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Famine and war propaganda in Ukraine

Russia exports much more than Ukraine: 20% of wheat, flours and derivatives, compared to 8.5% of Ukraine... what NATO, the EU and the US - and the bulk of our media - do not say is that at the genesis of that danger Western sanctions against Russia are much more significant than the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports.



For the expected increase in world hunger, Western sanctions against Russia are far more damaging than Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports.



Today the war in Ukraine and the response sanctions that the Russian invasion has received from the United States and the European Union, have created an exemplary situation. There is a [danger of hunger in parts of the global south that the UN Food Programme \(WFP\) warns about.](#)

"For wheat to be worth money: water, sun... And war in Sevastopol", it was said in Castile. I imagine that the saying was released in the mid-nineteenth century, after the Crimean War, and recalls the great role of the rich Ukrainian plains and their black lands in the production of cereal and the dynamics of prices.



I say exemplary for the obvious and well-known relationship between the disasters of war and hunger (according to WFP, 60% of the hungry live in areas affected by war and violence) which in the Ukrainian case will increase the group of those suffering from acute hunger in the world by 47 million. That is, the number of hungry will go from 276 million

(pre-war level) to 323 million this year, according to that source. But exemplary also for how this problem is used for warmongering purposes in a context of war propaganda.

The war in Ukraine complicates the impacts already generated by other conflicts, the pandemic, the climate crisis and the costs increased by an increase in the price of grain, which already came from before, and by transport. [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) will be the most affected area. Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan), will receive less and also more expensive.



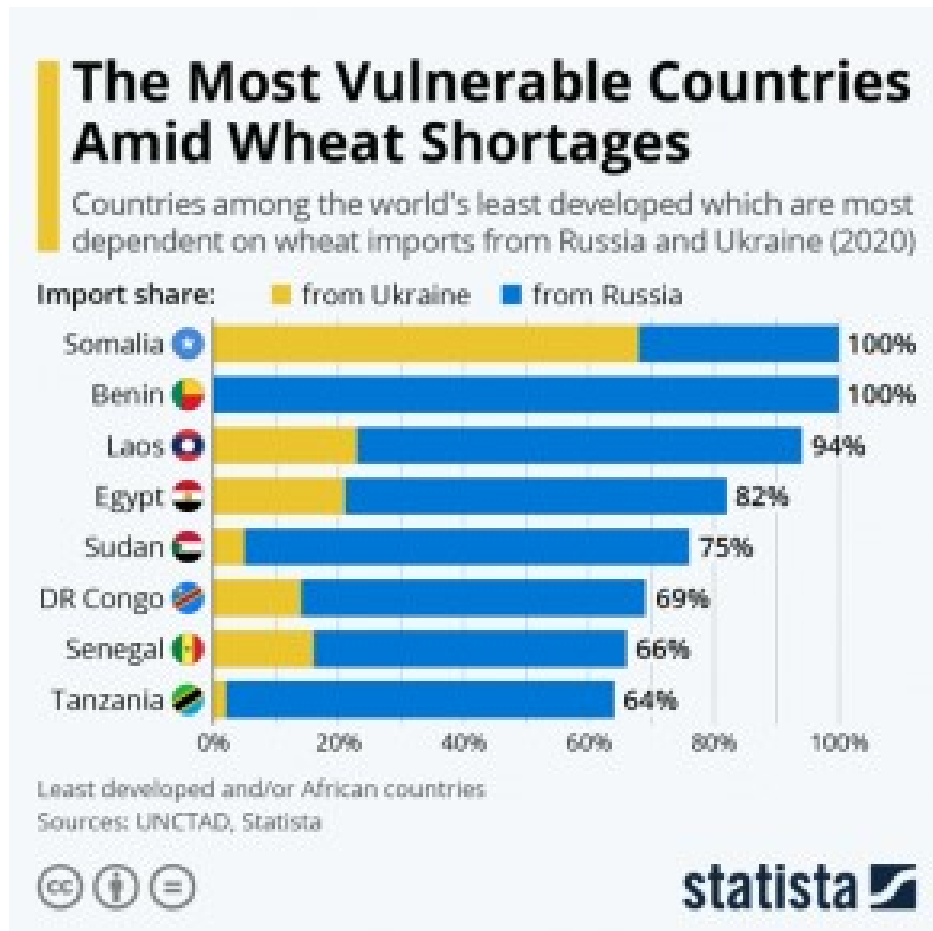
[The joint report identifies a total of 20 countries and contexts that are at "an increased risk of deterioration of acute food insecurity".](#)«

This WFP report was published in March, but most of our media only echoed it in June. And they frequently misreported.

