

# Russia Has Sent First Free Grain Shipments to Africa

By [AFP](#)

November 17, 2023



Ivan Studenov (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Russia has sent the first of its promised shipments of free grain to Africa, the country's agriculture minister said Friday.

"The first two ships have already left Russian ports for Somalia and Burkina Faso. We expect them to arrive in late November to early December," Agriculture Minister Dmitry Patrushev said in a statement.

State news agencies reported him telling a forum that the two ships were carrying 25,000 tons of grain each.

Russian President Vladimir Putin in July pledged to send 200,000 tons of free grain to six African countries.

The promise came shortly after Moscow withdrew from a UN-brokered deal that ensured safe

passage for Ukraine's agricultural exports from its southern Black Sea ports.

**Related article:** [Putin Promises Free Grain at Africa Summit](#)

Moscow had long railed against the initiative — claiming without providing evidence — that hardly any of Ukraine's exports were going to the world's poorest countries.

Russia and Ukraine are two of the world's largest producers and exporters of agricultural goods.

Russia's offensive on the country triggered fears of global food shortages and surging prices, particularly grains.

Patrushev said further shipments to the Central African Republic, Eritrea, Mali and Zimbabwe will be dispatched before the end of the year.

Putin has accelerated a diplomatic push into Africa since he launched a full-scale military campaign on Ukraine in February 2022.

Earlier this year he hosted a high-profile summit of African leaders in his hometown of St. Petersburg, including exhibitions by Russian arms producers and the state-run nuclear energy company.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/11/17/russia-has-sent-first-free-grain-shipments-to-africa-a83141>