

THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

IN THE UN DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS
AND OTHER PEOPLE
WORKING IN RURAL AREAS



№1
September 2023

Dear friends!

On behalf of the Program "Support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)", which operates in Ukraine within the financial support of the Embassy of Great Britain and is implemented by Crown Agents in partnership with International Alert and in cooperation with Crown Agents in Ukraine, we would like to congratulate You and express our support for public initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.

The protection of human rights is one of the main functions of states, and our solidarity with both the international community and civil society plays an important role in this process. It must be recognized that the violation of the rights of peasants occurs in many countries of the world, which led to the need for the adoption of a special human rights document at the global level.

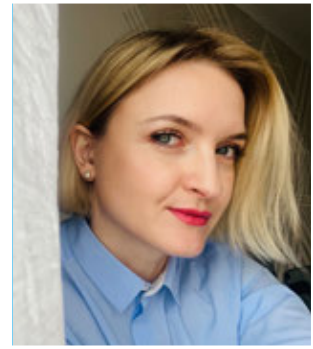
The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas was supported by 121 countries at the UN General Assembly in 2018. This document recognizes the importance of rural people in food security, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of rural areas. The right to adequate nutrition and food sovereignty, as described in Article 15 of the Declaration, is a fundamental right of every human being that requires careful monitoring and ensuring its protection.

For countries, including Ukraine, where agriculture is an important branch of the economy, the Declaration is of particular importance. In times of war, peasants feel particularly vulnerable when their lands and resources can be used without their consent or be threatened with confiscation. The declaration provides them with a legal tool to protect their interests, as well as the opportunity to turn to the international community in cases of violation of their rights. In addition, the Declaration recognizes and protects the right of peasants to participate in the determination of strategies for the development of the agricultural sector and to ensure their inclusion in the reconstruction processes of post-war Ukraine.

Crown Agents, in close cooperation with civil society, supports collective efforts aimed at protecting the peasantry in Ukraine, especially its vulnerable sections.

We hope that the stories you will find in this newsletter will inspire you to protect your rights and fight for a decent life and sustainable development. Let this path be an important step towards creating a fair and sustainable future for all.

Olha Zayarna,
Adviser on involvement of civil society organizations and
partnership development, Program "Support of civil society
organizations (CSOs)" in Ukraine.





Dear readers!

Here is the first edition of the bulletin dedicated to the basic right of every person to adequate food, which in international legal practice is legally binding and guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is realized when every person has physical and economic access at any time to sufficient and adequate food or the means of obtaining it.

Unstable patterns of food production and consumption, the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the worsening of the negative consequences of climate change, extreme weather events, economic downturns and crises have increased the existing inequality in the world food systems, caused a global food crisis. This crisis affects not only the right to food – as the availability and accessibility of food – but also a range of other human rights, including the right to a decent livelihood, a clean environment, fair and favorable working conditions, health care, social protection, etc.

The government of the country has a legal obligation to ensure the right to food, while every person has the right to enjoy it as a universal right without discrimination. Individuals or groups, including government officials, legislators, local communities, non-governmental organizations, scientists, consumer organizations, youth groups, small landowners, women's organizations, civil society organizations, as well as the private sector, are the most important actors in the realization of the right to adequate food.

We hope that the experience of our contributors in the implementation of this right will be interesting and useful for all Ukrainians who strive to revive the agro-food system of Ukraine on the basis of sustainability and fair access to domestically produced food.

**Olena Borodina,
Head of the Coordinating Council of the Ukrainian Rural
Development Network, and coordinator of the project
"Peasants' rights and food sovereignty".**

Monitoring and implementation of the Right to Food & the Rights of Peasants and People who work in rural areas



A person, his rights and freedoms constitute the highest social value in a state governed by the rule of law, and all activities in the sphere of state management of development processes and social transformations should be directed to their provision and fullest realization.¹ Instead, for a long time, the need to monitor human rights was considered, on the one hand, as a basis for criticizing the projects of any economic reforms and the results of their implementation; on the other hand, as a significant complication in developing new development strategies. This perception led to the formation of a destructive influence on the quality of life of humanity, led to oppression and violations of its basic rights, including the fundamental right to adequate nutrition.

The results of research conducted by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) indicate that the number of undernourished people in the world in 2021 was almost 900 million people.² More than 2 billion people suffer from a lack of essential vitamins and trace elements in their diet. Every year, almost 6 million children die from malnutrition and related diseases, which is about half of all deaths that could be avoided. Despite the popular belief that most deaths occur during social and natural cataclysms, practice proves that only about 10% of their total number is caused by armed conflicts, natural disasters and exceptional climatic conditions. The remaining 90% are victims of long-term lack of access to sufficient food.³ In view of this, the need to observe the human right to food has become an integral element of a number of international documents, such as: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Bill of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Voluntary Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, etc.

