

Forum:

United Nation Human Rights Office Of The High Commissioner (UNHRC)

Issue:

Countering the food supply chain disturbance attributed to the Ukraine-Russia War

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Overview

With 20% and 10% of global exports, respectively, Russia and Ukraine are the top two exporters of wheat production. Both nations are essential in providing wheat to international markets, notably those in the Middle East and North Africa, where it is the primary staple food (OECD). The Ukraine-Russia War had led to various tremendous impact worldwide, including but not limited to the exports of natural resources and the food supply chain. The war occurs at a time when the world's agricultural economy is failing to feed its expanding population in a sustainable manner due to climate change and the Covid-19 epidemic. The conflict between the two countries had intensified the food supply of countries around the world dramatically.

Ukraine and Russian Export

Ukraine is a major agricultural actor. According to the European Parliament, Ukraine exported 6% of food calories traded globally in 2021, making it one of the most important suppliers of fundamental agricultural commodities. Its main exports include wheat, maize, and sunflower oil, with an annual global exportation of 10% of grains, 15% of maize, 61% of sunflower cake, and 31% of sunflower oil. Russia had an annual global exportation of 24% of grains, 2% of maize, 20% of sunflower cake, and 24% of sunflower oil. Combines, they were the suppliers of over 50% of cereal imports in North America and the Middle East. Eastern African countries import 18% of

cereals from Ukraine and 72% of their cereals (European Parliament). Damage in Agricultural Infrastructure

Damage in Agricultural Infrastructure

The full-scale invasion of Russia to Ukraine had created tremendous impact on the food supply chain. Flow of goods had been blocked and fuel price rises with the shortages of commodities, which led to disastrous food shortages across the world. According to Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group, Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure had been damaged by Russia's military activity, causing a disruption to the entire supply chain. A large portion of its cultivated areas was damaged due to the military operations and contaminated with explosion products, causing these lands no longer suitable for the cultivation of food crops (UNCG).

Furthermore, Russia's occupational troops are deliberately destroying Ukraine's agricultural equipment, exacerbating the food crisis. The supply shock caused by the blockade of Ukrainian exports, combined with record prices for oil and basic commodities, prompted several governments to impose export limits, fueling market shocks and speculative operations and causing global food supply to be unpredictable. The ongoing conflict has led to economic sanctions imposed on Russia by several countries, including the United States and the European Union, which affected food exports and imports from Russia and Ukraine. Additionally, there have been reports of blocked border crossings and increased security measures, making it difficult for food products to reach their destinations. The volume of global trade in goods and services declined by 3.4%, energy prices increased by about 100%, and the prices of non-energy commodities by 8%. This is destructive for countries that can't afford the increased food price.

Increasing Food Insecurity

According to the European Commission, the Ukraine-Russia War will potentially lead to a trade drop of 60%, soaring wheat prices of 50%, and severe food insecurity with decreased purchasing power for wheat to above 30% (EU). The Food and Agriculture Organization established two scenarios of increased food insecurity, ranking them moderate scenario and severe scenario. They estimated that in moderate scenario, the global number of undernourished will

increase 7.6 million people above the baseline of 814 million, and an increase of 13.1 in severe scenario. Of the regions in the world impacted by the war, the Asian Pacific and the Sub-Saharan Africa suffer the most severe consequences, with an increase of 1.41% and 1.98% of undernourished population, respectively (FAO). This is causing further difficulties to solve the existing food insecurity issues in these regions.

UNHRC had instituted ensuring food security as the primary goal of promoting human rights worldwide. The right to adequate food is recognized as a fundamental human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. People's ability to access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is essential for their physical and mental wellbeing. Food insecurity disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, such as children, women, and the elderly, and can lead to malnutrition, hunger, and even death. Therefore, promoting and protecting the right to food is essential to achieving a world where everyone enjoys human rights and a life with dignity.

Key Terms

Food Insecurity

Lack of regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life.

Ukraine-Russia War

Refers to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022

Important Events/Timelines

2006

UNHRC was founded on 15 March 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly by resolution 60/251

2011

UNHRC established the Task Force on Secretariat services, accessibility and use of information technology

2021

UNHRC introduce innovations, break boundaries and set new human rights standards in response to the disturbance of people's livelihood caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Major Nations/Organizations

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Nations Human Rights developed principles and guidelines that aim to support food security to fully promote human right.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization that works to build better policies for better lives. Their goal is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.

Ukraine-Russia War impeded the food supply chain and affected numerous countries greatly, especially developing countries that are vulnerable to price increases and shortages. Russia and. Several regions rely heavily on imports from these two countries for their primary food supply. Russia and Ukraine supply more than half of North African and Middle Eastern cereal imports, while Furthermore, Russia and Ukraine, both large producers of essential foods, contribute 90% of the wheat supply in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Eritrea, Georgia and Mongolia. Ukraine is also a key supply of wheat for the World Food Programme, which feeds 115.5 million people in over 120 countries (unwomen).

Numerous African countries rely on grain from Ukraine and Russia to support more than 50% of their domestic consumption. Eastern African countries import 72% of their cereals from Russia and 18% from Ukraine. Somalia, Libya, Lebanon, Egypt, and Sudan rely heavily on wheat, corn, and sunflower oil from the two warring states (European Parliament, 2022). Egypt is the world's top importer of wheat, making it one of the most impacted country of the war. 85% of its wheat supplies comes from Russia and Ukraine combined. Predictably, the disruption in Ukrainian wheat production and export chains, as well as the severe impacts of the sanctions imposed on Russian economic and trading

activities, have sent wheat prices soaring. The Egyptian government will need to use more of its financial resources to secure wheat supplies and avoid threats to the country's food security.

In Cameroon, more than half of the population was food insecure prior to the war. The cost of imported food is causing local food inflation, pushing fundamental goods out of reach for people on low wages.

In Kenya, almost seven out of ten individuals were food insecure prior to the conflict, but only one out of ten is covered by at least one type of social protection. In Kenya the price of cooking oil climbed by 6.5% between February and March alone.

In Nigeria, approximately six out of ten people were affected by food insecurity before the conflict. Year-on-year food inflation was 17.2% in March, with bread, rice, and yam prices growing by more than 30% (OCHA).

Important Documents/Passed Solutions

1. Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (October 2022)
2. Conflict and the right to food - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri (December 2022)

Possible Solutions

The world is in desperate need of the resumption of Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea to solve its food security crisis. The UN plan aims to support the stabilization of the up-surge in food prices worldwide and stave off famine, affecting millions. The Black Sea Grain Initiative will allow 10 million tons of grain to leave Ukraine. The agreements sought to clear the way for the shipment of millions of tons of Ukrainian grain and some Russian exports of grain and fertilizer that have been blocked by the war. The Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) was established to facilitate the implementation of the Black

Sea Grain Initiative to allow ships to safely export grain, other foodstuffs and fertilizers, including ammonia, from Ukraine via a maritime humanitarian corridor (UN).

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