Russia and Ukraine account for 30% of global wheat exports. Both are also major exporters of barley, corn, sunflower seeds and sunflower oil. Much of this export goes to the South, in Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, where some of the poorest countries in the world are located, which were already on the edge due to the effects of price increases, the stress produced by the pandemic and the usual scourges; war, corruption, inequality, mismanagement...

NATO says that the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports is the reason for the quantitative increase in hunger that the UN and WFP announce and account for. But Russia exports much more than Ukraine: 20% of wheat, flours and derivatives, compared to 8.5% of Ukraine. That is why what NATO, the EU and the US do not say. The US – and with them

the bulk of our media – is that at the genesis of that danger Western sanctions against Russia are much more significant than the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports.



Russia exports far more cereal than Ukraine to food-fragile countries.

[The sanctions imposed on Russia](#) prevent the export of Russian grain. 50% of that grain – which is far more than anything Ukraine exported from its ports – was exported from the Russian port of Novorosisk on the eastern Black Sea coast. As a result of the sanctions, ships cannot access that port to load. Insurance companies do not cover the traffic of those ships, and Russian-flagged ships cannot use port infrastructure. In addition, Russia cannot charge for that grain trade, because payment systems are blocked and international banks closed for their activity.

Financial sanctions prevent Russia from collecting those exports and introduce the risk that payments through banks and systems controlled by the sanctioners will be confiscated, as has happened with the 300,000 million Russian dollars that were deposited in the United States (and with the 9000 million Afghans, whose appropriation, in revenge

for the military debacle in Afghanistan, it aggravates hunger in that wretched country, and with the Billions of Iranians stolen in response to the 1979 revolution, and...).



The European Union, the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada jointly decided to exclude a wide range of Russian banks from the [SWIFT financial system](#).

The second aspect of the sanctions aggravating the situation has to do with fertilizers. Their price has increased because of the increase in the price of the gas with which they are produced. Russia and Belarus are the world's first and sixth largest producers, respectively. Together they represent 20% of global production. And both are subject to sanctions.

So all of that affects prices. And the rise in prices has a direct impact on the chances of the poorest to pay for their food: Many of those who were once fair now do not arrive, warns the WFP.

It cannot be said, therefore, as the EU/NATO bloc and the US claim. In the US, Russia is responsible, or that it is just Russia. Obviously, there is a clear Russian responsibility for having initiated the invasion, an inseparable responsibility of the circumstances that also led to it from outside Russia. The most diplomatic thing that can be said is that there is a shared responsibility. And the most objective thing is to say that Western sanctions against its geopolitical adversary in this conflict are a factor of increasing hunger more important than the blockade of Ukrainian ports, which the Russians are willing to lift under certain conditions.

Despite this, the message sent to us by Atlanticist politicians and their media is unequivocal. On May 24, in Davos, the ineffable President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said that *"Russia is bombing silos in Ukraine, blocking Ukrainian cargo ships full of wheat and sunflower and hoarding its own food export as a form of blackmail. That is using hunger and grain as a resource of power."* (*Wall Street Journal*, May 24: "[Ukraine-Russia War Is Fueling Triple Crisis in Poor Nations](#)").



[Discurso de Ursula von der Leyen en el Foro de Davos](#)

"Debemos garantizar que esos cereales se envían al mundo, de lo contrario millones de personas pasarán hambre", dice la ministra de exteriores canadiense, Melanie Joly.

Lo que se abre paso con estas declaraciones es una campaña para romper militarmente el bloqueo ruso de la costa ucraniana alegando "catástrofe humanitaria". Es decir una escalada militar aún más peligrosa.

Al día siguiente de la declaración de von der Leyen, el editorial del WSJ, explicaba de lo que se trata bajo el titular, *"Romper el bloqueo alimentario de Putin"*:

"The world needs a strategy to break the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports so that food and other products can be exported, and that means a plan to use warships that escort merchant freighters out of the Black Sea." "the civilized world must act soon to avert an even greater humanitarian crisis." Putin is using "global food pressure for NATO and other nations to agree to peace on their terms." And the newspaper proposed; "an international coalition of warships" independent of NATO to carry it out without Russia being able to denounce provocation.

The war is going for a long time. Western power centers and media clearly advocate its eternalization. The Kremlin is also not interested in a negotiation as long as it does not

have a clear, or apparent, result of military success to present as an outcome. Any "humanitarian" pretext will be, and is, exploited in that warmongering context. The increase in hunger in the South does not matter in Brussels, or in Washington, or on Wall Street. And for Moscow it is a "side effect" of the ill-calculated Western sanctions against Russia.

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