

**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to FAO,  
Ambassador Yaroslav MELNYK**

*(169<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Council)*

**Your Excellency, Director General**

**Distinguished Independent Chairperson of the Council**

**Esteemed colleagues,**

**Everyone involved**

It has been six weeks, for us Ukrainians it feels like a lifetime, since Russia launched his premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified, and brutal invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's ceaseless bombardment of Ukraine's cities and critical infrastructure has created one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises in Europe since the World War II.

The number of civilians killed by Russian troops in these six weeks exceeds our military losses.

The Russian troops are deliberately striking the agricultural enterprises. They consistently destroy fuel storage sites, product distribution centers, destroy even conventional agricultural machinery, and mine fields.

There are also confirmed cases of barbaric robberies of agricultural technics from Ukrainian farmers (tractors etc.).

Moreover, we have **the proved story of one farmer from Chernihiv region**, of how russian invaders used the seized starch factory as a crematorium for burning bodies of those they have killed.

**Just imagine the scale of their atrocities!**

**Dear colleagues,**

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has posed serious risks to global food security and worsens global hunger that would require a range of responses from governments and international organizations.

Every 10<sup>th</sup> loaf of bread in the world is baked from the grains grown by Ukrainians. Around 80% of agricultural products were exported from Ukraine through seaports in The Black Sea and Azov Sea.

Today, sea routes from our main ports are blocked by Russian military vessels. They deliberately attacking civil ships (six as of today).

Without our exports, it is not simply a shortage, but a threat of famine for more than a dozen countries in Africa and Asia. Because there will be not enough volumes of commodities and prices will increase. It's a fact.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

Ukraine is **willing to continue its exports** according to our international obligations, as we do have some grain corn, wheat, sunflower oil for export from the previous year yield.

Before the war, about **9.5 mln tons of maize, 6 mln tonnes of sunflower and 4.5 mln tonnes of wheat** were held as stocks in Ukraine with an estimated value of USD 8.3 billion. **60% of which (nearly USD 5 billion) were held by the Ukrainian farmers.**

This is an equivalent to operating capital needs of the Ukrainian farmers to plant spring crops and pay rent for 8 million hectares in 2022.

Aggression and blockade of the Ukrainian ports by russia undermines the ability of importing countries to meet their food security needs today, tomorrow and for the years to come.

All this prompts the Government of Ukraine **to work intensively on both tracks** – to secure the country's export potential and to ensure that Ukrainians will not suffer from hunger.

And here, we also **still count on FAO's more effective assistance** in Ukraine. We believe that Organization **should focus not only on rural households but on**

**more comprehensive support for Ukrainian agribusiness** during planting and harvesting seasons, because they are the **guarantors of food security and one of the drivers of national economy.**

Support to **the livestock sector is also crucial**, we need veterinary medicine and animal feed ingredients.

I want to assure you that **the only root cause of the food insecurity is the war unleashed by Russia, not sanctions.** There are no sanctions for food exports, on the contrary **it is Russia which banned grain and fertilizers exports.**

Recently, **russian government has announced additional restrictions on grain exports, enacting a partial ban effective till July.** It has imposed a quota on sunflower oil exports and banned the export of sunflower seeds and rapeseed.

I want **to draw your attention to** the fact Russia openly **referred to food exports as a weapon.** Thus, it reaffirmed the status of russian federation as an aggressor not only in the military and energy sectors, but also in the food dimension.

This country-aggressor **is blackmailing the countries relying on wheat from Ukraine and Russia.**

The abovementioned **policy of the Russian Federation questions the expediency of its membership in FAO.**

**Distinguished colleagues,**

It must be clear that **vulnerable countries will remain at risk** as long as Russia continues its war in Ukraine.

In conclusion, **I want to urge members of the Council:**

- to strongly condemn the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, aided by the Government of Belarus.
- to demand from Russia immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and to withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine.

- to request FAO to speed up and expand its emergency assistance in Ukraine within its mandate.

**I thank you!**