sup> U.N. agencies also report that, during 2022, “food, energy and fertilizer prices reached record heights increasing import bills and putting further pressure on the international reserves of most food-importing Arab countries and, consequently, on their exchange rates.”<sup>140</sup> In April 2023, the World Bank reported, “average year-on-year food inflation between March and December 2022 was 29 percent in the MENA region.”<sup>141</sup>

The future effects of the war on food insecurity across the MENA region may vary depending on countries’ relative wealth and underlying social and security conditions. Domestic production factors (e.g., weather, irrigation, and fertilizer), market conditions (e.g., prices and substitute availability), fiscal resources, and social, political, and security conditions may influence food security in individual countries.

Prior to 2022, many countries in the MENA region relied heavily on Ukraine and Russia for their wheat and vegetable oil imports, with the share of imports in overall supply varying among countries in the region.<sup>142</sup> **Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Libya, and Israel** were the largest importers of wheat from Russia and Ukraine by volume in the region leading up to the Russia-Ukraine war.<sup>143</sup> Overall, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization estimated in February 2023 that the region’s “average wheat import dependency” on Russia and Ukraine was “around 45 percent.”<sup>144</sup>

Populations in **Yemen** and **Syria**, among the poorest and most conflict-affected countries, face dire food insecurity and, in some areas, higher fuel and food prices. According to the WFP, as of the end of 2022, an estimated 17 million people in **Yemen** were food insecure, of whom 6.1 were facing emergency conditions.<sup>145</sup> As of mid-2022, 3.5 million Yemenis were acutely malnourished.<sup>146</sup> **Yemen** imports over 50% of its total wheat supply from the Black Sea region, including flour re-exports from other MENA states.<sup>147</sup>

As of 2022, **Syria** imported two-thirds of its food and oil supply, and imported most of its wheat from Russia.<sup>148</sup> According to U.S. government oversight reporting, as of the end of 2022, the

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<sup>137</sup> FAO, *Food Policy Monitoring in the Near East and North Africa Region*, 4th Quarter, 2022.

<sup>138</sup> WFP, *Global Operational Response Plan 2023*, Update #7, February 2023, p. 41.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO & UNESCWA, *Near East and North Africa – Regional Overview...*, April 2023, op. cit.

<sup>141</sup> World Bank Group, *Altered Destinies...*, April 2023, op. cit.

<sup>142</sup> FAO, “The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the current conflict,” March 25, 2022.

<sup>143</sup> U.N. COMTRADE data, HS-1001 – Wheat and Meslin, 2019-2022, available at <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

<sup>144</sup> WFP, *Global Operational Response Plan 2023*, Update #7, February 2023, p. 41.

<sup>145</sup> WFP 2023 Yemen Situation Report #2 - February 2023, March 29, 2023.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> International Food Policy Research Institute, “The Russian invasion of Ukraine threatens to further exacerbate the food insecurity emergency in Yemen,” March 23, 2022.

<sup>148</sup> World Bank, “Compounded stress: The impact of the war in Ukraine on the Middle East and North Africa,” March 7, 2022.

State Department viewed the economy in Syria as “at its worst” since 2011, “with humanitarian needs at the highest level seen so far.”<sup>149</sup> State Department officials assessed in March 2023 that “the economic situation in northeast Syria continued to be difficult with high commodity price fluctuations, the continued devaluation of the Syrian pound, reduced agriculture yield due to drought conditions, and the aftermath of the February 2023 earthquakes in northwestern Syria.”<sup>150</sup> In March 2023, USAID and the State Department reported that these factors, along with the “Russian invasion of Ukraine and the resulting global food and fertilizer supply crisis” had increased the need for stabilization and humanitarian assistance in Syria since 2021.<sup>151</sup> WFP reported in February 2023 that a fuel crisis in Syria was “crippling all aspects of life, and has pushed food prices to unattainable levels.”<sup>152</sup> In March 2023, WFP assessed that “Some 12.1 million people, more than 50% of the population, were food insecure and a further 2.9 million were at risk of sliding into hunger.”<sup>153</sup>

In **Egypt**, the world’s top importer of wheat by volume, the government has taken steps to reduce wheat exports and find new sources to compensate for the loss of wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine.<sup>154</sup> The government banned wheat and flour exports for the six-month period from mid-March to mid-September 2022, and Egypt’s General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC) approved additional countries-of-origin for its wheat imports.

