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# [*Business news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DM-KF81-F072-441D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 10, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** BUSINESS; Pg. 49

**Length:** 514 words

**Body**

Post Office personal cash deposits and withdrawals dip

Personal cash deposits and withdrawals at post offices were higher in April than a year earlier but dipped compared with the previous month. There were £750m of personal cash withdrawals in April, up by 27 per cent from £590m in April 2021, the Post Office said. But withdrawals were down by 3.7 per cent compared with March when the figure was £779m. Personal cash deposits totalled £1.26bn in April, up 17 per cent from £1.07bn in April 2021. The latest figure was lower than the £1.31bn recorded in March.

The Post Office has an agreement with many banks that enables people to do their day-to-day banking over its counters. It has been calling for legislation to be unveiled in the Queen's Speech today to protect free access to cash, and launched a "save our cash" campaign last year. PA

EasyJet recruitment campaign tackles job stereotypes

A new recruitment campaign by easyJet is aiming to tackle job stereotypes and inspire more young people to consider a career in aviation, including encouraging more girls to become pilots. The airline has released a recruitment film based on scenes from the 1980s blockbuster film Top Gun, in which the lead pilot roles were played by an all-male cast. EasyJet's film sees the roles reversed, with girls playing the lead.

The launch of the campaign follows new research by the budget carrier that suggested people believe gender stereotypes are dominating Hollywood films. A survey of 3,000 parents and their children showed that four in five said Hollywood perpetuates gender stereotypes when it comes to job roles for men and women. PA

Rightmove CEO to step down in 2023 after 16 years

Peter Brooks-Johnson, boss of Rightmove, has announced plans to step down after more than 16 years with the property firm. The UK's largest property website said Mr Brooks-Johnson will remain in the chief executive role until its full-year figures are unveiled in February 2023 and will help find a replacement to ensure a smooth handover. The group said it is now launching the search for his successor.

Mr Brooks-Johnson said: "With Rightmove progressing well on its mission to make home moving easier and our strong trading from 2021 continuing into 2022, I have decided it is an appropriate time to seek a new challenge."

Travelodge to hire 700 staff amid strong recovery

Hotel chain Travelodge has revealed plans to hire 700 staff ahead of an expected busy summer season for "staycations" as it reported a strong rebound from the pandemic. The company is looking to take on 640 staff across its UK sites, with 40 roles also open at its head office in Oxfordshire alongside 20 maintenance engineer positions. Travelodge is seeking to fill the permanent positions immediately as it gears up for another strong summer for staycation demand, while it also rolls out a hotel revamp programme and is set to open three new sites in the UK.

The group confirmed it will welcome applications from all candidates, including ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, whom it said "need a fresh start and have a right to work in the UK". PA

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2022

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[*Reflection on Ireland’s EU ‘marriage’ as von der Leyen addresses politicians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670F-52J1-DY4H-K1PW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 584 words

**Byline:** By Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** Opposition politicians responded to the EU chief’s comments in the Irish parliament.

**Body**

A visit by [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) to Dublin prompted politicians to reflect on the benefits of EU membership, with some taking the opportunity to raise flaws with the “marriage”.

As the one-day visit did not provide any opportunities for questions from the media, the most colourful part of the trip was when opposition politicians responded to the EU chief’s comments in the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) parliament.

Ms von der Leyen gave a glowing address to Dail Eireann in which she quoted former Irish premier Jack Lynch, former Irish president [*Mary Robinson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mary-robinson) , Irish playwright [*George Bernard Shaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/george-bernard-shaw) and the Irish band The Saw Doctors.

She noted the progress [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) had made since joining the EU, saying that it had grown its GDP from half of the EU average in the 1970s, to it now being double the EU average.

The European Commission president said that Ireland shows “Europe’s best face”, and that it was “a beacon for Europe and the world”, particularly in light of the “famous Irish welcome” it has given to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Her assertion that there would be no hard border on the island of Ireland prompted the loudest bout of applause from the packed Dail chamber.

Taoiseach Micheal Martin welcomed her “strong comments”, with he and Sinn Fein president Mary Lou McDonald in rare agreement in thanking the EU for its “unswerving” solidarity with Ireland during the “storm” of Brexit.

“Merci beaucoup for standing up for the Good Friday Agreement and the Irish protocol,” Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan told the German national during his contribution.

Ms McDonald had said that Ireland had “quite a journey” since joining the European Economic Communities in 1973 – a precursor to the EU.

“There have been so many positives, so many positive advances in areas like equality, workers’ rights, environmental standards, economic progress, and many many challenges too – the growing militarisation, deregulation and privatisation to mention just some.”

Other opposition politicians also raised criticisms of the EU in response to Ms von der Leyen’s address.

I hope the EU can learn from its mistakes and live up to the ideals which it claims to profess

Roisin Shortall

Social Democrat co-leader Roisin Shortall outlined what she saw as the good and the bad of the EU.

“It’s safe to say Ireland would be a less developed and less progressive country today had we not joined what is now the European Union.

“But it’s also fair to say it hasn’t all been positive – being forced to bail out the bondholders during one of our lowest ebbs is a case in point.

“The increased militarisation of ‘Fortress Europe’ and its consequences for desperate migrants, thousands of whom have died trying to reach our shores, must be regarded as shameful.

“And of course, the bloc’s fiscal policy must also come under the microscope.”

She added: “I hope the EU can learn from its mistakes and live up to the ideals which it claims to profess. Otherwise, we will undoubtedly be doomed to repeat those mistakes.”

People Before Profit’s Richard Boyd Barrett argued that it was necessary to criticise the European Union for imposing austerity on Ireland, saying that it was partly to blame for the housing and homelessness crisis that Ireland is still struggling with.

Towards the conclusion of speeches, Independent TD Michael Fitzmaurice noted that the EU was “like marriage… you either buy into it, or you don’t”.

Among those who were present for the address to the chamber were Sinn Fein deputy leader Michelle O’Neill and EU commissioner Mairead McGuinness.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Vladimir Putin 'more dangerous than Hitler or Stalin', says Poland's prime minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DW-KX81-DY4H-K3CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 581 words

**Byline:** Shweta Sharma

**Highlight:** Morawiecki accuses west of blissfully forgetting threat of Russia resurrecting demons of history

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) is more dangerous than [*Adolf Hitler*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adolf-hitler) or [*Joseph Stalin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joseph-stalin) , the Polish prime minister has warned, while calling for the destruction of the Russian president's "monstrous ideology".

[*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) 's leader [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) called for "de-Putinisation" in an article in [*The Telegraph.*](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2022/05/10/russias-monstrous-ideology-must-defeated/) He said Mr Putin's dangeruous ideology is bolstered by "deadlier weapons" at his disposal and new media at his fingertips to spread his propaganda.

"Putin is neither Hitler nor Stalin. Unfortunately, he is more dangerous," he wrote. "Not so long ago, Poland engaged in an information war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) over the genesis of the Second World War. We won; but Putin achieved his goals. He infected the internet with millions of instances of fake news."

Giving examples of the Ukrainian [*cities of Bucha, Irpin and Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-crimes-putin-b2075571.html%22%20title=%22War%20crimes:%20How%20are%20they%20defined,%20investigated%20and%20punished?) , where streets have "run with the blood of innocents", Mr Morawiecki said it signified the return of the "accursed ideologies" of Stalin and Hitler.

He accused the west of falling into "blissful forgetfulness" of the threats posed by Russia as Moscow continued to work to "resurrect the demons of history" in the last three decades.

He said the illusion that history cannot repeat itself "was laid bare on February 24 this year", when [*Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-nuclear-weapons-russia-ukraine-b2076280.html%22%20title=%22How%20likely%20is%20it%20that%20Russia%20will%20launch%20a%20nuclear%20attack?) despite repeatedly denying the months-long military build-up on its border was to invade the neighbour.

The Polish prime minister blamed western ignorance which allowed Mr Putin to develop ideologies akin to "20th-century communism and Nazism".

"We will lose our soul and our freedom and sovereignty" because Russia will not stop at Kyiv, he warned.

"She [Russia] has set out on a long march towards the west and it's up to us to decide where we stop her."

Poland, which shares a border with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , has been one of the most vocal countries to speak out against the Russian invasion and urged support for the Ukrainian army from world leaders while [*demanding stringent sanctions.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-vladimir-putin-bulgaria-ukraine-hungary-b2071998.html%22%20title=%22Europeans%20weigh%20costs%20of%20cutting%20Russian%20energy%20over%20Ukraine)

Warsaw has also opened its [*borders to millions of* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-asylum-guidance-belgium-inadmissible-b2075884.html%22%20title=%22Asylum%20seekers%20could%20be%20sent%20to%20Rwanda%20for%20'spending%20a%20couple%20of%20weeks%20in%20Brussels'%20on%20way%20to%20Britain) who fled the besieged Ukrainian cities after Mr Putin ordered what he deemed as a "military operation" in Ukraine.

The US director of National Intelligence Avril Haines also suggested that Mr Putin's plans would not stop with Ukraine and that he is preparing for a prolonged conflict.

She said the Russian president could fully mobilise his country or even impose martial law if he feels that things are turning against him.

"We assess President Putin is preparing for a prolonged conflict in Ukraine during which he still intends to achieve goals beyond the Donbas," Ms Haines told a Senate hearing on Tuesday.

She added that Mr Putin will use nuclear weapons only if he considers Russia faces an "existential threat".

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the papers say - May 3*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C5-61M1-DY4H-K32K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 5:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 593 words

**Byline:** PA Reporter

**Highlight:** The papers feature the latest from inside the Conservative Party on the eve of local elections.

**Body**

Factional disputes, the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and an intruder at the barracks near [*Windsor Castle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor-castle) are among the topics on the front pages today.

The [*Tories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tories) have been "hit by infighting" before Thursday's elections, according to the i, while the Daily Express says the Prime Minister's right to buy plan is a "vote winner".

Tuesday's front page: Tories hit by infighting on eve of election [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Latest by [*@janemerrick23*](https://twitter.com/janemerrick23?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) : [*https://t.co/j6dipMWKRS*](https://t.co/j6dipMWKRS) [*pic.twitter.com/sIVI5xd2cy*](https://t.co/sIVI5xd2cy) - i newspaper (@theipaper) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/theipaper/status/1521245001761660935?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tuesday's Daily EXPRESS: "Boris' Right To Buy Plan Is Vote Winner" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/ziZRoYKocM*](https://t.co/ziZRoYKocM) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1521244054666850306?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Guardian says Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) faces a class action for the backlog in Ukrainian visa approvals, while The Independent says refugees have been forced into overcrowded homes.Guardian front page, Tuesday 3 May 2022: Patel faces mass legal action from Ukrainians stuck in visa backlog [*pic.twitter.com/CQp6aIaiGc*](https://t.co/CQp6aIaiGc) - The Guardian (@guardian) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/guardian/status/1521236673643925504?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tuesday's INDEPENDENT Digital: "***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** forced into overcrowded homes" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/bAX2w8FOY5*](https://t.co/bAX2w8FOY5) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1521235352995958784?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Rising inflation will take £7,000 out of pensions according to The Times.Tuesday's TIMES: "Rising inflation to blow £7,000 hole in pensions" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/RpaOg99GUp*](https://t.co/RpaOg99GUp) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1521240388522201088?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Daily Mail leads on figures from the Liberal Democrats that show patient to GP ratios have reached over 2,200 to one in England.Tuesday's Daily MAIL: "Where HAVE Our GPs Gone?" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/srQqqw0qwb*](https://t.co/srQqqw0qwb) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1521236042174640135?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) An "intruder" who posed as a priest was invited to stay at the barracks near Windsor Castle by the Queen's Guard, according to Metro and The Sun.Tomorrow's Paper Today THE FAIL OF THE SENTRY Intruder who posed as priest (and ejector seat pilot) invited to stay by castle guards[*#tomorrowspaperstoday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/C6Pazo8iIo*](https://t.co/C6Pazo8iIo) - Metro (@MetroUK) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK/status/1521239693383417857?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) On tomorrow's front page: Queen hit by shock security breach after imposter allowed into barracks just yards from Windsor Castle and stays the night[*https://t.co/iHEMsU1LHa*](https://t.co/iHEMsU1LHa) [*pic.twitter.com/Z8FUZtYmFA*](https://t.co/Z8FUZtYmFA) - The Sun (@TheSun) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TheSun/status/1521244187483648002?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Financial Times says the PM has joined an effort to persuade chip designer Arm to list in London.Just published: front page of the Financial Times, UK edition, Tuesday 3 May [*https://t.co/BPe7fL1XeE*](https://t.co/BPe7fL1XeE) [*pic.twitter.com/6PFSnnyCja*](https://t.co/6PFSnnyCja) - Financial Times (@FinancialTimes) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/FinancialTimes/status/1521217723438620672?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Meanwhile, Mr Johnson's comments that Ukraine is ready for its "finest hour" lead The Daily Telegraph.The front page of tomorrow's Daily Telegraph:'Johnson: Ukraine is ready for its 'finest hour''[*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Sign up for the Front Page newsletter[*https://t.co/x8AV4O6L2Y*](https://t.co/x8AV4O6L2Y) [*pic.twitter.com/F6wBrtVPDl*](https://t.co/F6wBrtVPDl) - The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1521246044964630529?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The prime suspect in Madeleine McCann's disappearance has had an application for parole rejected in Germany, according to the Daily Mirror.Tomorrow's front page: Maddie prime suspect 'a danger to society' [*https://t.co/HmO4oEiIP8*](https://t.co/HmO4oEiIP8) [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/FhlMmWvBOa*](https://t.co/FhlMmWvBOa) - The Mirror (@DailyMirror) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DailyMirror/status/1521240292208349186?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) And the Daily Star says Britain is in for a sweltering summer.Tomorrow's front page: We're Med for it [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/BBP5ahLhlP*](https://t.co/BBP5ahLhlP) [*pic.twitter.com/KE8lP81uXz*](https://t.co/KE8lP81uXz) - Daily Star (@dailystar) [*May 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/dailystar/status/1521243419011694592?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson insists he is honest person and truth 'matters very much to me'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C5-VHC1-JBNF-W3GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 10:02 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 507 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** 'I do my best to represent faithfully and accurately what I believe', says PM

