

## **EDITORIAL: Mr. Putin, stop sabotaging the Black Sea Grain Initiative**

***РЕДАКЦІЯ: Пане путін, припиніть саботувати Чорноморську зернову ініціативу***

*16 липня росія в односторонньому порядку оголосила про призупинення Чорноморської зернової ініціативи, міжнародної угоди про безпечне транспортування продовольства з українських портів. Ситуація незмінно погіршуватиметься із припиненням експорту продовольства з України, однієї з головних житниць світу. Автори редакційної статті закликають росію негайно відкликати свою заяву. росія деякий час заявляла, що фінансові санкції Заходу негативно вплинули на її власний експорт зерна та добрив. Але, на думку авторів, росії потрібно пам'ятати, що ці санкції були введені через її власне незаконне вторгнення в Україну. І саме ця війна зробила Чорне море менш безпечним для суден, що призвело до затримок у постачанні російського експорту зерна. Автори наголошують, що не можна дозволити росії ігнорувати ці факти і діяти як жертва. Якщо росія планує змусити Захід пом'якшити санкції в обмін на дотримання Чорноморської зернової ініціативи, це було б рівнозначно взяттю вразливих людей світу в заручники. Це було б безсовісним актом нелюдності. Автори завершують статтю висновком, що чим довше росія залишатиметься глухою до благань країн, що розвиваються, тим глибшою буде її ізоляція від міжнародної спільноти.*

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Russia on July 16 unilaterally announced the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an international accord on the safe transportation of foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports.

Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine led to a complete halt of maritime grain shipments from Ukraine, causing world food prices to soar and energy prices to skyrocket, dramatically increasing the threat of famine in poor nations.

The situation will invariably worsen with the end of food exports from Ukraine, one of the world's major granaries. We call on Russia to retract its announcement at once.

The main pillars of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July last year, are to ensure the safety of ships in the Black Sea carrying food export from Ukraine, and to inspect those ships' cargoes.

Russia has asserted for some time that its own grain and fertilizer exports have been negatively impacted by the West's financial sanctions.

But Russia needs to remember that those sanctions were imposed because of its own illegal invasion of Ukraine. And it is this war that has rendered the Black Sea less safe for ships, consequently causing delays in the shipment of Russian grain exports.

Russia must not be allowed to ignore these facts and act like a victim.

If Russia is scheming to get the West to relax the sanctions in exchange for honoring the Black Sea Grain Initiative, that would be tantamount to taking the world's vulnerable people hostage. That would be an unconscionable act of inhumanity.

Moreover, it is doubtful that Russia has always honored the initiative in good faith.

The accord was initially meant to last for 120 days but the duration was extended three times, while Russia continued to sabotage it with temporary suspensions and shorter extensions.

It has also been pointed out that Russia has intentionally delayed cargo inspections to obstruct the shipment of Ukrainian exports.

In Poland and Hungary, where some of that delayed Ukrainian grain eventually got there by an overland route, local farmers reacted by forcing their governments to impose a temporary import ban.

Russia must welcome this sort of chaos in Europe, thinking it serves its own interest.

The leaders of seven African nations visited Russia last month to convey to President Vladimir Putin the dire economic problems their countries are facing and to demand an end to the war in Ukraine.

But Putin countered with the argument that the food crisis had nothing to do with Russia's military campaigns in Ukraine, and insisted that the availability of grain exports from Ukraine will not make the problem go away.

The longer Russia remains deaf to the pleas from developing nations, the deeper its isolation from the international community will grow.

We hope the United Nations and Turkey will persist in negotiating with Russia over the continuation of grain exports from Ukraine. We call on Russia to respond sincerely to global humanitarian efforts.

After nearly 18 months of war, much of Ukraine's farm belt lies devastated. This year's wheat production is expected to shrink drastically, as it did last year.

Some farmland areas were sewn with landmines while others were flooded after the willful destruction of a major dam. There is no avoiding the long-term damage to the nation's farming industry.

The only solution lies in Russia's total withdrawal from Ukraine.