

International Development Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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From Sarah Champion MP, Chair

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
By email

19 April 2022

Food insecurity following Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to express my concern about the issue of global food insecurity as a consequence of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As you will be aware, together Ukraine and Russia make up 30% of global markets for wheat, 20% for maize and 80% for sunflower oil. Russia and Belarus are also key exporters of chemicals for fertilisers. The International Fund for Agricultural Development estimates that Russia and Ukraine provide around 12% of the world's calorie consumption.

Food insecurity within Ukraine

In Ukraine, 12 million people are in need of food assistance as a result of Russia's invasion. Complex supply chains and logistical difficulties in conflict areas mean that donors such as the World Food Programme must buy food to deliver 4-5 weeks in advance. Without contributions from donors being disbursed, donors could run out of funding in Ukraine in 2 months. With this in mind, I would be grateful for your response to the following:

1. Please provide an update on the amount of UK food assistance disbursed to Ukraine in monetary terms (i) to date and (ii) forecast for disbursement over the next financial year.
2. How is the UK Government coordinating with international partners to ensure enough funding is supplied for food assistance programmes in Ukraine?
3. How is the UK Government working with international partners to help supply drivers delivering food in Ukraine (a) protective equipment and (b) fuel?

Disruption to food production in Ukraine

The continuation of conflict means that the production and harvesting of crops has been significantly disrupted. A key period for planting is approaching in April/May and a key period for harvesting in June/July.

Additionally, industrial food production has been impacted by the ongoing conflict, destruction of infrastructure, increase in fuel prices, and shortage of fuel.

4. Considering this, how is the UK Government supporting (a) agricultural food production and (b) industrial food production in Ukraine?

Global food insecurity

Global food insecurity has been worsened further by Russia's blockade of the Black Sea, which has disrupted grain exports. Russia's invasion has also caused the Ukrainian Government to ban the export of certain foods, and to allow the export of others under strict licensing conditions. Operating costs for aid organisations working on food assistance are therefore rising rapidly. The World Food Programme predicts a US\$29 million monthly increase in operating costs from food and fuel price increases.

This has come at a time where there is already increased pressure on global agriculture due to the pandemic and extreme weather influenced by climate change. Import-dependent countries will be the first hit by such impacts, including in the Middle East and Africa.

All of this threatens to amount to a serious rise in global malnutrition and the potential for famines, particularly among the most marginalised and those already living in extreme poverty. In light of this, I would be grateful for your response to the following questions:

5. How much did the UK Government spend in the last financial year and how much will it spend this financial year on international food programmes (a) overall and in (b) Afghanistan, (c) Chad, (d) Ethiopia, (e) Jordan, (f) Lebanon, (g) Libya, (h) Niger, (i) South Sudan, (j) Syria, and (k) Yemen?
6. What percentage of people reached by UK aid food assistance programmes in the last financial year were in extreme poverty? How many people in extreme poverty will the FCDO reach with food assistance programmes this financial year?
7. What UK aid programmes providing food assistance are currently being affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent sanctions on Russia and Belarus? How is the Government mitigating the impact on these aid programmes?
8. What support is the UK Government providing to shipping companies which are continuing to supply food from the Black Sea?

I would be grateful for your response by 10 May. The Committee intends to publish this letter and your response.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Champion MP

Chair of the Committee