

DEBUNKING RUSSIAN NARRATIVES AROUND THE BLACK SEA GRAIN INITIATIVE

August 2023

The Kremlin continues to use grain as another tool of war against Ukraine and the world, including those it calls "allies." For example, one of the central narratives of Russian propaganda is that "Russia plays a key role in ensuring food security in African countries." But how close is this to the truth?

The Center for Food and Land Use Research (**KSE Agrocenter**¹) team has thoroughly researched the main Russian narratives and manipulations regarding the grain deal and debunked them with facts and figures.

DOES UKRAINE NOT SUPPLY GRAIN TO LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES?

Contrary to the belief that Ukraine has not supplied grain to low-income countries during the Grain Deal, the data shows that Ukraine has indeed catered to these nations, albeit to a lesser extent than high-income or upper-middle-income countries. This discrepancy can be attributed to the higher demand from wealthier nations.

However, Ukraine has not neglected lower-income countries. In the 2021/22 season, Ukraine exported **around 5.6 million tons of grain** to lower-middle-income countries and **0.8 million tons** to low-income countries².

Destinations of Ukrainian agricultural commodities transported under the Grain Initiative by World Bank income group



Source: UN Black Sea Initiative Data.

Furthermore, Ukraine has committed to humanitarian efforts, delivering **more than 0.7 million tons of wheat** to low-income African countries under the "Grain from Ukraine" initiative, part of the UN World Food Programme.

¹ <https://kse.ua/kse-impact/center-for-food-and-land-use-research-c4flur/>

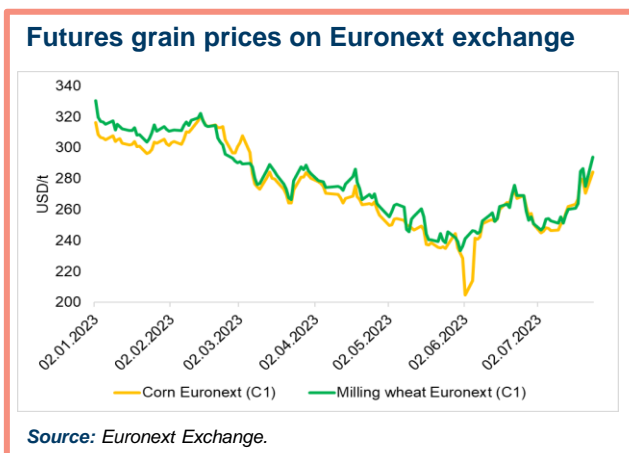
² <https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/data>

IS UKRAINE'S ROLE IN GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY EXAGGERATED?

The assertion that Ukrainian grain is insignificant for global food security is far from the truth. In 2021, Ukraine was a major player in the global grain market, being the largest exporter of sunflower oil, the third-largest exporter of corn, and the fifth-largest wheat exporter³.

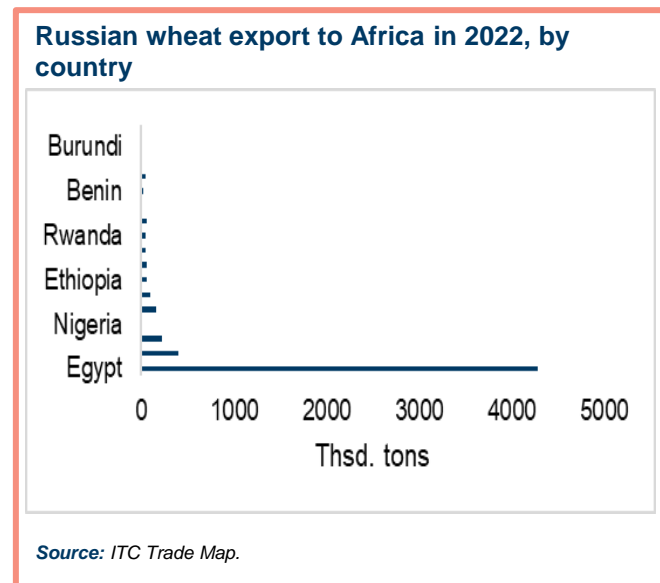
According to the KSE Agrocenter estimates, as of 2022, more than **400 million people** worldwide depend on Ukrainian grain⁴.

The critical role of Ukraine in global food security was underscored when futures grain prices rose by more than **30 USD/t** (around 11%) following Russia's announcement of its withdrawal from the Grain Deal on July 17, 2023.



RUSSIA ENSURES FOOD SECURITY IN LOW-INCOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES: MYTH OR REALITY?

The belief that Russia ensures food security in low-income African countries is inaccurate. Data shows that the share of low-income African countries (in the sub-Saharan region) in Russia's total grain exports is relatively low.



According to ITC Trade Map, in 2022, Russia exported 5.5 million tons of wheat to African countries, with Egypt being the largest importer, accounting for 29% of total Russian wheat export⁵. However, the share of sub-Saharan African countries in Russian wheat exports **did not exceed 5%** for the observed period.

HELP IN WORDS OR DEEDS?

Russia's contributions to the UN World Food Programme have been on a downward trend in recent years. In 2022, Russia's share in total contribution to the WFP was a mere **0.2%**, compared to Germany's 13%⁶.

Despite a recent pledge of \$10 million in food aid to four African countries⁷, Russia's overall contribution remains minimal, with no confirmed reports of independent humanitarian programs.

³ <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/app/index.html#/app/home>

⁴ <https://kse.ua/ua/about-the-school/news/russian-invasion-in-ukraine-could-threaten-global-food-security-and-starve-hundreds-of-millions-globally/>

⁵ <https://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.wfp.org/funding>

⁷ <https://northafricapost.com/68894-russia-to-send-10million-in-food-aid-to-four-african-countries.html>

WHY IS RUSSIA MANIPULATING?

The facts again confirm that Ukraine is crucial in ensuring global food security by supplying grain to high- and low-income countries and actively participating in humanitarian programs, which is not the case with Russia.

The narratives about its role promoted at various levels are only part of a broader strategy aimed at obtaining additional benefits, including the continuation of the war against Ukraine.

Such actions are already harming global food security, access to grain and fertilizers for the world's population.

Therefore, when you hear similar theses from the media or social media, we advise you to check the information carefully and not fall for outright manipulation, which Russia does not neglect in its ongoing war against Ukraine.

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