

Borodina Olena

*Academician of NAS of Ukraine, Doctor of Economics, Professor,
Head of the Department of Economics and Policy
of Agrarian Transformations,
State Organization "Institute for Economics and Forecasting
of the NAS of Ukraine";
Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development,
Polish Academy of Sciences*

Yarovyi Viktor

*PhD, Leading Researcher,
State Organization "Institute for Economics and Forecasting
of the NAS of Ukraine";
Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development,
Polish Academy of Sciences*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36059/978-966-397-602-0-3>

FOOD SECURITY, LAND POLICY, AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR UKRAINE: TOWARDS A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED INTEGRATED APPROACH

The consequences of war are nowhere more immediately visible than in food security. In Ukraine's rural areas, the full-scale invasion has disrupted agricultural supply chains, forced mass displacement of farming communities, contaminated or mined hundreds of thousands of hectares of productive land, and pushed millions of people into conditions of acute food insecurity. Yet reconstruction planning continues to treat food security, land policy, and rural development as separate administrative domains, addressed by separate ministries through separate instruments.

This fragmentation is not merely inefficient but fundamentally flawed. Access to food depends on access to land; land tenure depends on the stability of rural communities; community stability depends on the broader conditions of rural development. In post-war Ukraine, these dependencies are not background assumptions but the central policy problem. A framework that addresses one domain while ignoring the others will predictably fail.

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) offers a different starting point. Developed within the international human rights law tradition and mainstreamed through UN development practice, HRBA reframes development goals as legal obligations rather than policy preferences. The state bears direct accountability to rights-holders: the rural population whose rights to food, land, a clean environment, and participation in local decision-making are legally recognised entitlements, most recently reaffirmed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas [1].

What remains underexplored, however, is how HRBA can be operationalised across multiple interdependent policy domains simultaneously. Rural development, food security, and land policy are typically studied and managed as separate fields. In post-war Ukraine, this separation is analytically and practically untenable. Displacement directly affects both food access and land tenure. Mine contamination shapes both agricultural production and spatial planning. Demographic collapse in rural areas creates feedback loops that cut across all three domains at once. The response, we argue, requires an explicitly integrated approach that treats these domains as constitutively linked rather than merely adjacent.

It is this reasoning that underlies the international research project *"Substantiation and measures for implementation of a human rights-based integrated approach to rural development, food security and land policy in post-war rebuilding of Ukraine"* (rUAR: *Rebuild Rural Ukraine*) [2], implemented over 2023–2026 by a team of researchers from three institutions: the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development, Polish Academy of Sciences (Warsaw); the Institute for Economics and Forecasting of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv); and the Institute of Land Management of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv).

The project's ambition is both analytical and applied. On the analytical side, it examines the current state of Ukrainian rural areas, maps threats to post-war development, and assesses land and food supply needs against critical demographic trends. The right to food and the sustainability of agri-food systems are treated as central analytical categories in this work [3]. Within this rights-based framework, the project also addresses a range of interconnected issues: access to land

and land market reform [4], food price dynamics and the affordability of food [5], the transformation of agricultural and rural development in the context of European integration [6], and other related aspects. On the applied side, it develops post-war development scenarios through spatial modelling and decision-support tools, and formulates policy recommendations for the institutional framework of rural reconstruction, grounded explicitly in the human rights-based integrated approach (HRBIA) rather than in conventional sectoral logic.

The principles that HRBIA brings to this work, namely accountability of state institutions toward rights-holders, non-discrimination, community participation, transparency, and alignment with the SDGs and the EU's Common Agricultural Policy reform, are not merely normative declarations. They function as analytical criteria: a given reconstruction policy can be evaluated against each of them, and the results of that evaluation are actionable.

This is also why the approach carries relevance beyond research. For economists and public policy specialists trained in sectoral disciplines, HRBIA offers a vocabulary for thinking about complex, multi-domain problems that standard curricula rarely provide. Post-war Ukraine will need professionals who can work at exactly these intersections.

Acknowledgments: This research has been conducted within the project "Substantiation and measures for implementation of a human rights-based integrated approach to rural development, food security and land policy in post-war rebuilding of Ukraine" (acronym "rUAR: Rebuild Rural Ukraine") financed under the "Long-term program of support of the Ukrainian research teams at the Polish Academy of Sciences carried out in collaboration with the U.S. National Academy of Sciences with the financial support of external partners". Outcomes of the research project reflect only the opinions of the authors and the Polish Academy of Sciences, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and other partners supporting the program are not responsible for any use of the information contained therein.

References:

1. United Nations. (2018). Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. A/RES/73/165. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1650694>
2. IRWiR PAN. rUAR: Rebuild Rural Ukraine – project page. Available at: <https://www.irwirpan.waw.pl/931/badania/substantiation-and-measures-for-implementation-of-a-human-rights-based-integrated-approach-to-rural-development-food-security-and-land-policy-in-post-war-rebuilding-of-ukraine>
3. Borodina O. (2024). On the question of the methodology for studying human right to food in sustainable agri-food system. *Economy of Ukraine*, vol. 67 (4), pp. 36–56. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15407/economyukr.2024.04.036>
4. Ibatullin S., Sakal O., Krupin V. (2024). Agricultural Land Market in Ukraine: Challenges of Trade Liberalization and Future Land Policy Reforms. *Land*, vol. 13, p. 338. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/land13030338>
5. Yarovyi V., Krupin V., Borodina O., Wojciechowska A. (2025). Food Prices and the Right to Food: Assessing Trends in Ukraine During Wartime. *European Research Studies Journal*, vol. XXVIII(3), pp. 61–72. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/4033>
6. Kovalenko A., Tsybulska J., Sakal O., Krupin V., Bratinova M. (2025). Ukraine's Agricultural and Rural Development: Transformation of Strategic Planning within the Processes of European Integration. *European Research Studies Journal*, vol. XXVIII(1), pp. 739–760. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35808/ersj/3933>