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has insisted that he is an "honest" person who does his best to tell the truth, despite admitting he was "inadvertently" wrong to say all [*Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/covid) rules had been followed in Downing Street.

The prime minister also said he had "no idea" whether he would receive more fines from the Metropolitan Police over [*rule-breaking government parties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-news-referendum-election-latest-b2070254.html%22%20title=%22Boris%20Johnson%20news%20-live) in the weeks ahead.

Speaking to ITV's Good Morning Britain, Mr Johnson said the best way to judge his honesty is to "look at what this government says it's going to do and what it does".

Are if he was honest, Mr Johnson said: "Yes. I do my best to represent faithfully and accurately what I believe. Sometimes it's controversial and sometimes it offends people but that's what I do."

When host Susanna Reid referred to the importance of honesty and telling the truth, Mr Johnson said: "It matters very much to me."

He added: "If you're talking about the statements I made to the House of Commons, I was inadvertently wrong, and I've apologised for that ... I've apologised for the things we got wrong during the pandemic, and I repeat those apologises."

Mr Johnson is facing an investigation over misleading parliament over [*Partygate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/partygate) after he told the Commons that no laws were broken in Downing Street.

This comes despite ongoing calls for his resignation from opposition MPs as well as some of his own backbenches after police handed him a fixed penalty notice (FPN) for attending a celebration for his birthday in No 10.

Mr Johnson then insisted that any news of a further FPN will "not remain secret", but pleaded for the public to wait until the police investigation and top civil servant Sue Gray has offered her full report on the scandal.

He added: "I will make sure that as soon as I'm able to say something on the conclusion of the investigation, you will have a lot more on it."

Asked why he should not resign, as Matt Hancock did as health secretary and Allegra Stratton did as press secretary, the PM said: "I'm getting on with the job that I was elected to do ... and I'm proud of what we have been doing."

The PM also admitted the UK could have reacted faster in helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but said "large numbers" of those fleeing the war are now coming to Britain.

"So far 86,000 visas have been issued and 27,000 are already here and I want to say 'Thank you' - 27,000 is a lot and it's growing fast and I want to pay tribute to all those who are helping to look after Ukrainians. Could we have done it faster? Yes, perhaps we could."

Mr Johnson also asked GMB host "Who's Lorraine?" as he appeared on the programme for the first time in nearly five years.

"Who's Lorraine? Lorraine is a legend!" Ms Reid fired back on her colleague Lorraine Kelly.

Mr Johnson appeared to have misunderstood the situation, thinking he was being passed over to Ms Kelly for another interview. "Fantastic, well I didn't think I was talking to Lorraine, OK..." he muttered.

When the daytime "legend" appeared on the screen, she simply said: "Wow. Thank you, Susanna. A masterclass in a political interview."

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rob Rinder and Jerome Flynn back our Refugees Welcome appeal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658D-S6Y1-DY4H-K0YH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 20, 2022 Wednesday 1:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 573 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** More celebrities have backed our Refugees Welcome campaign after they have witnessed some of the devastation being inflicted through the Russia Ukraine conflict first hand

**Body**

More stars of the entertainment industry have backed our [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) appeal to provide support for the millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled their homes because of the Russian invasion.

Broadcaster and barrister [*Rob Rinder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rob-rinder) visited a train station close to the Polish-Ukrainian border and saw the scale of the disaster firsthand, including how the Red Cross, one of the charities backed by our appeal, was making a critical difference.

Rinder said: "I met mums with children, the elderly and the disabled arriving from Ukraine at a train station in Przemysl. Just a month ago, this was a train station like any other but now it is a refugee centre. The Red Cross have been providing round-the-clock health care and psychological support to people who fled the conflict.

"I saw Red Cross teams handing out food and essentials like blankets, hygiene kits and sleeping mats. Marta, a doctor for the Red Cross, explained that the organisation has given medical help to 6,000 people since the crisis began. Marta works from a makeshift medical centre set up in a primary school. She told me about a woman who had given birth in a bomb shelter in Ukraine, who arrived at the centre with her two-week-old baby. It was the first time the new mum was able to sleep on a proper bed, use a normal toilet and eat a proper meal since she'd given birth."

Actor [*Jerome Flynn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jerome-flynn) , known for his roles in Game of Thrones and Soldier Soldier, backed our support for World Vision, one of 13 charities that make up the Disasters Emergency Committee, which is being funded by our appeal.

He said: "More than half the children in Ukraine have been forced to flee their homes and the chaotic environment of life on the move means many are in extremely vulnerable situations. World Vision has been reaching people in Ukraine with emergency supplies since the conflict started, as well as getting medical supplies and equipment to hospitals.

"They also provide emergency shelter, food assistance and hygiene kits, and are rolling out child protection training. The immediate needs of those whose lives have been uprooted is huge, but it's heartening to see people's mental wellbeing also being addressed."

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees/u/30286981) .

So far we have raised more than £400k along with our sister title, the Evening Standard. Together we are part of a much larger effort supporting the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal, which is bringing together leading UK aid charities.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine needs homes for its refugees as much as it needs our weapons of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656F-F671-JCS0-D20F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 11, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 490 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

There is no shortage of irony that it is clearly far easier to get a British prime minister into a foreign conflict zone than it is to get a normal Ukrainian citizen out of one.

Boris Johnson has taken a surprise visit to Ukraine, to be pictured walking around Kyiv with President Volodymyr Zelensky. Pre-agreed words have been put on social media by various Ukrainian politicians, describing Johnson as "the leader", in international terms, in Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression.

There's no doubt that the UK is playing a pivotal role in arguably the most important aspect of the conflict. It has provided vast numbers of weapons; and, importantly, weapons that have achieved cult status among Ukrainian fighters. The firing of handheld anti-tank missiles has been accompanied by shouts of "God Save The Queen!".

But the scale of the devastation in Ukraine and the ongoing outrageous murder of civilians only highlights the urgency of the need to provide sanctuary to the Ukrainian people, and it is here that the UK is anything but "the leader".

A crossbench peer, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, is still trying to get through the refugee visa process so that a mother and two children, people who are known to her, can come and live in her family home.

She has said that there is "a failure of recognition that this uncertainty is adding to the trauma that these people have already experienced. These aren't just pieces of paper, these are people??? and these are people who have lost everything".

Baroness Finlay's experience is no different from anybody else's. She is particularly concerned that the three visas have all had to be processed individually, suggesting that mothers and children may be separated from each other for a time.

When the UK opened its Ukrainian refugee scheme, almost half a million people had applied within the first 48 hours. Home Office minister Kit Malthouse said on Sunday morning that 40,000 visas had been approved, and up to 12,000 completed.

The exact number of people who have fled Ukraine in terror is not known, but is quite possibly 10 million or more. Poland has received millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. For a country of the size and wealth of the UK, 12,000 is a pitiful number. When asked about this failure, Priti Patel, the home secretary, said: "I apologise with frustration."

If Johnson wishes to trumpet his successes with regard to the assistance the UK has provided Ukraine, which he most certainly does, he must address the failure of the UK's refugee policy as a matter of utmost urgency. It is not as if he doesn't understand the mortal danger faced by the people of Ukraine. They need the security provided by a safe place to live, every bit as much as they need the security that comes out of the barrel of a gun.

Johnson, we must presume, is safely back from Kyiv. It is, quite literally, a rite of passage that he must make open to hundreds of thousands more, without any further delay.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*House Democrats ask Biden to get tougher with Saudi Arabia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6570-8BV1-DY4H-K1RJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2022 Wednesday 9:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 527 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Three dozen House Democrats say Saudi Arabia is being a bad strategic partner

**Body**

Nearly three dozen House [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) are pushing the administration to get tougher with [*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) , calling it a bad strategic partner after it has refused to help ease the world's oil supply crunch during Russia's Ukraine invasion.

Rep. [*Gerry Connolly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerry-connolly) , a Virginia Democrat and senior member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Rep. Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat and chairman of the Committee on Rules, led lawmakers in a letter asking Secretary of State Antony Blinken for a "recalibration" of the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

The Saudi Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) started out his presidency freezing out the kingdom's crown prince and de facto ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, over Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen and abuses including the killing of American-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi at a Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Tight oil supply and rising oil prices that are driving inflation have led the Biden administration to try to improve its relationship with Saudi rulers since then, however.

Blinken and other U.S. diplomats and military leaders have called on Saudi officials, dialed back public criticism of Saudi imprisonment of dissidents, and emphasized U.S. defensive support for the kingdom against cross-border missile attacks on Saudi oil sites and other targets by Houthi rebels in Yemen.

There are no signs the U.S. overtures have assuaged affronted Saudi rulers, and the kingdom has refused to make the drastic increases in oil pumping that the U.S. hopes for.

The House Democrats' letter noted the kingdom's ongoing harsh treatment of rights advocates and the 2018 killing of Khashoggi, which the U.S. intelligence community concluded Prince Mohammed ordered.

And currently, the Democrats wrote, Saudi Arabia is doing nothing to help the West as it tries to freeze out Russia for its war in Ukraine. Russia is a top global oil and gas producer, and the conflict has worsened an already tight global oil supply.

"Instead of accepting appeals from our government to produce more oil, an initial step that would immediately lower prices for Americans across the country," Saudi rulers are reportedly talking with China about pricing part of its oil sales in the Chinese yuan, a move that could weaken the U.S. dollar, the Democrats wrote.

"Governments that have formed genuine, ironclad alliances with the United States, forged in shared values of democratic norms and respect for human rights, have answered the call to action in the wake of unprovoked invasion. Unfortunately, our long-standing relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not produced a similar response," Democrats wrote.

"Saudi Arabia's inability to stand up for international law exemplifies the short-and long-term risks associated with maintaining uncritical U.S. support for the Saudi regime," the letter added. It asked Blinken to rebalance U.S. dealings with Saudi Arabia accordingly.

The Saudi Embassy in Washington separately said Wednesday it would provide up to $10 million in support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

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Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar starts peace-themed tour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6566-X2F1-JBNF-W12K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2022 Sunday 12:21 AM GMT

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**Length:** 514 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar Donetsk has opened a series of charity games on a government-backed "Global Tour for Peace" with a 1-0 loss at Greek league leader Olympiakos

**Body**

Wearing the names of heavily bombarded cities on its jerseys, Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) opened a series of charity games on a government-backed "Global Tour for Peace" with a 1-0 loss at Greek league leader [*Olympiakos*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olympiakos) on Saturday.

