

Country: United Kingdom

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)

Agenda Item: Russia-Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine War is an ongoing war in which Russia, Belarus and pro-Russian forces are involved on the one hand, and Ukraine on the other. It is a military mobility that began in 2014 and grew in February 2022 after Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who was dismissed after Yevromaydan, asked Russia to send troops to the region due to tensions in Crimea.

The UK has been one of the biggest supporters of Ukraine: measured in billions of euros, it is the third largest donor to Ukraine, coming after the US and the EU, and ahead of Germany, the largest individual EU Member State donor. The support is mostly military: as of 24 February 2023, the UK had committed €6.6 billion in military assistance to Ukraine according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy. The UK has provided lethal weaponry, such as anti-tank missiles and long-range rocket systems, and announced in January 2023 that it would send 14 Challenger II main battle tanks to Ukraine. The UK has also provided over 200 000 items of non-lethal aid, been pivotal in setting up a long-term training programme for the Ukrainian armed forces (Operation Interflex), in which some EU Member States participate, and offered to train Ukrainian fighterjet pilots. The UK has pledged £220 million (€253 million) in humanitarian aid for 2022 and 2023, focusing on lifesaving assistance such as food and shelter, prioritising women, girls and the most vulnerable. The financial aid includes a 3-year £100 million package (€115 million) primarily to support those parts of Ukraine's economy most vulnerable to Russia, such as the energy sector. Furthermore, the UK government has committed US\$100 million (€91 million) for the Ukrainian budget to support public sector salaries, social protection, and core services. It also works through a World Bank guarantee scheme and its fiscal support grants. Looking ahead, London is hosting the international Ukraine Recovery Conference in June 2023.

Defense and security links between Ukraine, NATO members and other allies and partners began shortly after Ukraine's independence Dec. 1991. These links intensified with Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, but primarily took the form of bilateral provision of training and non-lethal military equipment.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, bilateral military assistance has been significantly increased, with many allies providing lethal weapons to Ukraine for the first time. For some countries, such as Germany, and historically neutral countries, such as Sweden, this represents a significant reversal in previous defense policies that excluded the provision of offensive weapons.

The types of weapons provided have also evolved as the conflict in Ukraine has evolved. There were fears that the provision of increasingly sophisticated weapons could escalate the conflict.

Air defense remains a priority, as well as ammunition supply and long-range offensive capabilities. Delays in aid are assessed by NATO to have affected Ukraine's ability to defend its own lines, with Russian forces subsequently making tactical gains in Eastern Ukraine. There are ongoing concerns about a possible summer attack by Russia. The US has also accused Russia of using chemical weapons against Ukrainian forces.

The allies have also increasingly turned their attention to the practical implementation of the long-term security guarantees promised to Ukraine in July 2023. The continuous supply of modern equipment,

long-term capability development and strengthening of Ukraine's defense industry base are seen as a way to achieve greater goals. Self-sufficiency in arms production is at the heart of these plans.

The UK government is providing a range of economic, humanitarian and defensive military assistance to Ukraine, and is imposing additional sanctions on Russia and Belarus.

The UK is providing both economic and humanitarian aid, including vital medical supplies. The UK's non-military support to Ukraine since the start of invasion comes to £4.7 billion. This includes over £4.1 billion in fiscal support, and over £640 million in bilateral assistance. The UK's total military, humanitarian and economic support for Ukraine now amounts to £9.3 billion.

Furthermore, we are providing military aid to Ukraine, continuing to work with international partners to supply vital weapons to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. So far we have delivered a wide range of equipment including main battle tanks, helicopters, minehunter ships, thousands of anti-tank weapons, anti-air missiles, multiple launch rocket systems, long range precision strike capability, armoured vehicles, drones, artillery, small arms and ammunition. We have also delivered non-lethal aid including helmets, body armour, rations and medical equipment. Since 2022, with support from our allies, we have trained over 35,000 Ukrainian soldiers. More specialised training has been provided to Ukrainian personnel including marines, combat fighter pilots, and chaplains. The UK is also leading two international capability coalitions, focused on drones and the maritime domain, to provide long-term military support to further bolster the capabilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

In addition, we are changing the immigration system to support British nationals and their families who usually live in Ukraine, and Ukrainians in the UK and their families. We are also offering a sponsorship scheme, Homes for Ukraine, allowing individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the UK.

Moreover, we are delivering an unprecedented package of sanctions to cut off funding for Putin's war machine. We have now sanctioned over 1,600 individuals, entities and subsidiaries since Putin's invasion of Ukraine, including 69 leading oligarchs. We have coordinated with our allies on sanctions aimed at starving the Russian government of funds to further its unprovoked war against Ukraine, including a joint decision by all G7 countries to remove Russian banks from the SWIFT system.

References

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