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Russia Prepared for Food Crisis Since Last Year — Kremlin Aide

By AFP

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Russia had taken steps to prepare itself for a food crisis even before President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine, a Kremlin aide said on Thursday.

Russia and Ukraine alone produce 30 percent of the global wheat supply.

Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine and a barrage of unprecedented international sanctions on Russia have disrupted supplies of fertilizer, wheat, and other commodities from both countries, pushing up prices for food and fuel, especially in developing nations.

"Vladimir Vladimirovich understood that these problems could affect Russia," former economy minister and Putin adviser Maxim Oreshkin told a youth forum in Moscow.

"Russia is actively preparing for a global famine; it started at the end of last year," he added.

Putin sent troops to Ukraine on Feb. 24, after the Kremlin denied for months the possibility of a large-scale offensive against its smaller pro-Western neighbor.

The United Nations this week urged Russian authorities to release grain stuck in Ukrainian ports due to Moscow's military campaign.

Oreshkin said he believed "global hunger" would begin in late 2022, adding that "ill-thought-out" policies by the United States and EU countries were leading to the food crisis.

Oreshkin also said that the US attempts to get Ukrainian grain out of the ex-Soviet country would lead to a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Ukraine and "major" food problems for the world.

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