The tour aims to raise money for Ukraine's military in the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , and also help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** displaced by the war.

Shakhtar is also set to play Fenerbahce, Hajduk Split and Lechia Gdansk, with other opponents still to be confirmed. Soccer clubs around Europe have been offering to play games against Ukrainian clubs and host youth players after soccer in the country was shut down when Russia invaded in February.

Shakhtar was already displaced from its original home of Donetsk in 2014.

At Karaiskaki stadium in Piraeus on Saturday, Shakhtar players replaced their names on the back of their jerseys with those of cities bombarded by Russian forces, including Mariupol.

"The names of those cities, where so many people died, will remain forever in our hearts. The guys were crying in the locker room after the game," Shakhtar captain Taras Stepanenko said. "We thank Olympiakos for giving us the opportunity to play the game ... We hope we passed our message against war and for peace."

Olympiakos coach Pedro Martins said he hoped Ukrainian teams "will soon return to European competitions and Ukrainians (will return) to normality."

Shakhtar's Italian coach, Roberto De Zerbi, did not attend because he felt unwell a couple of hours before the game and doctors recommended that he stay at the hotel. He hopes to coach in the next game, against Polish team Lechia Gdansk, on Thursday.

Shakhtar, which had been playing in Lviv and Kharkiv before the war, had not played a game since December, and Stepanenko said his team did well given the lack of preparation. Players trained in Turkey before flying to Greece. All the team's foreign players have been released and replaced by players from the youth academy, Stepanenko said.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias and the Ukrainian ambassador to Greece, Sergii Shutenko, attended the game.

The 32,000-seat stadium appeared to be not more than a quarter full. A lively contingent of Ukrainians occupied one end of the stadium. The opposite end, where Olympiakos hardcore fans normally sit, was empty. Their official fan club, called Gate 7, boycotted the game.

In a statement, Gate 7 said it "refused to take sides" and "play political games."

Next to the empty Gate 7 seats, a smaller section was filled with 176 teddy bears and other children's toys in memory of the 176 children who, Ukraine said Saturday, have died in the war since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion

After a minute's silence for the victims of war, the match began and the warm camaraderie lasted about five minutes before home fans started to treat it as a normal game of soccer and jeered their opponents.

Brazilian forward Tiquinho got the only goal with a header in the 22nd minute in a game where the score never really mattered.

\_\_\_

More [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) soccer: [*https://apnews.com/hub/soccer*](https://apnews.com/hub/soccer) and [*https://twitter.com/AP\_Sports*](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pictures of the week: Holy dips, protests across the globe and a 170-year-old dinosaur*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67X1-TM21-JBNF-W3PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2023 Friday 7:03 PM GMT

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**Length:** 688 words

**Byline:** Charlotte Hodges and Alex Hickson

**Highlight:** The Independent’s picture editors bring you the best photography from all corners of the planet

**Body**

Each week the picture editors at [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/) sort through hundreds of thousands images sent into us by photography agencies from all around the world.

These are some of the most eye-catching and the most striking images from culture, news, politics, sport and lifestyle.

You can also keep up with the latest photography making headlines via our [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/the.independent/?hl=en).

Lightning flashes over Kuwait City during a thunderstorm.

Sex workers take part in a demonstration to protest plans to move the city’s historic red light district to another area in Amsterdam.

Seiichi Sano, an 89-year-old Japanese man, rides a wave at Katase Nishihama Beach in Japan.

Jaspa Fletcher and Harris Andrews during the round three AFL match between Western Bulldogs and Brisbane Lions at Marvel Stadium.

The sun rises over homes covering a hill in the Catia neighborhood of Caracas, Venezuela.

Protesters shout slogans outside Israel's parliament in Jerusalem amid ongoing demonstrations and calls for a general strike against the hard-right government's controversial push to overhaul the justice system.

Devotees take holy dips and pray in the river Saryu on the occasion of Ramnavi festival, celebrated as the birthday of Hindu God Rama, in Ayodhya, India.

Daffodils around the base of Warkworth Castle in Northumberland.

A demonstrator calling for action on climate change is removed by police and security as Scotland’s newly appointed First Minister and leader of the Scottish National Party, Humza Yousaf, attends his first First Minister’s Questions at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

Conservator Pedro Jimenez takes part in conservation work on the 170-year-old dinosaur that inhabit Dinosaur Island in Crystal Palace Park in south London.

Protesters set up a flaming barricade across railway tracks at a train station during a demonstration after the government pushed a pensions reform through parliament without a vote, using the article 49.3 of the constitution, in Lorient, in Brittany, western France.

A local resident carries a teddy bear while gathering belongings outside a multi-storey apartment block damaged in recent shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Russian-controlled Ukraine.

Kashmiri Muslim women pray at a mosque adjacent to the shrine of Shah-e-Hamdan (Khanqah-e-Moula) during the fasting month of Ramadan in Srinagar, the summer capital of Indian Kashmir.

The sun rises over Brown's Bay in North Tyneside.

Camilla, Queen Consort, holds a bouquet of flowers as she steps into a car after landing at Berlin Brandenburg Airport in Schoenefeld near Berlin.

Girls embrace in front of a makeshift memorial for victims by the Covenant School building at the Covenant Presbyterian Church following a shooting, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Pope Francis speaks with his aides prior to being helped get up the popemobile car from his wheelchair, as he leaves at the end of the weekly general audience at St. Peter's square in The Vatican.

Palestinians hold flags as they mark Land Day, an annual commemoration of six Arab citizens of Israel who were killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations over land confiscations in 1976, in the southeast of Gaza City.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his wife First Lady Rosangela 'Janja' da Silva sharing a laugh with English musician Chris Martin, lead vocalist of band Coldplay, during a meeting in Rio de Janiero, Brazil.

Dogs walk through the water towards a flooded building during an annual spring flood in the Ryazan Region, Russia.

New Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf and Deputy Frist Minister Shona Robison wave to the media as he poses with the new cabinet at Bute House.

A protester wearing a mask of Dobby, the house-elf character from Harry Potter stands in front of French gendarmes during a demonstration against the visit of French President in Savines-le-Lac, French Alps.

A nun stands at St. Peter’s square in The Vatican, a day after the Pope was admitted to the Gemelli hospital in Rome.

King Charles III, centre, and Berlin’s Mayor Franziska Giffey, second right, visit the Ukraine Arrival Centre Tegel, for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine needs homes for its refugees as much as it needs our weapons of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656F-F671-JCS0-D21D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 11, 2022 Monday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 492 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

There is no shortage of irony that it is clearly far easier to get a British prime minister into a foreign conflict zone than it is to get a normal Ukrainian citizen out of one.

Boris Johnson has taken a surprise visit to Ukraine, to be pictured walking around Kyiv with President Volodymyr Zelensky. Pre-agreed words have been put on social media by various Ukrainian politicians, describing Mr Johnson as "the leader", in international terms, in Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression.

There's no doubt that the UK is playing a pivotal role in arguably the most important aspect of the conflict. It has provided vast numbers of weapons; and, importantly, weapons that have achieved cult status among Ukrainian fighters. The firing of handheld anti-tank missiles has been accompanied by shouts of "God Save The Queen!".

But the scale of the devastation in Ukraine and the ongoing outrageous murder of civilians only highlights the urgency of the need to provide sanctuary to the Ukrainian people, and it is here that the UK is anything but "the leader".

A crossbench peer, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, is still trying to get through the refugee visa process so that a mother and two children, people who are known to her, can come and live in her family home.

She has said that there is "a failure of recognition that this uncertainty is adding to the trauma that these people have already experienced. These aren't just pieces of paper, these are people??? and these are people who have lost everything".

Baroness Finlay's experience is no different from anybody else's. She is particularly concerned that the three visas have all had to be processed individually, suggesting that mothers and children may be separated from each other for a time.

When the UK opened its Ukrainian refugee scheme, almost half a million people had applied within the first 48 hours. Home Office minister Kit Malthouse said yesterday morning that 40,000 visas had been approved, and up to 12,000 completed.

The exact number of people who have fled Ukraine in terror is not known, but is quite possibly 10 million or more. Poland has received millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. For a country of the size and wealth of the UK, 12,000 is a pitiful number. When asked about this failure, Priti Patel, the home secretary, said: "I apologise with frustration."

If Mr Johnson wishes to trumpet his successes with regard to the assistance the UK has provided Ukraine, which he most certainly does, he must address the failure of the UK's refugee policy as a matter of utmost urgency. It is not as if he doesn't understand the mortal danger faced by the people of Ukraine. They need the security provided by a safe place to live, every bit as much as they need the security that comes out of the barrel of a gun.

Mr Johnson, we must presume, is safely back from Kyiv. It is, quite literally, a rite of passage that he must make open to hundreds of thousands more, without any further delay.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Live Updates | Russia-Ukraine War*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655M-3SV1-JBNF-W4VS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 7, 2022 Thursday 7:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 536 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is appealing to NATO to provide his war-torn country with weapons to help avoid further atrocities like those reported in the town of Bucha this week

**Body**

BRUSSELS - Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is appealing to NATO to provide his war-torn country with weapons to help avoid further atrocities like those reported in the town of Bucha this week.

Arriving at NATO headquarters Thursday for talks with the military organization's foreign ministers, Kuleba said: "My agenda is very simple... it's weapons, weapons and weapons."

Kuleba says that "we know how to fight. We know how to win. But without sustainable and sufficient supplies requested by [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , these wins will be accompanied by enormous sacrifices."

"The more weapons we get and the sooner they arrive in Ukraine, the more human lives will be saved."

He urged Germany in particular to go further, and speed the dispatch of sorely needed equipment and arms, saying that "while Berlin has time, Kyiv doesn't."

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Ukraine girds for renewed [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) offensive on eastern front

- General Assembly to vote Thursday on suspending Russia from UN rights council

- ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** find quickest route into US goes through Mexico

- Seeing Bucha atrocities is turning point for media, viewers

- Russia makes debt payment in rubles, a move that could result in historic default

- Go to [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine) for more coverage

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Senate will take up legislation Thursday to end normal trade relations with Russia and to ban the importation of its oil.

Both bills have been bogged down in the Senate, frustrating lawmakers who want to ratchet up the U.S. response to Russia's war against Ukraine.

Senate Majority Leader [*Chuck Schumer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chuck-schumer) said Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) needs to be held accountable for what Schumer said were war crimes against Ukraine.

The trade suspension measure paves the way for President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) to enact higher tariffs on certain Russian imports.

The bill banning Russian oil would codify restrictions Biden has already put in place through executive action.

In a virtual speech to Congress last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said "new packages of sanctions are needed constantly every week until the Russian military machine stops."

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LVIV, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has accused Russia of trying to hide the evidence of war crimes to interfere with the international investigation.

"It seems that the Russian leadership was really afraid that the global anger over what was seen in Bucha would be repeated after what was seen in other cities," Zelenskyy said in his daily nighttime video address to the nation late Wednesday.

"We have information that the Russian troops have changed tactics and are trying to remove the dead people, the dead Ukrainians, from the streets and cellars of territory they occupied. This is only an attempt to hide the evidence and nothing more," Zelenskyy said.

He also said thousands of people are now missing, either dead or deported to Russia.

Zelenskyy also urged Russian citizens not to be afraid to protest the war.

"If you have even a little shame about what the Russian military is doing in Ukraine, then for such Russian citizens this is a key moment: You have to demand - just demand - an end to the war," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Most of foreign aid budget is spent in UK, says experts*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RK-1NF1-F072-43T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

October 29, 2022 Saturday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 14

**Length:** 606 words

**Byline:** SOPHIE WINGATE

**Body**

The UK is now spending more of its international development budget at home than in poor developing countries, development experts have said.

That is because a large proportion of the pot is being spent on housing refugees, mainly from Ukraine, according to the Centre for Global Development (CGD).

Rishi Sunak was criticised for slashing the foreign aid budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of national income when he was chancellor, as well as setting a precedent for letting the Home Office and other departments use the pot, and stretching the rules on what can be counted as aid.

The UK aid budget is around £11bn, with some £4bn going to multilateral institutions including the World Bank.

Of the remaining £7bn, which is administered by the UK directly, more than half will be spent domestically this year, including some £3bn on housing refugees, according to CGD's analysis.

