



Climate warning



Professor Aniebiet Inyang Ntui

4 w •  Climate Advocate



Vladimir Putin

 Climate warning

War on Nature: How the Russian Invasion of Ukraine is Devastating the Environment

The ongoing invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation which began a year ago has caused extensive environmental damage that poses a severe threat to the climate and biodiversity of the region. The conflict has resulted in the destruction of critical ecosystems, the release of pollutants into the air and water, and the displacement of both people and wildlife.

One of the most immediate impacts of the invasion on the environment is the destruction of forests, wetlands, and other vital ecosystems. Russian forces have cleared vast areas of land for military use, destroying essential habitats for numerous plant and animal species. This loss of biodiversity not only affects the ecosystem but also contributes to climate change. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, and the loss of forests results in the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, exacerbating global warming. The United Nations Environmental Programme has estimated that the conflict has resulted in the destruction of 27,000 hectares of forests and the loss of 4,000 hectares of wetlands. These ecosystems play a vital role in regulating the climate by sequestering carbon and filtering water, among other functions. The loss of these ecosystems has significant implications for the environment and human societies.

The war has also led to the release of large amounts of greenhouse gases, which contribute to global warming and climate change. The burning of oil fields in Ukraine has released carbon dioxide that could potentially increase global temperatures by up to 0.7 degrees Celsius, according to the European Geosciences Union. Although seemingly small, this increase can have significant consequences for the climate.

Furthermore, the conflict has resulted in the release of pollutants into the air, soil, and water. Heavy machinery and military vehicles have released particulate matter and other pollutants into the air, causing respiratory problems and other health issues for both humans and wildlife. Explosives and other weapons have contaminated the soil and water, posing a significant threat to the health of people and animals in the area.

The decline in the population of numerous delicate species, including wolves, lynxes, and birds of prey, is another devastating impact of the conflict. This loss of biodiversity has a significant impact on the functioning of ecosystems, affecting everything from soil health to pollination and nutrient cycling.

The environmental damage caused by the conflict also has economic implications. The loss of ecosystems reduces the potential for eco-tourism, an important source of revenue for Ukraine. The contamination of soil

and water can lead to reduced agricultural productivity, affecting the livelihoods of farmers and exacerbating food insecurity in the region.

The long-term effects of the conflict on the environment are difficult to predict, but they are likely to be severe. The destruction of ecosystems and the release of pollutants into the air and water will have lasting impacts on the climate and biodiversity of the region. The displacement of people and wildlife will likely lead to ongoing environmental degradation and continued loss of biodiversity.

It is crucial to recognize that the effects of the ongoing conflict on the environment do not stay confined to the region. The release of pollutants into the air contributes to global warming, and the loss of biodiversity affects the functioning of ecosystems worldwide. As the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his remarks on the situation in Ukraine, "Environmental destruction is not just a local problem; it is a global threat."

The destruction of ecosystems, release of pollutants into the air and water, and displacement of people and wildlife all contribute to ongoing environmental degradation that will have lasting impacts on the region and the world. As we confront the urgent challenges of the climate and biodiversity crises, it is essential to recognize the role of the illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia in exacerbating these challenges and to work towards peaceful solutions that prioritize the health of the only known habitable planet.

About the Author:

Aniebiet Inyang Ntui is a Nigerian diplomat and professor who has served as the Ambassador of the EU's European Climate Pact since December 2022. She was named by the Web of Science as the "Most Read Researcher in Nigeria" and is the current University Librarian at the University of Calabar. -

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Damage to industrial facilities has caused heavy pollution, exposing residents to toxic chemicals and contaminated water.

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Rashid Kamau · · 4 w

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Kevin ·  · 4 w

The long term effects of the war on the environment will be felt in due course.

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