Most often, peasants experience various forms of oppression and violations of this right, despite the fact that they produce food. Empirical data of the Task Force on Hunger Problems of the UN

¹ Human rights: their general implementation and protection in Ukraine. – [Electronic resource]. – Available at the link: http://www.gusrv.gov.ua/pravo2019_1.htm

² The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. – [Electronic resource]. – Available at: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/ru?details=cc0639en>

³ The right to adequate food. Statement of facts No. 34 / NGO "Kharkov human rights group". – [Electronic resource]. – Available at: <https://library.khpg.org/files/docs/1596517961.pdf>

Millennium Development Project prove that now 80% of the world's starving population are rural residents; of the total number of people living in extreme poverty, 75% work in rural areas; 50% of people experiencing acute food shortages are small farmers who are fully/partially dependent on agriculture, about 20% of people are landless families conducting economic activities on leased land, or hired workers involved in agricultural production for work with low level of wages.⁴ Obviously, the rural population is a vulnerable group from the point of view of providing food in sufficient quantity, of acceptable quality, in accordance with culture and traditions, therefore their right to adequate food has become a significant component of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.

The Right to Adequate Food

IN THE UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO WORK IN RURAL AREAS



In the Declaration, the right to adequate nutrition (Article 15) is presented through a set of obligations of the state to create appropriate conditions for its implementation (Fig. 1).

Thus, **Article 15.1** emphasizes the integral relationship between the production and consumption of food products within the framework of the current food system. Separation of these processes can lead to false conclusions: focusing only on production will limit the right to food only to the need to increase the volume of agricultural products, and concentration on consumption will narrow it to the need for compensatory programs of food and / or financial support. Interpretation of the right to food production as part of the right to adequate food was defended by various Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations. The main goal of this step is not to ensure the self-sufficiency of each household, but to create favorable conditions for establishing food production at the local level, at the community level.

Article 15.2 states that the elements of the right to adequate nutrition are: availability, sufficiency (in terms of quantity and quality, cultural compatibility and nutrition), accessibility (physical and economic) and sustainability. The availability of food implies the possibility of obtaining food products as a result of the use of land, water, forest and other natural resources or as a result of joining the systems of distribution, processing and sale of products. Thus, the Declaration directly confirms the right of peasants and other people working in rural areas to produce food to meet their own needs. In case of impossibility of such production or in order to ensure a balanced diet, they must have access to food that is offered for sale in markets and retail establishments.

Accessibility and sufficiency of healthy, nutritious and culturally acceptable food must be guaranteed both physically and economically. Special attention should be paid to the vulnerable population, such as: children, the sick, people with limited physical capabilities, senior citizens with physical difficulties. The amount of expenditure on food should not prevent the realization of other fundamental rights. The most marginalized and poor peasants should have access to social security programs or other government programs that guarantee the economic availability of food.

⁴ Final study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on the advancement of the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. – [Electronic resource] . – Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/108/03/PDF/G1210803.pdf?OpenElement>



Figure 1. The right to adequate food for peasants and other people working in rural areas

The issue of sustainability, i.e. economic, social and ecological balance, is of particular importance for the rights holders of the right to food (peasants and other people who work in rural areas) and the rest of society. In this sense, an effective national policy, a complex of legal instruments and mechanisms for the protection of ecological sustainability should be developed in order to ensure the possibility of increasing the amount of food production for current and future generations, preventing the pollution of water resources, protecting soil fertility,⁵ etc. This involves the careful selection and implementation of only those agro-food models that clearly meet the criterion of sustainability.

The right to adequate food is an individual right, in other words, every peasant or person working in rural areas should be able to fully enjoy it. At the same time, the realization of this right can be collective in nature and be defended by a certain social group or an entire community.

Article 15.3 guarantees a global approach to nutrition in the context of national strategies that meet the needs of rural people and enable them to overcome hunger and malnutrition. The realization of children's right to adequate nutrition seems to be extremely important here, since malnutrition in childhood can significantly worsen health in adulthood, and the formed food diet should contain a complex of nutrients necessary for physical and mental development, health maintenance self and physical activity of a person, as well as meet his/her physiological needs at all stages of the life cycle. Therefore, states should strive to ensure sufficient nutrition for rural children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The article pays special attention to providing quality information on nutrition and creating conditions for the application of the acquired knowledge.

Article 15.4 defines food sovereignty as the right of people to build their own food system. This is a collective right, which is considered by people's movements and civil society as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally acceptable food, produced in a socially just way, that meets ecological requirements".⁶ The concept of food sovereignty is based on a number of theses that cover different dimensions of the food system:⁷

- within the framework of food sovereignty, the right of all citizens, communities, entire peoples to sufficient, healthy and culturally acceptable food is guaranteed, while at the same time, the fallacy of considering such food only as a "customary" product, without taking into account its social functions, is seen as unacceptable;
- food sovereignty promotes the localization of food systems and establishing control over the use of natural resources;
- food sovereignty stimulates the preservation of traditional knowledge and the accumulation of new knowledge and skills;
- food sovereignty relies heavily on the natural environment and contributes to its preservation.

Article 15.5 contains the obligation of states to respect the rights of peasants to adequate food and to involve them in the development and implementation of legislative acts and program documents that will significantly affect the implementation of this right. Programs aimed at combating hunger and improving the quality of nutrition must correspond to accepted models of production and consumption, taking into account the specifics of the local level and promoting the realization of other rights (rights to land, rights to seeds, etc.) (Fig. 2).

