The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says Understands 'Concerns' of African Countries Over Grain

July 21, 2023



Workers load grain at a grain port in Izmail, Ukraine. **Andrew Kravchenko / AP / TASS**

Russia said Friday that it understood the concerns African nations may have after Moscow left the Ukrainian grain deal, promising to ensure deliveries to countries in need.

Those countries in need would receive the necessary assurances at a summit later this month, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin told journalists.

"We understand the concerns our African friends may have," said Vershinin. "But I want to say that these concerns are not only understandable but will be fully taken into account.

"The countries in need in the course of contacts with us and in the course of the upcoming Russia-Africa summit will naturally receive the necessary assurances regarding their needs for agricultural products — first of all grain," he added.

Related article: Kyiv Says 60K Tons of Grain Destroyed in Odesa Attack

The summit is expected to be held in Russia's second city St. Petersburg in late July.

Vershinin's comments came days after Russia exited the landmark grain deal that allowed the safe passage of cargo ships carrying Ukrainian grain from Black Sea ports.

Moscow had for months complained that a related agreement on allowing the export of Russian food and fertilizers had not been honored.

Russian President Vladimir Putin this week said that Russia would consider returning to the deal if its demands were "fully" met, saying the agreement had "lost all meaning."

Vershinin told reporters that there were currently "no contacts" to find an alternative to the grain deal.

The grain deal, brokered by the UN and Turkey, had enabled the export of more than 32 million tons of Ukrainian grain over the last year.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/07/21/russia-says-understands-concerns-of-african-countries-over-grain-a81929