While the UK is allowed to count refugee-hosting costs as official development assistance (ODA) under internationally agreed rules, it is one of only a few countries - and the only one in the G7 - to fund all the costs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from its existing aid budget, the Washington and London-based think tank said.

Ranil Dissanayake, policy fellow at CGD, said: "The development budget - the pot of money we put aside to help the world's poorest people - is being squeezed from every angle. Not only was it slashed by almost a third, Rishi Sunak then set a precedent as chancellor for letting other departments claim whatever they could back from this pot.

"Saying we spend 0.5 per cent of our national income on aid is becoming meaningless, when such a huge proportion of this pot is being spent domestically, rather than on helping people facing enormous hardship across the world."

One of the key Tory MPs who rebelled against Mr Sunak's aid budget cuts last year, Andrew Mitchell, has now been appointed by the prime minister as development minister in the Foreign Office.

The appointment was seen as significant as Mr Mitchell, a former international development secretary, could increase pressure on Mr Sunak to honour his pledge to return to 0.7 per cent of international aid spending by 2024-25.

However, the prime minister is considering freezing the budget for an extra two years - saving £4bn a year - as he eyes ways to plug a multi-billion pound fiscal black hole, The Telegraph reported.

Mr Mitchell "focused strongly on results for the poor, and value for money - at the moment, the way budgets are handled they deliver neither," according to Stefan Dercon, professor of economic policy at Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government.

He tweeted on Wednesday: "Aid is now only 0.3% of GNI (gross national income) once we account for all asylum/refugee costs and other spending programmes for Ukraine inside the UK. That is now less than it was before 1997."

He blamed the Home Office's "(poor) management of accommodation costs in the UK" and predicted "more cuts to humanitarian spending for African and Asian crises, and less for those things the UK built a reputation for doing well".

A spokesperson at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said: "Across government, there are significant pressures on the 0.5 per cent ODA budget due to the costs of accepting refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine as well as wider migration challenges. Obviously how many refugees arrive in any particular period is not certain, so there is not a fixed cost.

"We remain one of the largest global aid donors, spending more than £11bn in aid in 2021, and UK aid has recently gone towards those in need in the Horn of Africa and Pakistan."

PA

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden has mangled an effective message by calling for the 'butcher' Putin to go*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-WJC1-JCS0-D4H6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 27, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 503 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

Vladimir Putin is a "butcher", declared Joe Biden after he met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland. This is no more than a factual description of a brutal leader for whom life is cheap. Unfortunately, the US president went beyond mere facts in the last line of his speech in Poland, when he declared: "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power."

It is an admirable sentiment, but it was a mistake for Mr Biden to express it. It looked as if he were setting out US policy, which was why White House officials immediately "clarified" that the president had not meant what he said: "The president's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbors or the region. He was not discussing Putin's power in Russia or regime change."

They know, even if Mr Biden briefly forgot, that Mr Putin is desperate for his fight to be with the US. The Russian president's worldview seems to be based on a mythical history of the Greater Russian people, who include Ukrainians and other Eurasians, in a struggle of civilisations against the decadent west, led by a morally compromised America. He thought he had taken up arms against a "Nazi", westernised elite that is oppressing the Ukrainian people, only to discover that the Ukrainians do not want to be part of his empire.

Mr Putin wants to portray the war as being between Russia and the US-led Nato alliance because the alternative is to accept that it is a war of aggression waged by the Russian military state against its Slav neighbours and cousins.

That is why it matters that President Biden, whose tour of Europe had otherwise been a success, allowed himself to be hooked into Mr Putin's framing of his war as a conflict with the US by proxy.

Until now, the US president has avoided this trap. He drew the line at enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine, and at supplying Polish MiG-29 fighter jets. This attracted some criticism at home, from an American public who think he is not being "tough enough" on Mr Putin. Mr Biden may know better than the American public that they do not want to be drawn into a nuclear confrontation with the Russian military.

It seemed that President Biden had a better idea. Do not do what your opponent wants you to do. Supply the Ukrainians with the less visible equipment they need. The Ukrainians so far have been effective in enforcing a no-fly zone themselves, using western-supplied missiles.

And tell it like it is: Putin is a butcher. That is not what the Russian people want. And if it doesn't deliver what they do want, which is mostly material comfort and security, as it is for most people around the world, they will not tolerate him for long. No amount of mystical goo about Greater Russia will make up for a failure to deliver bread, peace and land.

President Biden has interrupted Mr Putin's mistake with a mistake of his own. He needs to correct it and, in concert with all friends of the Ukrainian people, he needs to persevere with the strategy, which is to tell the truth about Putin and pass the ammunition.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar to start peace-themed tour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655W-D811-JBNF-W4W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 2:42 PM GMT

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**Length:** 530 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar Donetsk will play a series of charity games on a government-backed "Global Tour for Peace" that will raise money for the country's military in the war against Russia

**Body**

Ukrainian soccer club Shakhtar Donetsk will play a series of charity games on a government-backed "Global Tour for Peace" that will raise money for the country's military in the war against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

The depleted squad has gathered in [*Turkey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turkey) to prepare for Saturday's opening match against [*Greek*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greek) league leader [*Olympiakos*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olympiakos). The games will also raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** displaced by the war.

"Football diplomacy will help us involve millions of fans around the world in assisting Ukraine, which is really important," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Friday. "By this charity tour, we will continue attracting the world's attention to Russian aggression against Ukraine and raise more funds for the Ukrainian army."

Shakhtar is also set to play Fenerbahce, Hajduk Split and Lechia Gdansk, with other opponents still to be confirmed.

Soccer clubs around Europe have been offering to play games against Ukrainian clubs and host youth players after soccer in the country was shut down when Russia invaded in February.

Olympiakos has advertised the game as "Football For Peace - Stop war in Ukraine." Tickets for the match in Pireaus cost 10 euros ($10.90).

"This shall be the opening match in a series of friendlies the Ukrainian outfit is going to play against top clubs in Europe and the U.S.," the defending Greek champions said.

Shakhtar has not played a competitive game since mid-December. On Feb. 26, the league leaders were scheduled to resume the domestic season after a winter break. But two days before their game at Metalist Kharkiv, Russia launched its military invasion and Ukrainian soccer stopped.

Shakhtar typically provides several players to the Ukrainian national team, which was unable to play a World Cup qualifying playoff match against Scotland two weeks ago.

FIFA wants to stage that game in Glasgow in early June. The winner will play Wales several days later for a place at this year's World Cup in Qatar. FIFA also removed Russia from the playoffs.

Shakhtar has relied on a core of Brazilian players to win 13 league titles over the past 20 years and become a regular in the Champions League. In December, Shakhtar finished last in a Champions League group that included Real Madrid and Inter Milan.

During the war, FIFA changed transfer rules to let players with Ukrainian clubs sign elsewhere. Shakhtar loaned Tetê to Lyon while Junior Moraes, who gained citizenship and played for Ukraine, went to Brazil to play for Corinthians.

The club's success has continued despite being exiled from its home city Donetsk in 2014, when pro-Russia separatists took control of parts of eastern Ukraine. The team has been playing in Kyiv in recent years.

Nicknamed the Miners, the club is owned by billionaire Rinat Akhmetov and has become a symbol of its home region. The Donbass Arena hosted games at the 2012 European Championship.

The club said during the war it has so far provided 1.4 billion Ukrainian hryvni ($48 million) in "humanitarian aid to civilians, as well as assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Territorial Defense force in dozens of cities and towns."

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More [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) soccer: [*https://apnews.com/hub/soccer*](https://apnews.com/hub/soccer) and [*https://twitter.com/AP\_Sports*](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach plays down suggestions Zelensky criticised Irish support for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-9P01-DY4H-K27R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 11:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 501 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin said he 'wouldn't have taken the same slant as some may be taking from' the Ukrainian president's comments

**Body**

The Ukrainian president has offered only qualified thanks to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) for its support for the country since the Russian invasion a month ago.

Addressing the European Council, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) namechecked EU member states - noting in turn what he saw as the level of support the country had given [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

"Ireland, well, almost," Mr Zelensky said.

The Ukrainian leader offered no further reasons for his comment.

Taoiseach Micheal Martin, speaking on the second day of the European Council meeting in Brussels, played down the comments.

He suggested he does believe Ireland was being criticised by the Ukrainian leader.

Ireland, while fully backing the Ukrainian push for EU membership, has not abandoned its position of military neutrality in the face of the Russian assault.

Mr Martin has stressed the country is not politically neutral and has committed millions of euros in non-lethal aid to Ukraine.

Exceptional display of solidarity and unity yesterday between the EU, US, and others in support of the people of [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Biden and President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) gave open appraisal of situation to [*#EUCO*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EUCO?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) leaders.Today we focus on energy prices and security. [*pic.twitter.com/YNc3jhSpqW*](https://t.co/YNc3jhSpqW) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 25, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1507297440369627138?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ireland has also taken in more than 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with thousands more expected to arrive after the Government removed any requirement for visas.

Mr Martin insisted Mr Zelensky "was actually talking in terms of the European perspective".

He said: "I wouldn't have taken the same slant as some may be taking from it.

"I can't surmise in terms of what implication there is except I spoke to him last week and he was very strongly in praise of the Irish contribution, both from a humanitarian perspective, in terms of our clear support for Ukraine's application to join the EU, and he thanked me personally for my own personal commitment to that.

"I am not going to surmise in terms of whatever particular take you would take from the use 'almost' or 'practically'."

He said people should not read too much into the comments.

"We are a militarily-neutral country, but again we facilitated the EU Peace Facility, which has been of enormous support to the Ukrainian people.

"I wouldn't overstate it, quite frankly."

Speaking to European leaders, Mr Zelensky said he was grateful for the sanctions imposed so far.

But he told them: "These are powerful steps. But it was a little late.

"Because if it had been preventative, Russia would not have gone to war. At least, no-one knows for sure. There was a chance."

He asked European leaders not to delay accepting his country's bid to join the EU.

"Do not be late. Please."

Pointing to the events of the last month, he said: "You saw that Ukraine should be in the EU in the near future."

EU leaders have so far resisted the call to accelerate the accession of Ukraine to the bloc.

Mr Zelensky has accepted an invitation to address the Oireachtas on April 6, where he will speak directly to Irish politicians.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Leading independent Russian newspaper stops operations amid Ukraine war censorship*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653H-RDD1-JBNF-W0FR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 28, 2022 Monday 3:09 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 550 words

**Byline:** Rory Sullivan

**Highlight:** 'There is no other choice,' says editor-in chief, Dmitry Muratov

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's top independent newspaper has suspended its online and print operations after a warning from the country's authorities.

[*Novaya Gazeta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/novaya-gazeta) announced the decision on Monday, saying it would resume its investigative work after the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ends. This comes after an alleged warning from state communications regulator Roskomnadzor for failing to properly identify an organisation deemed a "foreign agent" by the Russian authorities in its publications.

The newspaper had recently removed material on what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine, following the introduction of a law that criminalised the publication of information which contradicts the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) 's official narrative.

"After this we are stopping the release of the newspaper on the website, on (social) networks and on paper -until the end of the 'special operation on the territory of Ukraine,"' the newspaper said in a statement on Monday.

Its editor-in chief, Dmitry Muratov, who was the co-winner of last year's Nobel Peace Prize, and his reporters said: "There is no other choice. For us, and I know, for you, it's an awful and difficult decision."

Russian [*censorship*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/censorship) increased after Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to invade Ukraine in late February. As a result of the additional pressure, multiple independent news organisations have closed this month, including the radio station Ekho Moskvy and the television station Dozhd (Rain).

Mr Muratov, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his "efforts to safeguard freedom of expression", founded Novaya Gazeta in 1993, before becoming editor in 1995.

Working in a dangerous journalistic environment, the newspaper has broken major stories such as Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov's anti-gay crackdown and the torture committed in Russian prisons.

The 60-year-old dedicated his Nobel Prize to six of his colleagues who were killed because of their work.

"'It's not mine. I'm not the right beneficiary, there are real ones," he told Meduza. "It's just that the Nobel Peace Prize isn't awarded posthumously, it's awarded to living people."

Last week, Mr Muratov said he wanted to sell his medal and donate the proceeds to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "Novaya Gazeta and I have decided to donate the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize Medal to the Ukrainian Refugee Fund."

"I ask the auction houses to respond and put up for auction this world-famous award," he added.

Earlier in the conflict, Mr Muratov and his newspaper called for the end to the "barbaric war" in Ukraine.

