

Proof: EU Responsible For Grain Shortage

Russia not to blame for global food crisis – Putin

Russia is ready to aid in transporting Ukrainian grain, but Western sanctions make it impossible, the Russian president has said

<https://www.rt.com/russia/556586-putin-interview-food-crisis/>

The restrictions imposed by the US and its allies against Russia and Belarus will only exacerbate the looming global food crisis by affecting the fertilizer trade and sending food prices even higher, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said.

In a special TV interview on Friday evening following a meeting with African Union head Macky Sall in Sochi, Putin accused Western leaders of trying "to shift the responsibility for what is happening in the world food market."

The root causes of the crisis lie with the US financial policies during the Covid-19 pandemic and Europe's over-reliance on renewables and short-term gas contracts, which have led to price hikes and rising inflation, Putin has said.

The unfavorable situation on the world's food market did not begin to take shape yesterday, or even from the moment Russia launched the special military operation in the Donbass and Ukraine.

"It began to take shape as early as February 2020 in the process of combating the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic," he added.

High gas prices, which came as a result of under-investment in the traditional energy sector, have forced many fertilizer producers to shut down their businesses because of unprofitability, the Russian president argued. Such developments have shrunk the fertilizer supply, which, in turn, has pushed food prices higher, he added.

Yet, instead of taking any real steps to remedy the situation, Western nations just pin the blame on Moscow, Putin has said. The Russian president has dismissed all claims that Moscow is preventing Ukrainian grain from being exported to other nations as a "bluff." He also said that Russia was ready to increase its own grain export up to 50 million tons.

Putin pointed to the fact that there are several ways to safely transport the grain from Ukrainian territory, including through Poland and Hungary. He also said that Russian forces are about to finish demining the areas of the Black Sea it controls in order to facilitate the safe passage of goods through the Azov and Black Seas.

We are not preventing Ukrainian grain from being exported. It can be moved through the ports controlled by Ukraine. We are not the ones who mined these ports. Ukraine did. I have said many times: let them demine and let the ships with grain leave. We guarantee their passage with no problems.

The Russian leader has also called the Belarus transport route "the cheapest way" of getting

Ukrainian grain to customers around the world. Yet, using it would require that Western nations lift the sanctions they imposed against Minsk, he added.

Earlier on Friday, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko told UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that Belarus is ready to transport Ukrainian grain to European ports by rail, but that this would require those ports being able to accept goods from Belarus, which is currently impossible because of sanctions.

“To create the conditions for the transit of Ukrainian grain, the ports that would serve as shipping points should be able to load and unload Belarusian goods,” Lukashenko said.

Guterres, in turn, has said that he would discuss the issue with the leaders of the relevant nations in the coming days.