

“Uniting for Global Food Security” in Berlin - Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine is Creating Food Insecurity Worldwide

Open Letter by the following Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission to the Kingdom of Morocco:

Michael Cutts, Australia	Véronique Petit, Belgium
Plamen Tzolov, Bulgaria	Nell Stewart, Canada
Ladislav Škeřík, Czech Republic	Unna Mustalampi, Finland
Hélène Le Gal, France	Robert Dölger, Germany
Nicolaos Argyros, Greece	James McIntyre, Ireland
Armando Barucco, Italy	Hideaki Kuramitsu, Japan
Keeyong Chung, Republic of Korea	Jeroen Roodenburg, The Netherlands
Sjur Larsen, Norway	Krzysztof Karwowski, Poland
Bernardo Futscher Pereira, Portugal	Maria Ciobanu, Romania
Ricardo Díez-Hochleitner, Spain	Anne Höglund, Sweden
Simon Martin, United Kingdom	David Greene, United States
Patricia Llombart Cussac, EU	

World wheat markets have entered a period of extreme price volatility, due to the crisis created by Russian forces’ invasion of Ukraine. Shortages of food and fertilizer in many countries and accelerating spikes in food prices threaten to destabilize fragile societies, increase hunger and malnutrition, drive migration, and cause severe economic dislocation. The illegal and immoral attack on Ukraine has greatly exacerbated food security issues globally. All signs point towards even harder challenges to come.

There is no question about it – Putin’s aggression on Ukraine endangers the global supply of grain, stoking food insecurity amongst the world’s most vulnerable populations. The solution to this immediate crisis is simple: The Russian regime needs to stop its brutal aggression against Ukraine. The cause of the grain crisis is clear. It is easily seen in every wheat field that Putin’s bombs have destroyed, every farmer killed and every Ukrainian ship blocked in Black Sea ports.

Russian forces have prevented 20 million tons of existing grain from being exported from Ukraine to countries around the world, including Morocco. Additionally, credible reports indicate that Putin’s army, in contravention of international laws and agreements, may be transporting wheat out of Ukraine to Russian-controlled areas, hence withholding it from countries in dire need of grain imports.

The Russian regime itself has chosen to stop its own country’s exports of many sorts of grain, as well as fertilizer, or to export only to what it considers “friendly nations”. This aggravates the situation further. It also shows that President Putin is fully aware that his aggression threatens the world with hunger. The decision to weaponize food is Moscow’s – and Moscow’s alone, aimed at coercing the international community into accepting the invasion and occupation of Ukraine. But food security and nutrition are public goods, and hunger should not be used as weapon.

Russia’s leadership is blaming the sanctions imposed by G7 countries and others for the food crisis. This is false. It is merely an attempt to shift blame away from its illegal invasion of Ukraine. In fact, our sanctions explicitly exclude food supplies, meaning they do not prevent any country from purchasing wheat from Russia. The sanctions furthermore exclude agricultural commodities as well as other humanitarian and medical goods. Instead, those sanctions are designed as a means to stop Putin’s war machine, and to protect other countries’ sovereignty and territorial integrity (such as in Ukraine), as well as other countries’ food security (such as Morocco’s).

Neighbouring European countries to Ukraine such as Romania and Poland are coming to the rescue by transporting grain by land, as they did for a tender of Egyptian wheat last week. However, with much

lower capacity and at a much higher cost, this can only be an interim solution. The fact is that Russian warships are blocking Ukrainian ports, where millions of tons of wheat await export.

Coordinated global action is required to address food insecurity, with G7 countries and others playing their part. The G7 and other like-minded countries are standing by their commitment to support countries in this crisis generated by Russia's aggression. We are enhancing our cooperation to meet this crisis, through increased support to the World Food Program's activities, regional frameworks and support through bilateral assistance and national programs. Russia's government has failed to offer such support.

Morocco, like many other countries, is actively engaged in securing shipments of wheat and other foodstuffs for its people. To confront this food crisis, many countries and organisations, food exporters and importers alike, are meeting today in Berlin to seek solutions to keep global agricultural markets open. We will continue to support Ukraine in producing and exporting foodstuffs to help alleviate the crisis. We call for ensuring grain export as a humanitarian issue and implementing a "humanitarian passage for food" which will enable smooth delivery of goods to those in need.

Avoiding food insecurity is only possible by exercising every possible influence on Russia's regime. Here, Morocco also has a strong role. President Putin needs to end his aggression, and the destruction or blocking of essential food supplies for the world to avoid global hunger. This calls for nothing less than a united response by the international community, of which Morocco is a proud member.