Former Novaya Gazeta publisher Alexander Lebedev is the father of Evgeny Lebedev, a shareholder in The Independent.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden ending Europe trip with unity message that echoes past*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-8V71-DY4H-K1K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 5:23 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 521 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Twenty-five years ago, Joe Biden visited Warsaw, Poland, with a warning

**Body**

Twenty-five years ago, [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) visited [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , Poland, with a warning: Even though the Soviet Union had collapsed, some of NATO's original members weren't doing enough to ensure the alliance's collective defense.

"Now it is time for the people of Western [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to invest in the security of their continent for the next century," said Biden, then a U.S. senator.

Biden, now president, speaks again here Saturday as European security faces its most precarious test since World War II. The bloody war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has entered its second month, and Western leaders have spent the week consulting over contingency plans in case the conflict mutates or spreads. The invasion has shaken NATO out of any complacency it might have felt and cast a dark shadow over the continent.

U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the speech will outline the "urgency of the challenge that lies ahead" and "what the conflict in Ukraine means for the world, and why it is so important that the free world stay in unity and resolve in the face of Russian aggression."

Biden's remarks will end a four-day trip that included an earlier stop for a series of summits in Brussels. While in Warsaw, he also planned to visit with Polish President Andrzej Duda and meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the aid workers who have been helping them.

Some 3.5 million Ukrainians have fled the country, half of them children, according to the European Union. More than 2 million have gone to Poland. Biden previewed his closing speech during appearances Friday in Rzeszow.

"You're in the midst of a fight between democracies and oligarchs," the president told members of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division as he visited their temporary headquarters. "Is democracy going to prevail and the values we share, or are autocracies going to prevail?"

During a later briefing on the refugee response, Biden said "the single most important thing that we can do from the outset" to force Russian President Vladimir Putin to stop the war "is keep the democracies united in our opposition."

Biden praised the humanitarian effort as being of "such an enormous consequence" given the scope of the crisis, which adds up to the largest flow of refugees since World War II. He appeared to lament that security concerns "understandably" will keep him from visiting Ukraine.

Duda, who appeared with Biden on Friday, said the refugees are "guests."

"We do not want to call them refugees. They are our guests, our brothers, our neighbors from Ukraine, who today are in a very difficult situation," he said.

The U.S. has been sending money and supplies to aid the refugee effort. This week, Biden announced $1 billion in additional aid and said the U.S. would accept up to 100,000 refugees.

The U.S. and many of its allies have imposed multiple rounds of economic and other sanctions on Russian individuals, banks and other entities in hopes that the cumulative effect over time will force Putin to withdraw his troops.

Biden was scheduled to return to Washington after his speech in Warsaw on Saturday.

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) writer Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Camilla keeps hi-tech watch over Charles at new Meta headquarters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6540-5TW1-JBNF-W2H6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 6:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 497 words

**Byline:** Helen William

**Highlight:** The couple later took part in their first digital plaque unveiling to officially open the tech giant's new King's Cross campus.

**Body**

The [*Duchess of Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duchess-cornwall) kept a hi-tech watch over the Prince of Wales as the royal couple officially opened Meta's new central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) offices.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) and Camilla were enjoying an hour-long tour of some of the technological innovations which have been built by [*Meta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meta) when she donned a pair of Ray-Ban smart glasses - which can let you take photos, video, listen to music or take phone calls.

She stared straight at her husband, smiled and said: "I can hear what you are saying."

The couple later took part in their first digital plaque unveiling to officially open the tech giant's new King's Cross campus - which has more than 620,000 square feet of office space and almost 5,000 workstations.

The couple were in a reality lab - cheerfully named Spider-Ham after cartoon characters by Meta engineers - where they were given sneak peaks various innovations.

Charles looked at a virtual reality headset which helps users explore and learn about places around the world, including its sites, history and culture.

He was talked through the different ways that WhatsApp chatbots are being used to create a social impact.

He was told of how it can help to provide countries around the world with reliable information.

Other WhatsApp services include a loneliness chatbot created with the Jo Cox Foundation, to help people link up with places where they can find support and help.

London is Meta's largest engineering hub outside of the US with more than 4,000 employees based at offices in Brock Street, Rathbone Place, Shaftesbury Avenue and now King's Cross.

Charles was also briefed on the 2Africa subsea cable which is a global effort by tech companies to help connect Africa, Europe, and the Middle East with affordable, high-speed internet to three billion people.

He was also told about Meta's efforts to boost online safety.

The prince also heard about the work that Meta is doing to support the people of Ukraine.

This includes how [*Facebook*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/facebook) Groups are being used to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, including new emergency relief features which help members come together and take action.

Since the invasion of Ukraine began, more than five million people have joined over 4,000 Facebook support groups to be part of the drive to help Ukrainian people - through local communities providing humanitarian aid like accommodation, legal advice or medical aid among other forms of assistance, according to Meta.

Camilla also met up with Facebook groups who use the platform to support parents and families in their communities and which have a combined membership of more than 200,000 people.

She also recorded a conversation for her Reading Room account on Instagram.

After the royal visit, Nicola Mendelsohn, Meta's vice president global business group, said: "It is not just that we are leading on innovation that we are proud of but that we are doing it in a thoughtful and meaningful way as well."

She added: "At our heart our company is about people, it is about community and it's about connections."

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Grant Shapps will host Ukrainian refugee family including grandmother, 75, boy, 6, and their dog*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-9P01-DY4H-K27S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 11:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 487 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn and Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Transport secretary said he would learn some Ukrainian to make the refugee family welcome in his home

**Body**

Cabinet minister [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) is set to host a refugee family of three fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The transport secretary said earlier this month he was registering his interest in the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme - set up amid criticism of the government's existing refugee policy - which allows those with no family ties to come to the UK.

Those offering sanctuary to families fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's brutal invasion must be able to offer accommodation for at least six months, and according to the latest government statistics over 150,000 people have registered their interest.

Following discussions with his family, Mr Shapps told The Times he will soon be hosting a six-year-old boy, his mother and 75-year-old grandmother, alongside their dog, Max.

The cabinet minister said he was able to use a room in house - 20 miles from London - due to his son currently being away at university and said he was in daily contact with the Ukrainian family. He lives n Hertfordshire with his wife Belinda and they have three children.

"These people are literally fleeing their lives, they don't know if their home will be there when they get back," he said.

"Their family is having to split up. Every time we get into a family conversation about it that's literally where the conversation ends."

The minister also told The Times he expected to pick up some Ukrainian as he spends time with the family - "enough to make them welcome" - and said he will help enroll the six-year-old at the local primary school.

Mr Shapps was the first minister to commit to welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into his home, writing on Twitter: "We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country."

Health secretary Sajid Javid said that he was "starting to have a conversation" with his wife but said he would find it hard to "offer the time that I think a host would reasonable [be] expected to have available".

Levelling-up minister Michael Gove said he was "exploring what I can do" while Rishi Sunak said he and his wife planned to help 'in other ways'.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*A farce is meant to be funny*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66NK-TM41-F072-40WT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

October 21, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 564 words

**Byline:** TOM PECK

**Body**

The national lottery runs a game called Set for Life, in which the winner receives £10,000 a month for the rest of their earthly days.

So if you're trying to work out quite what it was that Liz Truss was smiling about as she absolutely smashed the record for shortest ever British prime minister (and without even having to die to do so), it's important to remember there are upsides. That's exactly what she's won. A £120,000 a year payout, for evermore, is what ex-prime ministers receive. A token of the nation's eternal gratitude for absolutely, absolutely nothing. Humiliated forever but, you know, still set for life.

Is it a farce? Fawlty Towers was a farce. Farces are funny. Liz Truss clearly thinks, on some level, it's hilarious. But we all have our coping strategies. If it feels surreal for all of us, imagine being her. It's barely two months since she bought her Margaret Thatcher costume. She must regret not renting it.

Still, no one can say she didn't get a lot done. Alright, so she got nothing done, but there were some great moments. Sacking your chancellor for the crime of agreeing with you about absolutely everything, and then appointing a replacement with whom you disagree about everything, and then telling him to reverse all of your policies in the hope it might help you cling on? That kind of dysfunction is one for the Guinness books, even these days. And all who witnessed it should, in some regard, consider themselves grateful.

Not even the eight sentences she could be bothered to read out came close to articulating that she had a clue what she'd done or what had happened. There are rising interest rates everywhere, rising energy prices. The consequences of Putin's war in Ukraine are felt everywhere. Poland is trying to find homes for five million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. So how do you get to the bottom of Britain being the only country that is making an international tit of itself? Liz Truss clearly hasn't. Nor will she ever. The self-regard is too sociopathic, the cocksuredness backed up by considerably less than nothing.

We should know by now that things only ever get worse. The TV cameras had not yet panned away from the Downing Street door before odd little Tory MPs had appeared, agitating for the return of Boris Johnson. The Tory party has now completed its extremely high-budget advertising campaign to prove that it is entirely incapable of governing the country. It should surely be able to work out that if it returns to the person it threw out before this one, it will only be making that case ever more forcefully.

Already the evidence is clear that they're going back to the only thing they actually know how to do. Manoeuvring and machinating, factionalising. That a once-serious country seriously has to hear, yet again, talk of who is backing who in a Tory leadership contest. Suella? What's Gove up to? Jeremy Hunt's ruled himself out. Rishi Sunak's the bookie's favourite.

Just spare us. Please, please just spare us. A week from now, in theory, there'll be somebody else standing on the steps of Downing Street, giving yet another moist-eyed, breathy speech about how much they love their country, about everything it has given them. About unleashing Britain's potential. Enough's enough. No more now. Just unleash yourselves, gallop off over the horizon and never come back. No one even cares if you take your winnings with you.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian president takes aim at imports of Russian diamonds*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6545-MN11-JBNF-W0WG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 3:16 PM GMT

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**Length:** 482 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has asked Belgian lawmakers for more help in the war against Russia and took aim at the continued import of Russian diamonds to the Belgian port of Antwerp

**Body**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked [*Belgian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgian) lawmakers for more help and took aim at the continued import of Russian diamonds to Belgium's port of [*Antwerp*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antwerp) on Thursday while repeating calls for a no-fly zone over his country.

Zelenskyy's video address at the parliament elicited a long round of warm applause, but Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo reiterated the Western stance that NATO is not a party in the war.

"And it should not become one," he added. "You have been pleading for a no-fly zone imposed by NATO since the beginning of this war. Let's be frank, this would mean shooting down Russian planes and an escalation that might engulf the whole continent of Europe. More lives lost, and a wider war without any solution."

De Croo, however, assured Zelenskyy of Belgium's resolute and long-lasting support. He announced new orders for weapons to be delivered to the war-torn country.

Zelenskyy thanked Belgium - a country of 11.5 million - for its help, and for welcoming already 30,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who managed to escape the conflict.

But recalling the ordeal of the besieged city of Mariupol's inhabitants, Zelenskyy also pointed to the continued importing of Russian rough diamonds to Antwerp, which is the world's most important diamond trading hubs.

"There are people for whom Russian diamonds sometimes sold in Antwerp are more important," he said through a translator speaking in French. "[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) for whom accepting Russian ships in their ports, and for whom the income from these ships is more important than our struggles."

"I believe that peace is way more valuable than diamonds, than the deals sealed with Russia, than the Russian ships (allowed) in ports, than Russian oil and gas," Zelenskyy added. "Help us. Do it, with weapons, sanctions, and the possibility to become members of the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union). "

According to The Antwerp World Diamond Centre, the official representative of the city's diamond industry, 86% of all rough diamonds mined worldwide are traded in Antwerp, making it the most important gateway to the world for Russian diamonds

Diamond imports from Russia to the EU have not been targeted by the bloc's sanctions so far.

De Croo said last week that Belgium is not opposed to sanctions that would have an impact on the diamonds sector, but said the EU should be careful not to take measures that would be more detrimental to the 27-nation bloc than to Russia.

"If as a European Union we do that and the whole traffic is just moving to Dubai, and it does not have an impact on Russia, then ... I mean. we are not waging a war on ourselves," he said. "The goal is that the impact should be on the Russian side. So I'm not against it, but it should be done with good international agreements or we might have no impact at all."