⁵ Voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, FAO (2004), Guideline 8E. – [Electronic resource]. – Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/voluntary-guidelines-support-progressive-realization-right-adequate-food?gclid=CjwKCAjw3oqoBhAjEiwA_UaLtkl-YC0EO3nzjKAX4y8djE6NA2EmMSnVsfhXum7whYw_P9L-4g0vFxoCX_4QAvD_BwE

⁶ Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Forum, "Declaration of Nyéléni," February 27, 2007. – [Electronic resource]. – Available at: https://nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/Nyeleni_EN.pdf

⁷ Right to adequate food and nutrition, and to food sovereignty. – [Electronic resource]. – Available at the link: https://www.fian.org/files/files/Andrea_20201211_Papers_2_Food_V2.pdf



Figure 2. Relationship of the right to adequate food with other rights

The obligations of states in this area can be divided into separate components, such as:

- **assistance** - involves the active participation of the state in activities aimed at expanding peasants' access to resources, means of livelihood, technical assistance for the realization of their right to produce quality food products, state support necessary for the organization of deliveries of the obtained products to local markets, etc. Evidently, compliance by states with this obligation will have a positive impact not only on the realization of the right to adequate food for the peasants, but also on providing the population with local, healthy, high-quality and ecologically clean products;
- **provision** - involves taking the necessary measures in the event of the impossibility of realizing the right to food by individual persons / groups of persons. During security, climatic and economic crises, it is practically impossible to realize the rights of peasants in a high-quality manner, therefore appropriate programs of social security, food aid, etc., designed to protect vulnerable sections of citizens, prioritize local production of food products, and support small producers of agricultural products must be developed;
- **protection** - involves the creation of powerful safeguards against the seizure of land belonging to the rural population, the development of mechanisms to protect the interests of national small producers of agricultural products in the context of the globalization of trade flows, the normalization of the rights of employees involved in agricultural production, etc.

Peasants in Ukraine in the conditions of war

In Ukraine, thanks to favorable climatic conditions, fertile soil and hard work of the peasants, there were no large-scale manifestations of hunger during the time of independence. We can talk about an unbalanced diet (Fig. 3), its insufficient energy value and oppression of the right to food in terms of limiting access to education, information, equipment and technologies, credit resources, land, etc.

The situation was significantly complicated due to the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, which caused numerous human casualties, the destruction of industrial and social facilities, the destruction of logistics networks, and the mass movement of citizens across the country, mostly to the western regions, and beyond. Among the sectors of the economy, agriculture felt a significant negative impact: according to preliminary data, direct damage to the agricultural sector as of January 1, 2023 amounted to \$ 7.8 billion;⁸ in the structure of losses, the largest specific weight falls on completely or partially destroyed machinery and equipment, looted products, damaged granaries, destroyed perennial plantations, animal husbandry and beekeeping resources, mining of farmland etc.

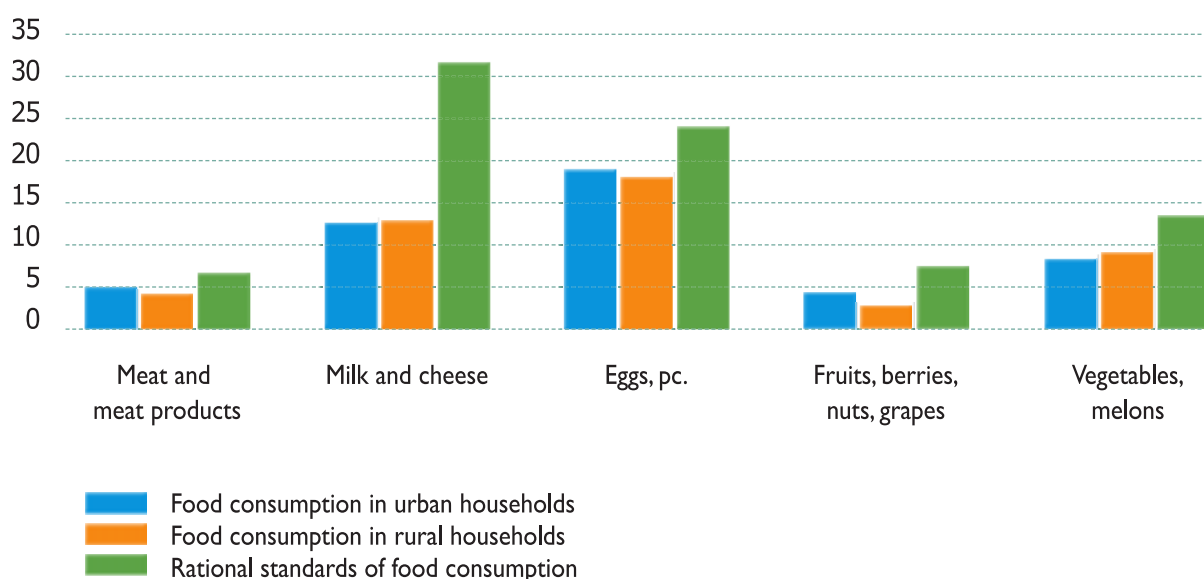


Figure 3. Consumption of food products in households in urban and in rural areas, average / month per person, kg

