



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **On the Anniversary of Holodomor**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 23, 2023

This Saturday, we will honor and remember the millions of innocent people in Ukraine who suffered and died in the Holodomor in 1932 and 1933 due to Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's deliberately brutal policies aimed at suppressing Ukrainian nationalism. The results are reflected in the meaning of the word "Holodomor," which as many have pointed out means "death by hunger."

Ninety years later, we see the leadership of the Russian Federation waging a war of aggression to subjugate the people of sovereign, democratic Ukraine and bend them to its will. Putin's goal remains the total subjugation of Ukraine and to deny and suppress its separate national identity. Russia is relentlessly attacking Ukraine's grain fields and agricultural and port infrastructure to advance its war aims, exacerbating global food insecurity for the world's most vulnerable.

Global Rights Compliance, an international humanitarian law NGO, published on November 16 a report detailing how conduct by Russia's forces and proxies to extract Ukraine's grain, "appears prima facie to be criminal in nature and likely involved a highly coordinated level of pre-planning," and part of the broader, systematic strategy by the Kremlin to weaponize hunger. The research found that Russia's conduct, coupled with its withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and ensuing attacks against grain infrastructure demonstrates, "a concerted pattern to weaponize Ukrainian grain, both in the context of the present conflict, as well as against the intended recipients of grain exports situated... beyond Ukraine's borders."

Russia both seized Ukraine's grain stores and then profited from their export. Global Rights Compliance assessed Russia's goal appears to have been to, "fund its own war effort, even in part, through purposefully denying food to civilian populations," and that such conduct could be considered starvation as a method of warfare. Perhaps most damning, the report found Russia appears to have planned this grain theft even prior to its full-scale invasion.

Further, we have seen time and again Moscow spread false narratives for its own purposes to diminish the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Yet, a chorus of voices, from the African Union and the Secretary General of the United Nations to Pope Francis have called on Russia to reinstate it. Despite Russia's obstruction, the world needs Ukraine's grain and Ukraine will deliver it. Last week, we welcomed the 100<sup>th</sup> ship's passage through the alternative Black Sea humanitarian corridor.

Madam Chair, since February 2022, we've seen the Russian Federation fill Ukraine's crop producing fields with mines. We've seen it attack and pillage grain warehouses. Russia

continues to bombard Ukraine's grain export infrastructure. These actions deny desperately needed food to people around the world.

Today, as we remember the victims of the Holodomor, it's vital to recognize the horror and pain caused by governments that purposefully implement policies designed to manipulate access to food for selfish political aims and for imperialistic gains. It is unconscionable and causes needless suffering. We must continue to document Russia's abuses and hold the Russian Federation to account in this body for its cruel and callous actions.

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