Egypt’s food subsidies cost an estimated \$4-\$5 billion annually,<sup>155</sup> with the price of subsidized bread essentially remaining unchanged since the late 1970s, when proposed changes to subsidies led to riots and hundreds of protesters were killed in clashes with police. Cuts to the bread subsidy could generate protests and pose a challenge to President Sisi. The government has instituted price controls on the cost of unsubsidized bread.

In October 2022, Egypt approved a \$500 million lending agreement with the World Bank to finance domestic wheat supply chain improvements and increase domestic grain storage capacity.<sup>156</sup> Egyptian authorities also have moved to stimulate domestic wheat production, raising government purchase prices in 2023.<sup>157</sup>

In February 2023, Egypt submitted a request to withdraw from the Grains Trade Convention (GTC), which it signed in 1995 as a way of promoting grain trade and market transparency. Egyptian commentators claimed that Egypt withdrew from the international treaty due to its ineffectiveness to control global grain prices and Egypt’s ability to secure grain supplies from

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<sup>149</sup> State Department response to State OIG inquiry reported in LIG-OCO, Quarterly Report to Congress on OIR, October 1, 2022–December 31, 2022, February 2023, p. 74.

<sup>150</sup> LIG-OCO, Quarterly Report to Congress on OIR, January 1, 2023–March 31, 2023, May 2023, p. 71.

<sup>151</sup> USAID and State Department responses to inspectors general inquiries reported in LIG-OCO, Quarterly Report to Congress on OIR, January 1, 2023–March 31, 2023, May 2023, p. 71.

<sup>152</sup> WFP, *Global Operational Response Plan 2023*, Update #7, February 2023, p. 41.

<sup>153</sup> WFP, “Half of Syria’s population faces hunger as conflict passes 12-year milestone and earthquakes deepen economic woes,” March 14, 2023.

<sup>154</sup> In March 2022, the FAO reported Trade Data Monitor statistics that more than 70% of Egypt’s wheat came from Russia and Ukraine prior to February 2022. See Figure 15 in FAO, *The Importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for Global Agricultural Markets and the Risks Associated with the Current Conflict*, March 25, 2022.

<sup>155</sup> Amira El Fekki and Chao Deng, “Egypt’s Bread Crisis Fuels Fears of Unrest,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 24, 2022.

<sup>156</sup> “Egypt Stands to Receive \$600 mln in Wheat Import, Silo Funding from World Bank, EU,” Reuters, June 2, 2022.

<sup>157</sup> *Asharq Al Awsat*, “Egypt Relies on Local Wheat Production, Increases Procurement Price 50%,” April 13, 2023.

partners such as Russia and India.<sup>158</sup> Another report indicated that Egypt owed the International Grains Council, which administers the treaty, membership fees.<sup>159</sup>

**Tunisia** has been particularly vulnerable to ripple effects on food prices and supply. Tunisia generally relies on imports for about two-thirds of its wheat and barley consumption. The cost of bread and other basic foodstuffs, which the government subsidizes, is politically sensitive: Tunisia has a history of bread riots sparking broader political instability. Prior to 2022, Ukraine was Tunisia's top source of wheat imports (48%), with Russia providing another 8%; as of early 2023, Tunisia had shifted to import wheat primarily from the European Union and Black Sea countries.<sup>160</sup> The U.S. Department of Agriculture assessed as of April 2023 that "insufficient rainfall and high temperatures" would likely lead to below-average harvests in Tunisia, despite efforts to expand planting and irrigation.<sup>161</sup> President Kaïs Saïed, who since 2021 has rolled back Tunisia's nascent democracy and reshaped its political institutions, has blamed speculators for food shortages and accused political opponents of "starving the people."<sup>162</sup>