Sources:

Expenses and resources of Ukrainian households in 2021. - [Electronic resource]. - Access via the link:
https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2022/zb/07/zb_vrd_21.pdf

Chervona S.P. Analysis of the consumption of basic food products in Ukraine in 2008-2015. - [Electronic resource]. - Access via the link:
<http://194.44.12.92:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/2661/14/14.pdf>

⁸ Agrarian losses and losses during the war: assessment methodology and current results. - [Electronic resource]. - Available at the link:
<https://agroelita.info/aharni-zbytky-ta-vtraty-pid-chas-vinyi-metodolohiia-otsiniuvannia-i-potochni-rezultaty/>



Soil pollution should be considered as a separate element of the damage caused. Experts of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine estimate its size at \$18 billion.⁹ Almost a third of the territory of Ukraine could be littered with ammunition and harmful substances: in some areas of the front, the content of heavy metals in the soil is sometimes 25 times higher than the norm.¹⁰ Agricultural products grown in these territories are dangerous for consumption, which is caused by the vertical and horizontal migration of harmful substances in the "soil - plant - human" system. Soils flooded as a result of the explosion of the Kakhovskaya HPP are significantly threatened by waterlogging / desertification, which indicates a high probability of their removal from agricultural circulation, or reorientation to the cultivation of industrial crops.



Peasant households were significantly affected. The results of a survey conducted by FAO indicate that 25% of the rural population engaged in agriculture have stopped their activities or reduced their production; in Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy and Chernihiv regions, the share of such farms reaches 40%. Incomes of more than half of rural households have significantly decreased; in the front-line regions, this indicator reaches 63-67% (Sumy, Mykolaiv, Donetsk and Zaporizhia regions). More than 50% of rural households in June - September 2022 spent more than half of their total expenses on food; in the frontline regions, almost every fifth respondent (18%) had a share of food expenses exceeding 75% of expenses.¹¹ Practice proves that in some places only self-organization, cohesion and mutual aid helped peasants to survive in war conditions.

⁹ Ruslan Strelets: The amount of damage to the Ukrainian environment from the armed aggression of the Russian Federation already amounts to more than 46 billion dollars.

<https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/ruslan-strelets-suma-shkody-ukrainskomu-dovkilliu-vid-zbroinoi-ahresii-rf-vzhe-stanovyit-ponad-46-miliardiv-dolariv>

¹⁰ 25 times more harmful metals in soils: how war pollutes fertile black earth.

<https://eco.rayon.in.ua/news/583021-u-25-raziv-bilshe-shkidlivikh-metaliv-u-gruntakh-yak-viyna-zabrudnyue-rodyuchi-chornozemi>

¹¹ A quarter of the rural population of Ukraine stopped working because of the war. – [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access to the resource: <https://agroportal.ua/news/ukraina/chvert-silskogo-naselennya-ukrajini-pripinila-diyalnist-cherez-viynu>

FOOD SECURITY:

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE, COMMUNITIES AND SOCIETIES

The Sumy region is one of those that succumbed to Russian aggression in the first days of the Russian-Ukrainian war. It is through its territory along the highways leading from Moscow, that convoys with tanks of the hordes of conquerors moved towards Kyiv. The occupiers brought chaos to the life of rural Ukrainian peasants and workers, who at the end of February 2022, were already preparing for spring sowing. But instead of the warm rays of the sun, the north wind came sharply and mercilessly...

A horde of rapists, vandals, inhuman barbarians destroyed the destinies of thousands and thousands of peasant families. However, as it turned out later, the enemies destroyed not only the lives of people, but tens of thousands of hectares of land, which was and is a feeding ground both for the Bilopillya community, whose lands lie in the border zone, and for many in Sumy Oblast and beyond.

Myself, I saw people in lines for bread. It's terrible

Vadym SOKHAN shares his personal impressions from the days of the military invasion, the fate of his fellow compatriots and the Mother Earth itself. Before the war, he was a farmer entrepreneur, and now, he is a landless farmer.

- Before the war, he cultivated crops on his hectares, which were also rented. Sowed and harvested wheat, barley, raised pigs. This is a kind of family business. If necessary, he hired additional workers during the season of production. A small farm, but the results were encouraging. Aspired to further development. But last year we had to close our business, - laments the farmer. - Before the war, other farmers also sowed and harvested crops. Even hangars were built 200-300 meters from the border. All this is in the past. Everything is destroyed.

The young farmer says that there was no lasting occupation of the territory. After the repulse and heroic resistance of the Ukrainians, the enemy retreated. There was a lull for a month and a half. Following the alarming news at the front, we understood that this was temporary. And so it happened. Mass shelling began, sometimes up to a hundred times a day. All this continues from February 24, 2022 until today. They destroy everything: infrastructure (schools, kindergartens, enterprises, housing), logistics. The supply of the most necessary has stopped. Myself, I saw long lines of people for bread. This is terrible.



