
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

Circular Letter No.4692
17 February 2023

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the Russian Federation**

The Government of the Russian Federation has sent the attached communication, received on 31 January 2023, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

MISSION OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME
ORGANIZATION (IMO)



ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ПРИ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ МОРСКОЙ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ (ИМО)

Address: 37 Harrington Gardens,
London SW7 4JU

Адрес: 37 Харрингтон Гарденс,
Лондон SW7 4JU

Telephone : +44 (0) 20 7 370 67 68 / 64
E-mail : postpred@mintrans.ru

Телефон : +44 (0) 20 7 370 67 68 / 64
Эл.почта : postpred@mintrans.ru

Ref. No. 003/050

The Mission of the Russian Federation to the International Maritime Organization presents its compliments to the International Maritime Organization and, referring to the United Nations Secretariat's press-release of 18th January 2023 on the Black Sea Grain Initiative, has the honour to share the accurate information on the status of the implementation of the Istanbul agreements on food and fertilizer exports from the Black Sea region.

Encl.:
2 page

The Mission of the Russian Federation kindly asks this note and its attachment to be circulated among the Member States of the International Maritime Organization.

The Mission of the Russian Federation avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the International Maritime Organization the assurances of its highest consideration. *J*



London, 31 January 2023

International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

Status of implementation of the Istanbul agreements

This note seeks to rectify the distorted presentation of facts contained in the UN Secretariat's press release of January 18, 2023, titled "Note to Correspondents: Update on the Black Sea Grain Initiative".

1. **Black Sea Initiative.** As of January 20, 2023, 668 vessels with 18,224,860 tonnes of food had left the ports of Odessa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny. Their cargo consisted of 46.1% corn feed, 5.9% grist, 5.5% rapeseed and other feed crops for cattle. The share of wheat amounted to 27.57%.

Placing a disproportionately strong emphasis on wheat shipments, the UN Secretariat's press release seeks to portray developing economies as the prime recipients for supplied humanitarian aid (allegedly 64%). For unclear reasons this category includes such states as Israel, South Korea and the Persian Gulf countries that are widely regarded as economically developed and, to our knowledge, are not currently facing immediate difficulties with food security.

The real geography of Ukrainian food recipients is as follows: high-income countries (EU member states, United Kingdom, etc.) received 8.6 million tonnes of cargo (4%); countries with above-average incomes (China, Jordan, Malaysia, etc.) received 6.1 million tonnes of cargo (33%) and countries with below-average incomes (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, etc.) received 2.9 million tonnes (16%). Only 551,527 tonnes (3%), including 396,169 tonnes (2%) carried by UN WFP-chartered vessels, were sent to countries with a widely-acknowledged precarious food situation (Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Afghanistan and Djibouti).

Importantly, the share of the latter group of countries in the overall figures is falling. In the first 120 days of the initiative it amounted to almost 4%, yet now it has dropped to 3%. This was perhaps the reason that UN officials chose to swiftly recast the Black Sea Initiative from a humanitarian into a commercial project, while refusing to publish information about cargo recipients, citing commercial secrecy.

Russia is unable to confirm information, contained in the UN Secretariat's press release, alleging that more than 100 ships involved in the initiative were staying in Türkiye's territorial waters and that the average waiting time was 21 days. As of January 20, 2023, 64 vessels remained in Ukrainian ports and inspection zones. Ukrainian representatives are mandated with compiling lists of ships defining their inspection and passage order. Russian representatives have no control over the list.

At the same time Russia has repeatedly highlighted the artificial problem of the congestion of bulk carriers in the port of Istanbul. This issue was provoked by Ukrainian commercial companies chartering vessels in violation of agreed rules and schedule for registration and participation in the initiative. These vessels cannot be considered as taking part in the initiative until they have been officially included. The Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul bears no responsibility for them.

2. **Togliatti – Odessa ammonia line.** The UN Secretariat's press release makes specific mention of the objective of resuming ammonia exports from the port of Yuzhny, as envisaged in the Black Sea Initiative. Instead of confirming that the export of fertilisers, including ammonia, was meant to commence simultaneously with Ukrainian food shipments, the document vaguely refers to some discussions between some unnamed parties seeking to reach some agreement. For the record – Russia is unaware of

the participants, scope and agenda for these discussions and has never been involved in any such contacts.

We have made our position crystal clear on numerous occasions. The transportation of ammonia was to begin immediately as an integral part of the Black Sea Initiative. UN officials are and always have been fully briefed on this point. No additional agreements on this issue are required. Technical capabilities to restore the ammonia line to full capacity are available. Companies charged with its maintenance are ready to resume work. The only missing ingredient is the consent of Kiev, which continues to obstruct the supply of raw materials required for the production of fertilisers (in a volume commensurate to the needs of 200 million people). Kiev is artificially linking this issue to the resolution of a number of political cases that have no bearing on food security. Sadly, UN officials, while vigorously clamouring for increased grain exports from Ukraine, have done little to move forward on this important issue.

3. Russia-UN memorandum. The UN Secretariat's press release concludes with literally one paragraph alluding to the second document signed in Istanbul on July 22, 2022 on normalising Russian exports of agricultural products and fertilisers. Nevertheless, the UN apparently fails to mention that the two agreements constitute inalienable parts of the same package proposed by UN Secretary General António Guterres and must be implemented in tandem.

Meanwhile, UN officials have yet to display practical results of the implementation of the aforementioned Russia-UN memorandum. Against the backdrop of numerous declarations by Washington DC, Brussels and London that their unilaterally introduced illegitimate restrictive measures do not apply to food and fertilisers, the UN keeps on assuring the public of their continuous efforts to come up with relevant waivers. But if there are no restrictions, why are the waivers needed at all?

Especially revealing in this respect is the current status of our proposal to transfer 262,000 tonnes of fertilisers free of charge to least developed countries. These fertilisers are now blocked in Latvia, Estonia, Belgium and the Netherlands. Russia officially informed the UN Secretary General of this proposal on September 7, 2022, providing all the necessary data.

The first and only consignment of 20,000 tonnes of such products was shipped from the Netherlands to Malawi on November 28, 2022. Russia volunteered to bear all expenses to transport and deliver the cargo and paid \$200,000 to the UN World Food Programme for its "mediation services".

The fertilisers arrived at the port of Mozambique on December 28, 2022 and should now be on their way to Malawi. Thus, it has already taken five months to send a small share of complimentary fertilisers under the UN aegis, and the cargo has yet to reach its destination. One can only guess how much time it will take to unblock and deliver the remaining 242,000 tonnes of fertilisers.

If the implementation of this strictly humanitarian initiative is facing such strong headwinds, the prospects for normalizing Russian exports of agricultural products and fertilisers with UN assistance look especially bleak. It seems that pontificating about the looming scourge of hunger and global food security while distorting the real situation with regard to ongoing assistance to least developed countries serves only one overriding goal - to promote Ukrainian commercial contracts and Western economic interests.