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Mark Carlson in Brussels contributed.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Couple who rescued Ukrainian relatives stuck in French hotel after being turned away at Calais*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-4KS1-DY4H-K0PD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 2:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 456 words

**Byline:** Tom Campbell,Gwyn Wright and SWNS reporter

**Highlight:** Couple were refused entry to UK because they did not have a visa

**Body**

A couple who rescued family members fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are having to spend 200 a day to stay in a French hotel after being turned away at the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) border.

Steve Billington and his Ukrainian wife Iryna Shyhera drove to Opole in Poland to rescue his brother-in-law's wife and their two young children, who managed to escape the conflict.

Bohdana Shyhera and, Solomiia, aged three, and Pavlo, 13, left their home in a village outside Lviv in western Ukraine after Russia invaded. Their father has been forced to stay and fight.

Mr Billington and his wife drove to [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) in France after collecting the escaped family in the hope of catching a ferry to the UK, but were refused entry because they did not have a visa.

They are now holed up in Hostellerie Saint Vincent in the town of Beauvais around 55 miles outside Paris while waiting for their travel documents, which is costing them around 200 per day.

Home secretary Priti Patel has announced that from Tuesday ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) can obtain visas to come to the UK without having to visit an application centre in Europe.

But Mr Billington said the reality was not that simple.

Mr Billington, 58, said: "I'm not going to put them through that again after what happened last week.

"I thought you were just going to be able to turn up at the border on Tuesday -I even booked a Euro Tunnel crossing.

"But they are saying you need some form of approval from the Home Office."

Mr Billington was initially told to drive to Brussels where the family would "get their visas in under 24 hours."

He pleaded with border control officers to let them through, but they threatened to have them forcefully removed by French police and said they would not be able to enter in the future.

Mr Billington, from Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire said: "The situation is, we're stuck in a hotel about 50 miles from Paris and it's costing me and my wife around 200 a day.

"It seems like Priti Patel made this announcement without checking with people on the ground who are saying no you can't do that.

"So we still need to go to the visa centre in Paris to hand over their passports and have their finger prints taken.

"We're probably going to be here for another week."

A government spokesperson said: "Last week we announced a new sponsorship route which will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come to the UK.

"This is alongside our Ukraine Family Scheme, which has already seen thousands of people apply, as well as changes to visas so that people can stay in the UK safely.

"The routes we have put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners. This is a rapidly moving and complex picture and as the situation develops, we will continue to keep our support under constant review."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Joe Biden mangled an effective message when he called for Vladimir Putin to go*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6535-3R41-JBNF-W167-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 503 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: The US president's tour of Europe was marred by loose words

**Body**

Vladimir Putin is a "butcher", declared [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) after he met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland. This is no more than a factual description of a brutal leader for whom life is cheap. Unfortunately, the US president went beyond mere facts in the last line of his speech in Poland, when he declared: "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power."

It is an admirable sentiment, but it was a mistake for Mr Biden to express it. It looked as if he were setting out US policy, which was why White House officials immediately "clarified" that the president had not meant what he said: "The president's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbors or the region. He was not discussing Putin's power in Russia or regime change."

They know, even if Mr Biden briefly forgot, that Mr Putin is desperate for his fight to be with the US. The Russian president's worldview seems to be based on a mythical history of the Greater Russian people, who include Ukrainians and other Eurasians, in a struggle of civilisations against the decadent west, led by a morally compromised America. He thought he had taken up arms against a "Nazi", westernised elite that is oppressing the Ukrainian people, only to discover that the Ukrainians do not want to be part of his empire.

Mr Putin wants to portray the war as being between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and the US-led Nato alliance because the alternative is to accept that it is a war of aggression waged by the Russian military state against its Slav neighbours and cousins.

That is why it matters that President Biden, whose tour of Europe had otherwise been a success, allowed himself to be hooked into Mr Putin's framing of his war as a conflict with the US by proxy.

Until now, the US president has avoided this trap. He drew the line at enforcing a no-fly zone over Ukraine, and at supplying Polish MiG-29 fighter jets. This attracted some criticism at home, from an American public who think he is not being "tough enough" on Mr Putin. Mr Biden may know better than the American public that they do not want to be drawn into a nuclear confrontation with the Russian military.

It seemed that President Biden had a better idea. Do not do what your opponent wants you to do. Supply the Ukrainians with the less visible equipment they need. The Ukrainians so far have been effective in enforcing a no-fly zone themselves, using western-supplied missiles.

And tell it like it is: Putin is a butcher. That is not what the Russian people want. And if it doesn't deliver what they do want, which is mostly material comfort and security, as it is for most people around the world, they will not tolerate him for long. No amount of mystical goo about Greater Russia will make up for a failure to deliver bread, peace and land.

President Biden has interrupted Mr Putin's mistake with a mistake of his own. He needs to correct it and, in concert with all friends of the Ukrainian people, he needs to persevere with the strategy, which is to tell the truth about Putin and pass the ammunition.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rishi Sunak says he won't be taking part in Homes for Ukraine scheme 'and will help in other ways'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-K601-JBNF-W2H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 11:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 500 words

**Byline:** Zaina Alibhai

**Highlight:** He said 25,000 Ukrainians have applied for visas but only 10,000 have been approved.

**Body**

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said he would not be welcoming a Ukrainian refugee into his home as part of the government's sponsorship scheme.

Thousands of Ukrainians have registered their interest in 'Homes For Ukraine' which sees people in the UK with a room to spare becoming a sponsor.

Asked whether his family would be taking part in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, Mr Sunak told Sky News's Sophy Ridge On Sunday programme: "No, I think everyone will be helping in the best way that they can.

"As I say, I'm full of admiration for those who can do that. My wife and I will be helping in other ways."

Homes For Ukraine opened for visa applications on March 18, and within two days some 100,000 people expressed interest in signing up.

"Those checks are going through now," Mr Sunak said. "In terms of visas that have been approved, my understanding is that about 25,000 have completed their applications. I think almost 10,000 have been granted already."

The chancellor admitted he didn't know the "exact movements" of those who had been accepted, and "if anyone has started to come."

The UK has faced criticism over it handling of refugees after it was the only European country to refuse visa-free entry to those fleeing the war.

Instead it introduced a family scheme allowing only Ukrainians with relatives settled in the country to enter.

The shambolic process saw refugees struggling to navigate the application progress, and forced to travel to visa centres often miles away.

New figures have shown there are more than 20,000 people waiting on decisions from the Home Office to join their family in the UK.

Since the Homes for Ukraine Scheme launched, 150,000 Britons have expressed an interest in opening their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The country's ambassador to the UK, Vadym Prystaiko, said he was "humbled" by the public's response to the programme, admitting he did not expect as many people to step forward.

"We're in an initial stage of this work but I'm very grateful that the UK Government and citizens are opening up their hearts, and sometimes homes, offering Ukrainians to stay here.

"I'm humbled by the sheer number of people who are opening up, sometimes just saying, 'I have a spare room, it's not even a spare house, or flat, it's just a spare room.' This is something that's very unusual."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Pub owner donates premises to house Ukrainian mothers and children*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-CKV1-DY4H-K1GM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 4:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 488 words

**Byline:** Gemma Bradley

**Highlight:** Charlie Southall, 43, said his experience of living in a women's shelter as a child influenced his decision to make the offer.

**Body**

A pub owner who experienced living in a women's refuge as a child has said offering his home to house Ukrainian mothers and children would give him a pleasure he had "not experienced before".

Some nine days after collecting the keys to the Montreal Arms in [*Brighton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brighton) , Charlie Southall decided to offer it for use as a free co-living space for Ukrainian women and children who have fled the Russian invasion.

The 43-year-old has lived in Brighton for the last 15 years but grew up in poverty and spent a summer living in a women's refuge in [*Stafford*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stafford) when he was 10-years-old after his parents' divorce.

At the time, Mr Southall received help from the youth charity The Prince's [*Trust*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/trust) , founded by the [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-wales) , which he said hugely influenced his decision to donate the building, as he knew the positive experience that charitable intervention could have.

"Although it sounds horrific, and of course there was an underlying crisis, I have got really positive memories from that experience because it felt like a fresh start," he told the PA news agency.

"I've got firsthand experience of how that co-living, peer support system can really help people that are in that situation ... now I'm able to do something to help others, and you know what, it's been one of the nicest things I've done in recent times.

"I was watching the news and like all of us, I've been quite moved by the humanitarian crisis ... it really had an effect on me.

"(Donating the pub) has woken me up and I'm enjoying it, it's giving me a pleasure that I've not experienced before and it's a fortunate position to be in."

The video production company owner has started a [*GoFundMe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gofundme) page to raise £85,000 to pay for the renovations needed to turn the former pub into a usable living space.

The renovation plans include creating a kitchen, a living space and a play area for children, utilising the open-plan layout on the ground floor of the building.

There are already six rooms on the upper floor which will be used as bedrooms.

Mr Southall said he would offer the pub for a minimum of three years, to match the Government Homes for Ukraine refugee scheme which promises a three-year visa for refugees fleeing the war.

His campaign also aims to raise donations from local businesses and he would like local residents to contribute and participate in the building works.

He has been in talks with various charities to help with the property once it is up and running as a community space, including how to help with language barriers and mental health rehabilitation.

Mr Southall said he had been moved by the support of the local community in Brighton, and that people had offered kitchen appliances and vans to help move supplies.

One woman, who owns a local pottery cafe, offered tiles with which Ukrainian children could paint and decorate their rooms.

To follow Mr Southall's fundraising efforts, visit [*www.gofundme.com/f/rennovating-a-home-for-****ukrainian-refugees***](http://www.gofundme.com/f/rennovating-a-home-for-ukrainian-refugees).

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*122,000 offer homes for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650W-N2P1-JBNF-W020-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 11:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 507 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey said the Government is still not doing enough to help Ukrainians trying to reach the UK.

**Body**

More than 120,000 individuals and organisations have expressed an interest in taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has said.

According to the latest figures from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and [*Communities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/communities) , 122,305 expressions of interest have been received by the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) programme.

The response to the scheme, which encourages members of the public to throw open their homes to people fleeing the fighting in Ukraine, comes amid intense criticism of the Government's response to the refugee crisis.

Register your interest in our [*#HomesForUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/HomesForUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) scheme here [*https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC*](https://t.co/iL1dcrW4uC) [*pic.twitter.com/b1nJ3m2n0S*](https://t.co/b1nJ3m2n0S) - Michael Gove (@michaelgove) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/michaelgove/status/1503402365692616706?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Downing Street welcomed the "huge" public response to the appeal for accommodation as a sign of the support in the UK for the Ukrainian people.But [*Liberal Democrat*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liberal-democrat) leader Sir [*Ed Davey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-davey) said the Government was still not doing anything to help those Ukrainians who had fled to neighbouring countries and were now trying to reach Britain.The new scheme aims to match refugees with individuals, charities and other organisations who can provide accommodation for at least six months, enabling Ukrainians without family ties in the UK to enter the country.The Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "We have seen a huge response from the British public. The Prime Minister welcomes the generosity of the British people."We knew when we opened the scheme that there would be an outpouring of support but the speed of the uptake and the strength of the interest in this is massively welcome and a sign to the Ukrainian people of the level of support there is for them."I've been in Eastern Poland today meeting refugees fleeing Ukraine and the charities helping them. But the UK Government is nowhere to be seen. Priti Patel and Boris Johnson are betraying these refugees and the British people who are ready to welcome them with open arms. [*pic.twitter.com/Do4DTOM7jy*](https://t.co/Do4DTOM7jy) - Ed Davey MP (@EdwardJDavey) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/EdwardJDavey/status/1503786985005199366?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

However Sir Ed, who was visiting the Polish border town of Przemysl, said that - unlike other European countries - there was little help on the ground for those refugees trying to travel on to the UK.

He said the new scheme, which required them to make an online application to be matched with a sponsor in Britain, was too complicated and too bureaucratic.

"Our Government is so wrong. It is just a hopeless way of going about it. They are pretending they are doing something and they really aren't," he said in a telephone interview with the PA news agency.

"How are you supposed to meet people on social media? These are people who are traumatised, they are exhausted, they are emotional.

"Sometimes they left in such a hurry they didn't even bring all their paperwork, apparently they have got to find a British contact somehow. Nonsense.