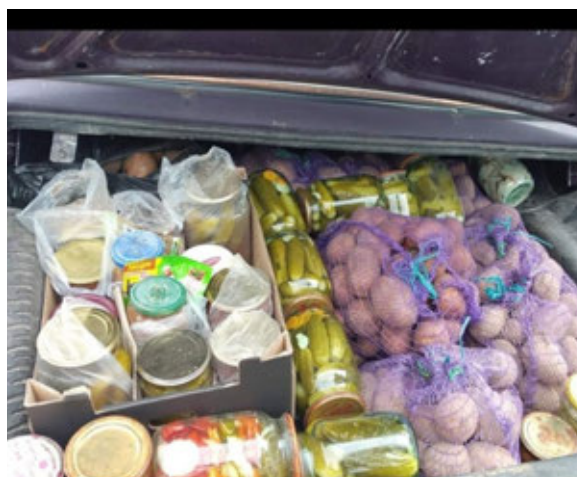


The enemy, shelling the territory, creates a gray zone

Having suffered a fiasco at the beginning of the invasion, the russians use stalin's scorched earth tactics. Lands are under round-the-clock aimed fire. As soon as the farmer or other people leave the field, they immediately shoot. All available arsenals of weapons are used: self-propelled guns, hailstones, missiles, drones, mines. Anything that shoots. Even helicopters fly in to scare away farmers from the fields.

Vadym Sokhan is very concerned about the fact that thousands of hectares of fertile land are not being used for their intended purpose. Since the beginning of the war, russian killers have already destroyed a zone 1.5-2 km wide along the border. In addition, it has already become dangerous to work in a 5 km zone. And the other day, orcs fired at harvesters at a distance of 7 km. Practically the border settlements of the community are broken. People left their homes. No one can cultivate the land. Power lines are damaged all the time. Beautiful fields are disappearing.

- It hurts to look at it. But even under such difficult conditions, the peasants did not give up. Last year, there was a huge problem with fuel (gasoline and diesel fuel were bought even at UAH 100 per liter), but we sowed and harvested crops. People had bread made from their own hands. They provided themselves with products. And that's good, - recalls Vadim. - Peasants, farmers, entrepreneurs, together with various public organizations, volunteers helped single elderly people, families with many children, and other villagers who were in need. There was enough from harvest to harvest.



From the oldest times, as soon as this year's harvest has been collected and transported to reliable storage, the peasant begins to take care of the next year's harvest. Farmers of the Bilopillya community and peasants who belong to the Association of Farmers of the Sumy Oblast do not stop worrying about the fate of future bread. Among them is Vadim Sokhan as a public activist, participant and inspirer of those ideas which unite all those who care about the food security of their compatriots.

Who does not care about the fate of their native land?

The Russian invasion showed "bottlenecks" in land relations. In particular, we are talking about a number of legal, financial, economic and some other aspects that will have to be solved at both the state and local levels.

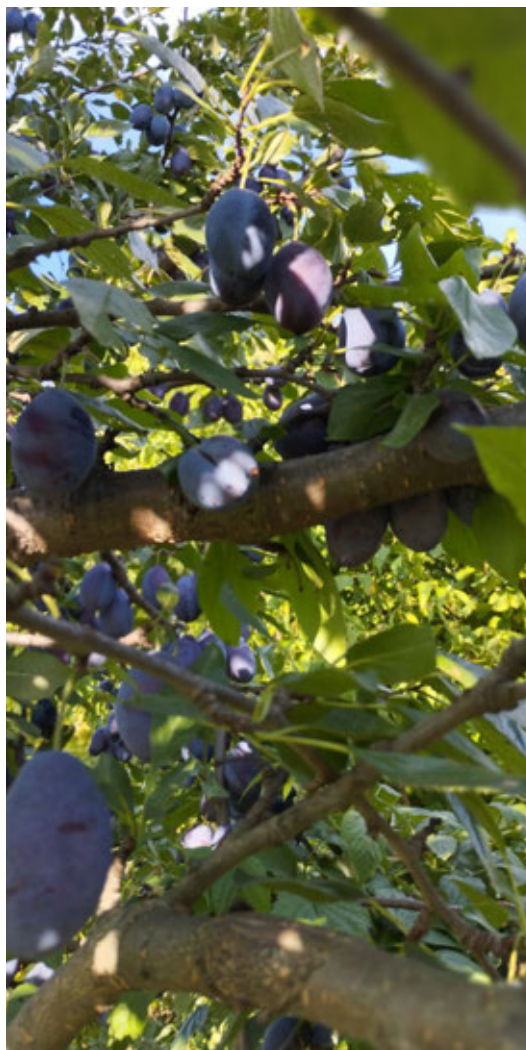
- Our community has its own vision of solving the problems caused by the war, Vadym Ruslanovych shares with us. - The peasants want to unite in a cooperative. We have already held the constituent assembly. The Charter and other documents for registration have been prepared. This way it will be better to cultivate the land, buy equipment, seeds, fertilizers or plant protection products, etc. In Sumy Oblast this year, a regional program was launched, providing 10 million hryvnias of aid to agricultural producers. The local government should take care of creating communal facilities that will work for food security. It's a shame, but the fact is that Bilopillya, whose population in 2020 exceeded 16,000 people, does not have its own bakery. And, even now, under shelling, bread is brought from Okhtyrka, Sumy and other settlements.