**Lebanon**, a former upper-middle-income country, has seen per-capita income and quality of life plummet since 2019 amid a severe economic crisis. In March 2022, the World Bank reported that Lebanon imported more than 90% of its grain from Ukraine and Russia and had only about a month of grain reserves at that time.<sup>163</sup> Lebanon has struggled to replace Ukrainian imports due to factors stemming from the country's ongoing economic crisis. Shortages of bread in 2022 exacerbated social tensions between Lebanese citizens and the country's large Syrian refugee population, leading some areas of Lebanon to issue curfews for Syrians and/or request that bakeries prioritize Lebanese customers.<sup>164</sup>

The World Bank reclassified Lebanon as a lower-middle income country in July 2022. The United Nations estimated in September 2021 that roughly three-quarters of Lebanon's population were then living in poverty, with conditions reportedly worsening since.<sup>165</sup> A \$150 million emergency World Bank loan to import wheat into Lebanon was approved in May 2022, with the first shipment arriving in February 2023.<sup>166</sup> In March 2023, WFP reported, "Basic living conditions are in continuous decline," and noted that a September 2022 assessment projected that 1.46 million Lebanese and 800,000 Syrian refugees – 42 percent of the total population – would be facing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity by April 2023 "due to the worsening economic crisis and increase in food prices."<sup>167</sup>

**Israel** is a high-income country in the region. For Israel's marketing year of 2022-2023, it received 26% of its grain and feed imports from the Black Sea basin (mostly Russia and Ukraine), a figure that was 30% lower than in marketing year 2021-2022.<sup>168</sup> According to the

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<sup>158</sup> "Growing Egypt-Russia relations," *Al Ahram*, March 15, 2023.

<sup>159</sup> "Egypt withdraws from UN grain treaty prompting sadness and concern," Reuters, March 9, 2023.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, and USDA, *Grain and Feed Annual*, "Tunisia," March 30, 2022.

<sup>161</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), *Grain and Feed Annual*, "Tunisia," April 7, 2023.

<sup>162</sup> Bloomberg, "Bread, Debt and Politics Whip Up Volatile Mix in Tunisia," April 24, 2022.

<sup>163</sup> World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa Region Ferid Belhaj "Compounded stress: The impact of the war in Ukraine on the Middle East and North Africa," World Bank Blogs, March 7, 2022.

<sup>164</sup> "UN body says violence against Syrians in Lebanon on the rise," Associated Press, July 29, 2022.

<sup>165</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "ESCWA warns: Three-quarters of Lebanon's residents plunge into poverty," September 3, 2021.

<sup>166</sup> World Bank Group, "First Shipment of 33,000 tons of Wheat Helps Rebuild Lebanon's Stock and Ensure Access to Affordable Bread," February 11, 2023.

<sup>167</sup> WFP, Lebanon Situation Report - March 2023, March 31, 2023.

<sup>168</sup> USDA, *Grain and Feed Annual Report, Israel*, March 22, 2023.



U.S. Department of Agriculture, “Tight supplies and political tension in Russia and Ukraine drove [Israeli] importers to source grain and feed elsewhere.”<sup>169</sup>

## U.S. Food Assistance

The U.S. government has provided different types of food assistance intended to combat acute insecurity and build resilience in selected MENA countries since Russia’s renewed invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In July 2022, the Biden Administration notified Congress of the planned obligation of \$79 million in FY2022 emergency supplemental Economic Support Fund (ESF) monies made available by the Additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2022 (P.L. 117-128) for agriculture sector and nutrition assistance in **Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen.**

The Administration also has cited the pressures created by the Russia-Ukraine war in its announcements of emergency food assistance for MENA countries. **Yemen** received additional emergency food assistance in 2022 as part of the Administration’s drawdown of the Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust. In September 2022, U.S. officials announced more than \$756 million in food assistance via the World Food Program for **Syria**, saying, “Putin’s war against Ukraine has further exacerbated the hunger crisis with a rise in food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.”<sup>170</sup> In April 2023, USAID and the Government of Ukraine announced the arrival of 30,000 metric tons of Ukrainian wheat in **Yemen** as part of a BSGI shipment funded by the United States, France, and Spain.