"We should be here saying if you want to come this is how we will do it for you. The Government isn't prepared to do the necessary for people who do want to come. It is just shocking."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the papers say - March 15*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-8SN1-DY4H-K006-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 3:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 596 words

**Byline:** PA Reporter

**Highlight:** The papers on Tuesday feature Vladimir Putin's latest moves and a history scandal with 'very naughty monks'.

**Body**

British responses to the war in eastern [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) are splashed across many of the front pages.

The Financial Times quotes the US as telling allies [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has signalled its willingness to provide Russia with military support in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with The Guardian reporting nearly 3 million people have fled the war.

Just published: front page of the Financial Times, UK edition, Tuesday 15 March [*https://t.co/zglWGzGtPL*](https://t.co/zglWGzGtPL) [*pic.twitter.com/6pbsv6ax7h*](https://t.co/6pbsv6ax7h) - Financial Times (@FinancialTimes) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/FinancialTimes/status/1503475823751352333?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Guardian front page, Tuesday 15 March 2022: Russia's deadly raids plunge Ukrainians into 'nightmare' [*pic.twitter.com/Awd0DwZKTM*](https://t.co/Awd0DwZKTM) - The Guardian (@guardian) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/guardian/status/1503493525677170695?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) A humanitarian corridor was used successfully for the first time in the war on Monday as invading forces allowed at least 160 cars to leave the southern city of Mariupol, according to The Independent.Tuesday's INDEPENDENT Digital: "First civilian convoy flees horror of Mariupol" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/apB704aNV0*](https://t.co/apB704aNV0) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1503508184195121155?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Boris Johnson has told The Daily Telegraph Western leaders had made a "terrible mistake" by letting President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) "get away with" annexing Crimea in 2014 and subsequently becoming "more dependent" on Russian power sources.The front page of tomorrow's Daily Telegraph:'West made terrible mistake with Putin, says PM'[*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Sign up for the Front Page newsletter[*https://t.co/x8AV4Oomry*](https://t.co/x8AV4Oomry) [*pic.twitter.com/kxaIdQ03MU*](https://t.co/kxaIdQ03MU) - The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1503492820442746881?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Daily Express and Daily Mirror report three British ex-special forces soldiers are feared to have been killed in Russia's strike on a Ukrainian base near the Poland border.Front page: 3 Ex-special forces Brits killed in Ukraine [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Read more: [*https://t.co/MepVONEKqU*](https://t.co/MepVONEKqU) [*pic.twitter.com/HqMfSfg3Be*](https://t.co/HqMfSfg3Be) - Daily Express (@Daily\_Express) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Daily_Express/status/1503498596779536392?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tomorrow's front page: 3 Brits killed in missile hell [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/jE8Wz8DBbz*](https://t.co/jE8Wz8DBbz) [*pic.twitter.com/DlIEz6XOsM*](https://t.co/DlIEz6XOsM) - The Mirror (@DailyMirror) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DailyMirror/status/1503501814427226126?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Daily Mail and i report tens of thousands of Britons signed up to the sponsorship scheme to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in its first few hours, while The Times says the programme's website immediately crashed after opening. The story is also covered by The Sun.Tuesday's Daily MAIL: "44,000 Sign Up To Give A Refugee A Home" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/sy681zkPrv*](https://t.co/sy681zkPrv) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1503503057719549958?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tuesday's front page: UK families open homes to refugees[*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Latest from [*@singharj*](https://twitter.com/singharj?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) : [*https://t.co/XKTMZQdr15*](https://t.co/XKTMZQdr15) [*pic.twitter.com/rkLFie8bFa*](https://t.co/rkLFie8bFa) - i newspaper (@theipaper) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/theipaper/status/1503485633351847936?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tuesday's TIMES: "Rush to take in Ukrainians" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/Gw5TS03JFj*](https://t.co/Gw5TS03JFj) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1503503401635782658?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tuesday's SUN: "UKraine" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/s4LqWFnUhl*](https://t.co/s4LqWFnUhl) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1503488929961500673?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Metro covers protesters breaking into a mansion owned by a sanctioned Russian oligarch in west London.Tuesday's front page:YOU'RE PUTIN US UP MATE[*#tomorrowspaperstoday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#BBCPapers*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BBCPapers?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#skypapers*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/skypapers?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/SDYS24n5IZ*](https://t.co/SDYS24n5IZ) - Metro Newspaper UK (@MetroUKNews) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MetroUKNews/status/1503476563270066182?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) And the Daily Star reports an academic's claim the [*Turin Shroud*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turin-shroud) is just a tablecloth and not the face of Jesus, with the paper adding "very naughty monks made it as a money-making scam".Tomorrow's Daily Star front page: Heavens![*https://t.co/YPqdAVs4Qj*](https://t.co/YPqdAVs4Qj) [*pic.twitter.com/o3vKYQOoR6*](https://t.co/o3vKYQOoR6) - Daily Star (@dailystar) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/dailystar/status/1503502287087489034?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6526-63B1-F072-442M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 22, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 528 words

**Body**

Woman seriously wounded while shielding her baby in Kyiv

A 27-year-old Ukrainian woman has described the moment a missile strike hit near her home in Kyiv almost killing her six-week-old baby, whom she managed to shield from shrapnel.

Olga, who did not disclose her last name, said she had just woken up to feed baby Victoria and had covered her with a blanket when the missile struck. She said she thought her baby had been hit when she first saw blood.

"I was wounded in the head, and blood started flowing. And it all flowed on the baby," she told Reuters. "I couldn't understand, I thought it was her blood." As she started screaming that her baby had been struck, Dmytro, the baby's father, said: "Olga, it's your blood, it's not hers."

She said the blanket had helped protect her child from the shrapnel.

Ed Sheeran and Camila Cabello to perform at fundraising event

Ed Sheeran and Camila Cabello are among the acts announced to perform at the charity event Concert for Ukraine. The two-hour fundraising effort has been set up with the aim of raising funds for the Disasters Emergency Committee's humanitarian appeal.

Rock band Snow Patrol, singer Emeli Sandé and jazz artist Gregory Porter are also among the acts that have been announced.

Cabello recently released her second collaboration with Sheeran, "Bam Bam". They previously released their duet "South of the Border", from Sheeran's No. 6 Collaborations Project,in 2019. "My heart is breaking for the people of Ukraine," she said.

Polish vet rescues animals trapped by Russian invasion

A Polish vet has recused around 200 cats, 60 dogs and even a pygmy goat from war-torn Ukraine, including one canine with a bullet lodged in its spine. Jakub Kotowicz, 32, crossed the border from Poland last week as part of three convoys, setting off from Przemysl at midday on Tuesday and returning at 3am. He said he has not slept for five days.

Among the animals Mr Kotowicz has rescued so far are a pygmy goat with diseased legs, a sphinx cat wearing a knitted jumper, and a chihuahua mother and her puppy.

He plans to keep the two-month-old pygmy goat, Sasha, who was saved from Lviv in western Ukraine. The goat is currently sharing a bed with the two chihuahuas and will be cared for by the vets at the ADA Foundation - an animal rescue charity founded by Mr Kotowicz when he was 17.

Zelensky praises Kunis and Kutcher for £26m Ukraine appeal

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has thanked Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher for their support after they raised nearly $35m (£2m) for the country.

The couple spoke with Mr Zelensky via a video call following their efforts to secure public donations to help supply humanitarian aid to Ukrainians displaced by Vladimir Putin's ongoing invasion, which is now in its fourth week.

On Sunday, Mr Zelensky shared a photo on Twitter taken during the call, praising the two actors for being "among the first to respond to our grief". He continued: "They have already raised $35m & are sending it to @flexport & @Airbnb to help [***Ukrainian***] ***refugees***.

"Grateful for their support. Impressed by their determination. They inspire the world," he added, using the hashtag #StandWithUkraine.

<strong/>

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Travellers book Airbnbs in Ukraine to send money directly to locals*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XC-S501-JBNF-W155-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 10:12 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:1

**Length:** 502 words

**Byline:** Lucy Thackray

**Highlight:** Airbnb waives fees so Ukrainian hosts receive maximum amount

**Body**

A trend for booking Airbnb apartments in Ukraine in order to send money directly to locals has started among industry workers and travel fans alike.

After the idea for booking [*the platform's rental apartments*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.airbnb.co.uk%2Fs%2Fukraine%2Fhomes&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/airbnb-booking-ukraine-help-locals-b2028446.html) -which transfers money straight to the renter -circulated online yesterday, Airbnb announced that it would waive all fees for bookings in the country.

More than a million Ukrainians have already been displaced following [*Russia's invasion of the country,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine-invasion-latest-news-b2020162.html) with many overseas looking for ways to help.

Sarah Archer, UK sales manager for Beachcomber tours, wrote on Twitter: "Booked a weekend in Kyiv on [Airbnb].

"Pick closest date, random apartment run by an individual not a company, book, pay and send a message of support while telling them you're a no show."

Airbnb announced a few hours later that it would waive both host and guest fees for bookings in Ukraine.

Another Twitter user, Mario DiMaggio, wrote: "HOW TO HELP -just booked a Kyiv AirBnb for one week, simply as a means of getting money directly into the hands of residents.

"It's really cheap and can make a small difference right now. Please share this idea."

Users of the rental platform can leave a message of support as they book a room anywhere in Ukraine -often at very cheap per-night rates -in order to donate money directly to a local.

"I will book my imaginary week tomorrow morning, l am amazed by the discovery of these new ways of solidarity, and support, thanks to everyone for the idea!" commented follower Susanna Antico.

Just made a booking, I got this message[*#Ukriane*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukriane?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#refugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/refugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0QusYockkC*](https://t.co/0QusYockkC) - Capricorn (@UnrealRated) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UnrealRated/status/1499637462179536903?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I just booked five and a tour. Feels so good to connect with Ukrainians directly," wrote @DominicaDailey."We appreciate the generosity of our community during this moment of crisis," said an Airbnb spokesperson."Airbnb is also waiving all guest and host fees on all bookings in Ukraine at this time."Airbnb's fees usually account for 3 to 15 per cent of a payment, but with these waived for Ukraine bookings, the owner will receive the full amount.The platform has more than 300 listings across Ukraine. On Monday, it set up a [*dedicated hub*](https://www.airbnb.org/help-ukraine) to help people abroad host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their spare rooms.Just made a booking -great idea. Just got this message back from the host.. [*pic.twitter.com/bL6W3KS1an*](https://t.co/bL6W3KS1an) - John Mitchell (@seagullsmitch) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/seagullsmitch/status/1499456836348616717?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It's worth noting that not all listings on Airbnb are owned by local residents -privately owned apartments and even big-brand hotel rooms can be listed on the platform.

Others on social media flagged concerns about verifying that listings are owned by Ukrainian locals, not by Russians or landlords abroad.

DiMaggio suggests finding a local's name as the contact and messaging them before booking. Many users have received heartfelt replies from apartment owners in the country.

"When this hell ends, we, with bread and salt and open arms, are waiting for you to visit peaceful Odessa!" wrote one Airbnb host.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Invasion jolts Russia's friends in tiny West-leaning Moldova*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-NCN1-DY4H-K37C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 10:59 AM GMT

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**Length:** 553 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Across the border from war-engulfed Ukraine, tiny, impoverished Moldova - an ex-Soviet republic now looking eagerly Westward - has watched with trepidation as the Russian invasion unfolds

**Body**

Across the border from war-engulfed [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , tiny, impoverished Moldova - an ex-Soviet republic now looking eagerly Westward - has watched with trepidation as the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invasion unfolds.

In Gagauzia, a small, autonomous part of the country that's traditionally felt closer to the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) than the West, people would normally back Russia, which they never wanted to leave when Moldova gained independence. But this time, most have trouble identifying with either side in the war.

Anna Koejoglo says she's deeply conflicted.

"I have sisters (in Ukraine), I have nephews there, my own son is in Kyiv," the 52-year-old said, quickly adding that her other, younger, son is studying in Russia.

"My heart is (broken), my insides are burning," she told The Associated Press.

Koejoglo is one of Moldova's 160,000 Gagauz, an Orthodox Christian people of Turkic origin who were settled there by the Russian Empire in the 19th century. They make up over 80% of Gagauzia's population, but only 5% of Moldova's 2.6 million people.

In the early 1990s, when landlocked Moldova voted to leave the Soviet Union, its Gagauz and Russian minorities wanted to stay. But unlike Russian-backed separatists in eastern Moldova who took up arms in 1992 to establish the unrecognized, breakaway Trans-Dniester area - which Russia essentially controls, maintaining some 1,500 troops there - the Gagauz in the south chose to compromise.