- So far, there are no answers to the question of what will happen to the land along the border. All these areas are filled with mines, shells, destroyed by ravines. Over time, they will need to be restored.

What to do with shared, leased plots that are not necessarily sown, and how to settle accounts with landlords? Is the question of exchange of shares, compensation for lost equipment and property being considered? For the peasants who have lived and worked on this land for generations and have no intention of going anywhere, these are painful but urgent questions. Violation of price parity, the activity of dubious intermediaries in the market, and the reduction of the network of vocational schools, which trained specialists in labor professions, plague the development of farming.

Vadym Sokhan believes that these are far from all the issues that need to be resolved now and especially after the war. Reflecting on the future, he talks about the importance of creating a local food system, the establishment of processing enterprises, which, above all, will provide the population of the community with food products and provide fair prices to producers of raw materials. He emphasizes that only by joint actions can the peasants protect their own interests against traders and other intermediaries.

He, like other villagers, wants to hear the opinion of government officials, deputies, and politicians about how the state's food system should be formed and operate. In this sense, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas should be the impetus for a certain response to the problems of rural people. And for now, the residents of the community, together with everyone in Sumy Oblast and in Ukraine, are bringing Victory closer with their daily work.



OLEKSIY SKOROMNY AND
SVITLANA GAPONYK:

"THIS IS OUR VILLAGE, LAND, HOME AND BUSINESS"

Slobozhanshchyna is one of the most important regions of Ukraine, both in cultural and historical, and in industrial, agricultural, socio-political aspects. The Pecheneg settlement territorial community in the Kharkiv region was formed in October 2020 by joining the Borshchiv, Artemiv, Martiv, and Novoburlutsk village councils to the Pecheneg settlement council. The community included 12 settlements. The community is located in the eastern part of the Kharkiv region, in the Chuguyiv district. In terms of population, it is defined by small communities, but the socio-economic situation grew and flourished every year.

One problem is the proximity of the northern neighbor, which, given the chauvinist-aggressive policy implemented by it for centuries, eventually played a bad joke with the central settlement of the community. The urban-type settlement of Pecheneg was not under effective occupation, but the front

line was nearby for seven months and Russian troops stood literally 2-3 kilometers from the settlement.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Russian Federation with its "ruthless peace" invaded the territory of the community three times.

For the first time, in August 2022, the village was shelled en masse. Then houses, garages, communication networks, cow sheds were destroyed, 19 cows died. A stream for storing grain was destroyed, the House of Culture, industrial enterprises, and dozens of private households were damaged. Pechenegs have not known such terror against the civilian population, probably since the time of their foundation.

For the second time, the Russians struck critical infrastructure in the Pecheneg region in September of the same year.

The third time was at the beginning of December 2022. In addition to the immediate threat to life and health, the moral pressure from shelling, the continuation of hostilities that have been going on for more than a month, the residents felt a serious shortage of food supplies. It was not even about a high-quality, full-fledged, balanced diet, but about elementary food products. In the prevailing



conditions, with empty shelves in stores, the impossibility of using bank cards, and limited supplies of food from their homesteads (gardens/gardens), people were in despair.

It is clear that without external assistance (state programs, community assistance and charitable organizations), the 8,000 Pechenegs simply would not have been able to survive. But they persevered!

How did it happen? Oleksiy Skoromny, an eyewitness of the events, tells about the history of his family and community in those recent times.

The family managed to survive and helped other residents of the community

Together with his wife Svitlana Gaponyk, they settled in Pechenegy back in 1999. They are engaged in farming. However, the war practically destroyed their life's work. This family not only managed to survive in those conditions, but also helped other residents of the community.

- The Pecheneg community was cut off from the territory of Ukraine for almost a month and a half. Logistics were disrupted, leading to major disruptions in food delivery. In order to at least somehow save the situation, the head of the community and entrepreneurs organized themselves and started giving flour to people for free, and they baked something with it. Some baked products from bran. One of the local farmers distributed milk for free for a month.

- Later, a farmer from western Ukraine called me and asked what do we need? Then they arranged food deliveries from Poltava. I can't calmly talk about the case when they brought sugar... They

handed out a glass and three tea bags each so that there was enough for everyone. They brought buns or something else. People took it in silence, then, standing, they ate little by little, because they were hungry. It was scary to watch. So that in the 21st century, people starve in Ukraine!? When more food aid began to arrive, people began to share it among themselves, trying to stock up, sometimes pushing, arguing, - Mr. Oleksiy shares his memories.