## Outlook and Possible Options for Congress

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the course of the Russia-Ukraine war, and its effects on global markets have several policy implications for the United States in the MENA region. The extent to which MENA governments are willing to coordinate their diplomatic, economic, and security decisions with U.S. policymakers will likely continue to vary. To date, it is unclear whether Russia’s military performance and setbacks undercut its appeal as a potential security partner for MENA governments. Russia appears to be seeking to counteract the effects of sanctions on its economy and security sector by redoubling its attempts to seek partnerships with MENA countries. Russia’s deeper defense partnership with Iran is one prominent example of this trend, along with continued coordination on oil production decisions between Russia and MENA members of OPEC+.

The extent to which U.S. policymakers prioritize diplomatic coordination with MENA governments vis-à-vis Russia over other policy goals may have long-term effects on perceptions of the United States in the region on other issues, including human rights. U.S. officials continue to monitor and respond to Russian security initiatives in the region.

More intense U.S. scrutiny of MENA governments’ relationships with Russia and of transactions by MENA-based entities with Russia and Russian entities could affect U.S. ties across the region. In February 2023, U.S. Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo said,

We have seen troubling patterns in several countries, including several of Russia’s neighbors, where the Kremlin has deepened its financial ties and trade flows as other markets have been closed off. We are providing intelligence and actionable information to

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> USAID, “The United States provides more than \$756 million in humanitarian assistance to meet emergency needs in Syria amid global food crisis,” September 14, 2022.

enable countries to stamp out sanctions evasion in their jurisdictions. And if they fail to do so, we and our partners are prepared to use the various economic tools at our disposal to act on our own. Officials from the U.S. and the governments of our coalition partners are also engaging with companies and banks in these jurisdictions to tell them directly that if they do not enforce our sanctions and export controls, we will cut them off from access to our markets and financial systems.<sup>171</sup>

Alternatively, there may also be opportunities for the United States to build on cooperation with MENA governments related the Russia-Ukraine war to achieve progress on other regional or global issues. Greater MENA region action to implement sanctions against Russian entities active in Ukraine, such the Wagner Group, could limit those entities' reach and capabilities in areas of common concern to the United States and MENA partners, such as Libya and Sudan. Joint mechanisms developed to facilitate the provision of military and civilians goods or humanitarian supplies from the MENA region to Ukraine could strengthen the potential for similar cooperation in other cases. U.S. and allied partnerships and programs intended to strengthen the resilience of agricultural sectors and food supply chains in the MENA region presumably could benefit the region over the long term.

The most practical and immediate implications of the Russia-Ukraine war for U.S. priorities in the MENA region may continue to be the societal effects of energy and food commodity market changes amidst otherwise difficult economic and fiscal conditions in key countries. Through April 2023, governments of energy exporters were buoyed by higher oil revenues and greater demand for non-Russian natural gas, but associated windfalls were being directed toward domestic initiatives and support to regional partners. Additional war-related commodity and energy market disruptions or other economic shocks could challenge those MENA governments with limited fiscal capacity and domestic resources and/or generate unrest. If new instability or confrontations emerge in the MENA region, U.S. partners in the region may prioritize limiting risks to themselves when they consider U.S. requests for cooperation related to the Russia-Ukraine war or other issues.

Congress may consider a number of legislative and oversight options in response to the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war in the Middle East and North Africa. These include:

- Congress may examine the global and MENA region-specific food security implications of the Russia-Ukraine war, and consider how and if U.S. diplomatic, financial, military, and assistance-based responses to the war can be calibrated to reduce food security impacts. Consideration of FY2024 foreign assistance, defense, agriculture, and other appropriations and authorization measures may provide opportunities for Members to shape future resources and authorities available to the executive branch, as well as to require the provision of information to Congress.
- Congress may conduct regular oversight of Administration engagement with MENA countries and U.S. assistance efforts, including by monitoring how the executive branch allocates food assistance appropriated by Congress, and assessing whether such activities are sufficient to meet current needs and achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.
- Congress might examine whether or how oversight mechanisms developed to enable U.S. foreign and security assistance to MENA partners could inform the

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<sup>171</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, Remarks by Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo on International Sanctions Against Russia, February 21, 2023.

development of oversight tools for U.S. assistance to Ukraine and other partners affected by the Russia-Ukraine war.

