

U.S. Accuses Russia of 'Extortion' Over Ukraine Grain Demands

By [AFP](#)

October 31, 2022



TASS

The United States on Monday accused Russia of extortion at the expense of the developing world after it demanded Ukrainian security guarantees on its Crimea fleet for preserving a secure corridor to export grain.

"What you're describing appears to be either collective punishment or collective extortion," State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters.

"It is not an issue between any two countries on the face of the earth. This is an urgent imperative" for developing countries, he said.

"Moscow's suspension of the initiative would be tantamount to collective punishment for the rest of the world, but especially lower- and middle-income countries that so desperately need this grain."

Price voiced alarm that global food prices have already risen because of uncertainty over the grain initiative, which had been negotiated by the United Nations and Turkey.

Original url:

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