People's consciousness has radically changed

Thanks to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, after a month and a half of isolation, the Pechenegs established contact with other settlements. The food situation improved, the issue with payment cards was resolved, but heavy shelling began again and many people left their homes and went to safe places. The rest of the villagers started spring sowing work - they sowed and planted what they had left, and continued to cultivate the land, despite the danger.

- One of our neighbors had his arm torn off right in the garden, another died when he went to bring water to a cow. My husband suffered a concussion and now he can't hear well, - comments wife Svitlana Volodymyrivna with tears in her eyes.

But the war caused certain changes in the minds of Pechenegs. Previously, some people did not consider it necessary to cultivate gardens and keep a household. And so, not having any reserves, they were forced to live half-starved at this critical time, without confidence in the future. Now the consciousness of the population has radically changed.



- Our neighbor did not cultivate his vegetable garden, so during the hostilities he had to ask for the most necessary foodstuffs. Now he grows vegetables. Today, people are very grateful for the help of charitable organizations - they give them poultry, fodder for them, seed material, - Oleksiy Skoromny continues his story.

Help plus own initiative

Currently, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is providing assistance to Ukrainian villages and communities affected by the Russian full-scale invasion, including Pechenizka.

In the Kharkiv region, 10,000 vegetable kits were distributed for households.
In the Pecheneg community, citizens received 3,000 sets. Pecheneg residents also received:

- 2,000 sets of fodder for chickens,
- 500 sets of fodder for pigs,
- 250 tons of seed potatoes;
- 400 families received 30 pcs. broiler chickens.

Agricultural producers of the Kharkiv region, namely 1,117 farmers and sole proprietors, received 2,234 tons of winter wheat.
In the spring of 2023, farmers received sunflowers, corn, peas, and barley.

In communities, people began to think about unification and cooperation, together is better. There is an understanding that this is their village, their land, their home and business. The main thing is the

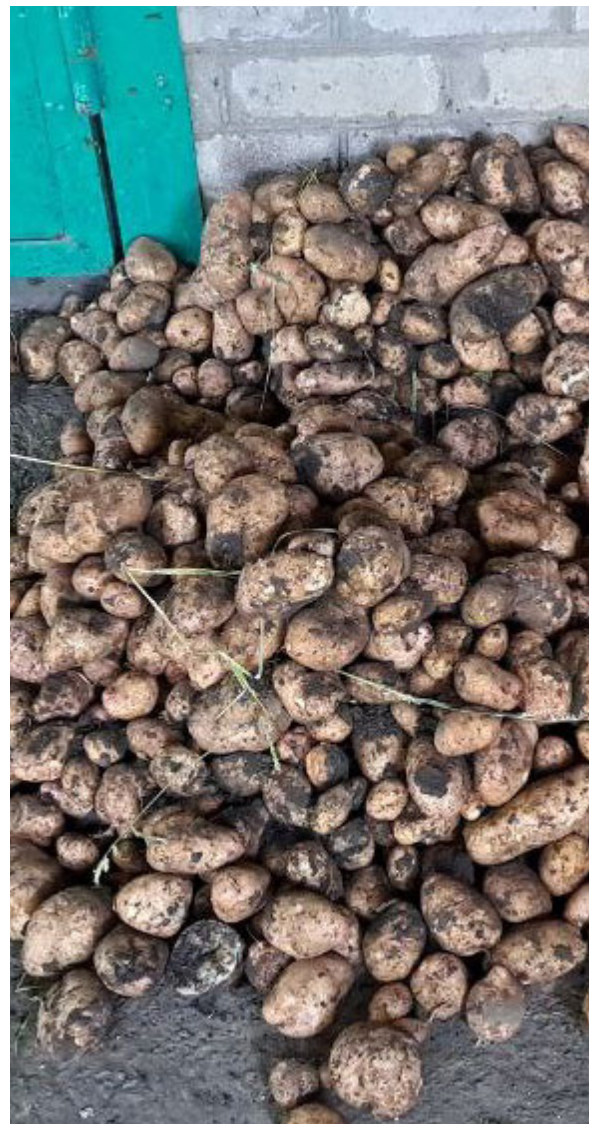


desire to work. Residents of the community, who had never raised poultry, began to do so, especially when chickens were distributed. 30 chickens is 90 kg of meat in 45 days. Consciousness changed, they began to rely more on their own strength, and not on supermarkets. So, there will be enough food for this winter in Pechenegy , - Svitlana Volodymyrivna tells us.

- Ms. Svitlana, as an adviser to the " Kharkiv Regional Advisory Center " created to advise farmers and the rural population, conducts training, after which each participant-peasant can write a business plan and take part in a competition, where he can receive funds for the development of a small business . She is convinced that it should be a system that can teach, show and provide.

- Everyone comes to us: both young people and pensioners. It is good that many young people are interested and involved in the work. And recently, a 70-year-old grandmother, who keeps 80 goats, asked for a lawnmower. I persuaded her to better listen to the trainings and receive financial assistance, Svitlana Volodymyrivna comments with a smile.