- Congress might review proposed security assistance and arms sales to MENA partners in light of partners' support for U.S. policy toward the Russia-Ukraine war and Russia's potentially diminished attractiveness to regional countries as a security partner.
- Congress might explore legislative options to engage with MENA partners and others to help encourage the expansion of non-Russian energy sources.
- Congress might engage executive branch officials on how to better ensure MENA partners proactively enforce and comply with U.S. and multilateral sanctions on Russia.
- Congress might consider whether or how regular appropriations and authorizations for enduring U.S. assistance might build greater resilience in the MENA region, especially for lower-income countries facing food insecurity and fiscal pressure exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine war.

## Appendix. MENA Country Votes on Selected United Nations Measures Responding to the Russia-Ukraine War

**Table A-I. MENA Country Votes on Selected United Nations Measures Responding to the Russia-Ukraine War**

United Nations General Assembly and Security Council Votes

| Selected Measures  | Yes   | No                   | Abstention   | Not Voting       |
|--|---|----------------------|--|------------------|
| Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine<br>A/RES/ES-11/6<br>February 23, 2023          | Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen          | Syria                | Algeria, Iran  | Lebanon          |
| Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine<br>A/RES/77/229<br>December 15, 2022 | Israel, Kuwait, Qatar   | Syria, Iran          | Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen                  | Lebanon, Morocco |
| Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine<br>A/RES/ES-11/5<br>November 14, 2022  | Kuwait, Qatar   | Syria, Iran          | Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen | Morocco          |
| Territorial integrity of Ukraine : defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations<br>A/RES/ES-11/4<br>October 12, 2022                        | Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen | Syria                | Algeria  | Iran             |
| Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council<br>A/RES/ES-11/3<br>April 7, 2022                               | Israel, Libya   | Algeria, Iran, Syria | Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen                   | Lebanon, Morocco |
| Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine<br>A/RES/ES-11/2<br>March 22, 2022   | Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, Yemen          | Syria                | Algeria, Iran  | Morocco          |

| Selected Measures  | Yes  | No                                 | Abstention  | Not Voting   |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Aggression against Ukraine<br>A/RES/ES-11/1<br>March 2, 2022   | Bahrain, Egypt,<br>Israel, Jordan,<br>Kuwait, Lebanon,<br>Libya, Oman,<br>Qatar, Saudi<br>Arabia, Tunisia,<br>UAE, Yemen | Syria                              | Algeria, Iran, Iraq   | Morocco  |
| Security Council Resolution 2623<br>(2022)<br>[On convening an emergency<br>special session of the General<br>Assembly on Ukraine.]<br>S/RES/2623(2022)<br>February 27, 2022                                 |  |                                    | United Arab Emirates  |  |
| Situation of human rights in the<br>temporarily occupied Autonomous<br>Republic of Crimea and the city of<br>Sevastopol, Ukraine<br>A/RES/76/179<br>December 16, 2021  | Israel   | Iran,<br>Saudi<br>Arabia,<br>Syria | Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt,<br>Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait,<br>Libya, Oman, Qatar,<br>Tunisia, UAE, Yemen                           | Lebanon,<br>Morocco  |
| Problem of the militarization of the<br>Autonomous Republic of Crimea<br>and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine,<br>as well as parts of the Black Sea<br>and the Sea of Azov<br>A/RES/76/70<br>December 9, 2021 | Israel   | Iran,<br>Syria                     | Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt,<br>Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait,<br>Lebanon, Libya, Oman,<br>Qatar, Saudi Arabia,<br>Tunisia, UAE, Yemen | Morocco  |
| Territorial Integrity of Ukraine<br>A/RES/68/262<br>March 27, 2014   | Bahrain, Jordan,<br>Kuwait, Libya,<br>Qatar, Saudi<br>Arabia, Tunisia  | Syria                              | Algeria, Egypt, Iraq  | Iran, Israel,<br>Lebanon,<br>Morocco,<br>Oman, UAE,<br>Yemen |

**Source:** United Nations Digital Library.

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