The food supply system in the Pechenegs began to improve little by little. This was facilitated by mutual benefit, assistance from public organizations, individual philanthropic entrepreneurs, assistance from non-governmental structures, and support from local authorities. And also - the realization that by uniting together, you can overcome any difficulties. Especially during war and aggression from a terrorist country, which is currently Russia.



CONNECTING PEOPLE:

A COMMUNITY VIEW OF BALANCED NUTRITION

Iryna Burzak is the head of the district of the village of Rudnitske, Baryshiv Territorial Community, Brovar District, Kyiv Region. Before the war, more than 600 people lived in the village, including more than 300 pensioners. During the war, the population increased due to internally displaced persons, who mostly came to their relatives.

Solving food problems during the occupation and after liberation

During the occupation from March 2 to 28, 2022, the peasants faced the problem of physical access to food. Shops were closed, people were not allowed to go outside, including to buy food. They were saved by stocks, mainly flour, cereals, preserves, potatoes, etc. There was no electricity and gas in the village, so there was no opportunity to bake bread. We had to organize the delivery of bread and some food products to homes, personal contacts and elders from neighboring villages helped. Oleksiy Zub, an entrepreneur from the village of Lukyanivka, who bought bread at his own expense and delivered it to people, provided significant help. Local farmers, delivered bread, eggs and milk to the people, supported the Lukyanivske gas station with food. After the liberation, the peasants were not sure whether they would be able to sow the fields and plant gardens. Part of the territory was mined, in some places there were remnants of ammunition. Iryna was in direct contact with the sappers and coordinated their actions in demining the houses in which the russians were located during the occupation and the plots of land, which gave people the opportunity to cultivate their gardens, and farmers and agricultural enterprises to sow their fields. They did it a month later, but the foundation was laid for food security for their families in 2022.

Solving the problem of school meals

As a result of military aggression, the school was destroyed. Therefore, the village faced the problem of organizing the education of schoolchildren, there are about 100 of them in the village, and providing school meals. The issues were discussed at the general meeting of the village and a decision was made to transfer the children to study in a neighboring settlement. Currently, the parents' committee independently solves the issue of school meals, and the community helps it in this, through additional payments from the local budget.





Regarding the range of food products

In the village, there is a lack of assortment of food products, in particular meat and dairy products. In recent years, there has been a sharp reduction in the number of animals kept by the villagers: currently there is only 1 family that keeps 6 cows, so there is not enough milk for all the needs of the villagers. A limited number of people raise pigs. Before the war, food problems were partially solved by food trucks that arrived on predetermined days. But today this practice is broken. The problem of providing meat and dairy products is solved by keeping poultry and purchasing products in nearby settlements - 16 km away in the city of Baryshivka, 15 km away in the village of Lukyanivka, on Saturdays - at the large market in the village of Berezovyi Gai, 15 km away.

About nutrition of vulnerable population groups

There are 14 families registered in the village who have the status of internally displaced persons. Some of them came to their relatives; displaced persons who did not have relatives in the village were given uninhabited houses with the consent of the owners. Each of them received a plot of land and, accordingly, the opportunity to grow vegetables. Neighbors provided the settlers with seeds, planting material and everything they needed. Most of the pensioners in the village are cared for by their own families. The state allocates funds for care and food to lonely people and those who need external assistance. Two social workers from the district regularly visit such people. Charity fairs are constantly organized in Rudnytskyi, in which local entrepreneurs actively participate. The collected funds go to help the needy and to support the Armed Forces.

In Iryna's opinion, the followings are important for the further development of the village:

Iryna emphasizes that the combination of efforts of the population, civil society and authorities at different levels will contribute to the realization of the right to adequate nutrition:

- support of the traditional way of food production, used by single individuals and farmers, which will not only provide the local population with work, but also contribute to the production of products with appropriate nutritional and taste qualities;
- continuation of the practice of consolidating the community in defending its rights through public initiatives;
- carrying out activities to increase people's awareness of modern technologies for improving the quality of food products;
- state support for producers of ecologically clean products;
- increasing the population's activity in solving local problems.

Obviously, the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine created extremely difficult conditions for the life of the peasants. Sometimes it is not about oppression and violation of the right to adequate food, but about elementary survival. The above stories prove that only through joint efforts, thanks to the solidarity, mutual aid and fruitful cooperation among the peasants, entrepreneurial structures, civil society and the state, it is possible to survive difficult times and actively participate in the post-war reconstruction of the country.

№1
September 2023



**Support to Civil Society
Organisations in Ukraine**

**Bulletin
of the Public Organization
"Knowledge Platform -
Agrarian Development and Rural Innovations"**

**The right to adequate food
In the UN DECLARATION
ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS
AND OTHER PEOPLE
WHO WORK IN RURAL AREAS**

The bulletin was prepared by the Public Organization "Knowledge Platform - Agrarian Development and Rural Innovations" thanks to a grant received from the Program "Support of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)" in Ukraine within the financial support of the Embassy of Great Britain.

The program is implemented by Crown Agents in partnership with International Alert and in cooperation with Crown Agents in Ukraine.

The content of the bulletin does not necessarily reflect the views of the Embassy of Great Britain, the views of International Alert and Crown Agents in Ukraine.

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