In 1994, they reached an agreement with the government in Moldova's capital, Chisinau, settling for a high degree of autonomy. Still, Gagauzia has maintained a strong relationship with Russia, where many Gagauz find education and job opportunities. Its population generally opposes the pro-Western shift embraced by ethnic [*Moldovans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldovans) who account for 75% of the country's people.

For Peotr Sarangi, a 25-year-old Gagauz, the old ties still hold strong.

"(The) Gagauzian population supports Russia more, many remain pro-Russian," he said.

Although Moldova is neutral militarily and has no plans to join NATO, it formally applied for EU membership when the Russian invasion began. It's also taken in about a tenth of the more than 2.3 million Ukrainians who fled their country for safety.

Ilona Manolo, a 20-year-old Gagauz, has no qualms in laying the blame with Moscow. "I think that Russia is at fault. ... I'd rather support (***Ukrainian***) ***refugees***," than Russia, she said.

There's similar sentiment elsewhere among Moldova's rich patchwork of ethnic minorities - even expressed by ethnic Russians who live outside the separatist region of Trans-Dniester.

One of the latter group, Nikola Sidorov, described the invasion of Ukraine as a "terrible thing." He said he believed Russian President Vladimir Putin "went too far (and) needs to calm down."

The 79-year-old added that the issue has become a subject of heated debates among his ethnic kin in Moldova's second largest city, Balti, where ethnic Russians make up some 15% of the population.

An ethnic Ukrainian who lives in Balti said her sympathies were divided.

"I'm very sorry for the people of Ukraine ... but I also feel sorry for Russians," said Iulia Popovic, 66. "I understand that it is all (happening because of) politics and that the situation is very difficult."

\_\_\_

Follow the AP's coverage of the Ukraine crisis at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*King Charles meets refugees who have settled for new life in Scotland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66MV-4PP1-DY4H-K28T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 17, 2022 Monday 4:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 528 words

**Byline:** Rebecca McCurdy

**Highlight:** The monarch met displaced families from countries such as Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan who have made a new life in Aberdeen.

**Body**

The King welcomed refugees from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) and [*Afghanistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghanistan) as he learned of efforts to resettle displaced families in Aberdeen.

Charles visited the Scottish city on Monday to hear first hand how Aberdeen City Council had been supporting people fleeing conflict in their homeland.

The city council has worked with the UK and Scottish Governments to provide accommodation and critical services such as health and education for more than 1,000 people from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria.

In a reception at the city’s Town House, the King met Inna Skvortsova, a Ukrainian woman who arrived in the city in April.

She now has a full-time role at the council assisting with the resettlement programme.

Ms Skvortsova said it was “such an honour” to be invited to meet the King.

She said: “Six months ago I didn’t expect that I would be here, or with the King, his majesty, and now I am proud to represent my country.

“I’m so grateful that the United Kingdom helped me and helped my compatriots.”

The monarch also met Burhan Vesal, who worked as an interpreter with the [*British Army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-army) in the south of Afghanistan.

He also met Mr Vesal’s wife, Narcis, who plans to use her medical experience as an Ob-Gyn to work as a doctor in the UK, and their son Sapehr, seven, who is enjoying school in the city.

Of meeting the monarch, Mr Vesal said: “It means a lot as a new immigrant. He spoke to us with openness and with laughter and joy.

“We ran away from conflict, we ran away from violence, in a hard situation, and now besides having the support from the community here, we have the support from the King and the Government.”

He added that the monarch was “touched” when Mr Vesal recounted his family’s life story.

The King also shared advice on being a good grandparent as the Afghan refugee, who asked to be known only as Yar to protect his identity, told Charles his family had expanded to 12 with a recent new addition.

Yar, who is still awaiting a permanent home in Aberdeen, had been employed as an interpreter with the Armed Forces and worked in Camp Bastion as an IT support worker before fleeing to [*Pakistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pakistan) where he was evacuated to the UK.

He said: “This was my first time to meet the King and this is my whole life. He is a very kind person.

“I had a good chat with him telling my family story to him and he was really, really good and said that ‘now you’re going to have a safe life here’.”

He said Charles was “excited” to hear that he had just become a grandfather for the first time and wished him luck in dealing with a growing his growing family.

Before his departure, a choir of school children, university students and some of the refugee families sang a song, the Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen, to the monarch.

During an official visit to Jordan in November 2021, the King visited the Al Nuzha Community Centre which is supported by UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and met refugee families receiving UK assistance through UNHCR.

Aberdeen has resettled about 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with capacity for more.

Approximately 170 Afghan refugees are currently staying in two hotels in the city and about 30 Syrian families have also been resettled in the city since 2014.

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish Government sends 4,000 blood bags and 50,000 masks to Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YX-7001-DY4H-K2R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 2:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 551 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** As part of an EU-wide effort, the Government and the HSE have donated thousands of items to help Ukrainian medics.

**Body**

The Republic of Ireland has sent 4,000 blood bags and 50,000 medical masks to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , as part of an effort to support the health service of the war-torn country.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) , working with the [*HSE*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hse) , has donated thousands of items designed to help Ukrainian medics, as part of an EU-wide effort.

Four thousand blood bags were donated by the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Blood Transfusion Service and sent to Ukraine on Monday from a supplier in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , while 10,000 bio-protection suits, as well as 50,000 medical-grade masks and more than 2,500 litres of disinfectant were dispatched on Friday.

The Department of Health confirmed that, alongside the HSE, staff are planning further donations to Ukraine and neighbouring countries as the Russian invasion shows no sign of ending.

The invasion has caused the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

Health Minister Stephen Donnelly stressed how vital these kinds of donations were.

"The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is devastating. I had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Gerasko earlier this week and am keenly aware of how important these donations are to supporting the Ukrainian response to ongoing conflict," he said.

"The HSE is coordinating a large number of offers of medicines and medical assistance we can provide, and I look forward to confirming further support shortly."

Darragh O'Brien, who is Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, said: "What is currently happening in Ukraine is an absolute tragedy. We must pull out all the stops that we can to assist the humanitarian effort that is currently under way.

"The Irish Government recognises the horrors of this conflict and will provide whatever humanitarian supports we can. These medical donations are critical to helping in saving lives."

Ireland has already taken in more than 2,500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with thousands more people expected to arrive in the coming weeks and months.

The country has already signed up to an EU-wide fund to provide arms and equipment to Ukraine, although Ireland as a militarily neutral nation has committed to providing non-lethal equipment only.

We're dispatching vital medical supplies to Ukraine. This is a cross government and health service co-ordination through EU mechanisms. Every health support we can provide will be made available. [*pic.twitter.com/DAdKiDUPl0*](https://t.co/DAdKiDUPl0) - Stephen Donnelly (@DonnellyStephen) [*March 11, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DonnellyStephen/status/1502300467187101703?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Appearing at an Oireachtas committee on Thursday, Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney indicated that Ireland is preparing to send defence equipment to Ukraine.

He said: "We're also looking to see what actual gear we can provide as well. We're making some decisions on that actually shortly having looked at what we have that is spare and available.

"And you'd be surprised - there's not as much as you might think.

"But there is some military defence equipment that I think would be useful and we're making decisions on that actually as we speak today. And we'll get it to Ukraine as quickly as we can."

On Friday afternoon, the Government also announced 18 million euro in emergency support for hauliers, amid spiralling fuel prices partly driven by the Ukrainian conflict.

The grant scheme will see 100 euro paid per week to hauliers, for an initial eight weeks, for every heavy goods vehicle on their licence.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Here's how to support women affected by the crisis in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y3-GXM1-DY4H-K32P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 9:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 515 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** Women's lives are at risk as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

In the days since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , more than 1m Ukrainians have fled the country. As men between the ages of 18 and 60 remain to fight the Russian forces, the majority of the [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) leaving Ukraine are [*women*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/women) and [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children).

Ukrainian women's lives are being placed at risk as a result of the attack. An estimated 80,000 women will give birth in the next three months in Ukraine, as some pregnant women have already been forced to [*give birth in bomb shelters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-pregnant-women-birth-shelter-b2028865.html) with a lack of medicine and equipment. Experts also warn that women in Ukraine will endure sexual violence wielded as a [*weapon of war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sexual-violence-women-russia-b2023618.html) , as crisis and displacement put them at [*increased risk*](https://www.unfpa.org/ukraine-conflict) of gender-based violence.

On International Women's Day 2022 -which takes place on Tuesday 8 March -and in the days that follow, it is important to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian women impacted by the humanitarian crisis. Here are some of the ways in which you can support women in Ukraine.

Donate to funds prioritising the support and protection of women and girls, both internationally and at the grassroots level.

[*UN Women*](https://donate.unwomen.org/en/ukraine?utm_source=UNW_Partner&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Ukraine2022) has established a fund to address the needs of Ukrainian women and girls, by working closely with women's civil society organisations, the UN Resident Coordinator, and the UN Country Team to deliver aid on the ground.

[*Save The Children*](https://support.savethechildren.org/site/Donation2?df_id=5751&mfc_pref=T&5751.donation=form1) , a UK organisation based in London, developed the Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund to provide children and families with food, water, hygiene kits, psychosocial support and cash assistance.

[*Host A Sister*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2Fhostasister%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/how-to-help-ukraine-women-donate-b2030494.html) is an online community that started in 2019 to help women and nonbinary individuals find find free accommodations, and has now [*pivoted*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/2022/03/01/help-ukraine-refugees-online-resources/9329728002/) to a community of women helping refugees. [*Transport A Sister*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F2182253995256054&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/how-to-help-ukraine-women-donate-b2030494.html) , which was started by a member of the Host A Sister community, is organising transport for people fleeing from Ukraine free of charge.

CARE's [*Ukraine Crisis Fund*](https://my.care.org/site/Donation2?df_id=31071&mfc_pref=T&31071.donation=form1&s_src=172220UCFM00&s_subsrc=FY22UkraineCrisisFundMO) aims to rush water, food, and hygiene kits to four million Ukrainians, especially women and children.

[*Global Empowerment Mission*](https://www.globalempowermentmission.org/mission/ukraine-crisis/) , in partnership with Bethenny Frankel's [*BStrong*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bethenny-frankel-ukraine-aid-b2027162.html) , is using donations to pay for basic necessities, relocation assistance, and stability housing.

[*Voices of Children*](https://voices.org.ua/en/) has provided psychological and psychosocial support to children affected by war in Ukraine since 2015.

Two experienced aid workers set up a [*crowdfund*](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ukrainesupportforwhrdandactivists?fbclid=IwAR0DHaT53oCgVhl_HbRuV5-NZ2vQBc11x5-MT0DYVkiEhkVfoRGcPk8BUsI) to provide urgent support to women human rights defenders and activists in Ukraine. Amy Greenbank and Almut Rochowanski -a UK-based activist and a women's rights activist with connections in the Ukraine, respectively -have collaborated with women activist groups in Ukraine since 2014. As of 2 March, the crowdfund has raised £4,600 to send to at least 17 women's human rights defenders.

Apart from women and children, vulnerable communities such as BIPOC ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, disabled Ukrainians, and LGBTQ people are being discriminated against at the border as they flee Ukraine. This [*one-page*](https://ukrainewar.carrd.co/) site offers a compiled list of where to donate to help vulnerable communities affected by the war.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Huge police response as squatters occupy Belgravia mansion owned by oligarch Oleg Deripaska*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 568 words

**Byline:** Joe Middleton,Lamiat Sabin and Zoe Tidman

**Highlight:** Signs were hung on the balcony saying 'this property has been liberated' and 'Putin go f\*\*\* yourself'

**Body**

The [*Met Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/met-police) has been criticised after sending nine vans to deal with five squatters holed up in a mansion reported to belong to Russian oligarch [*Oleg Deripaska*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oleg-deripaska).

The people have been occupying the property in Belgrave Square since [*early Monday morning and have hung signs on the balcony saying "This property has been liberated" and "Putin go f\*\*\* yourself".*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russian-oligarch-mansion-squatters-london-b2035179.html)

One man at the scene told reporters the group broke into the property at around 1am and were intending to "use the house [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) and refugees from all nations".

Met Police cordoned off the building and it has been surrounded by heavy police presence, with dozens of officers.

The level of police response has prompted derision on social media. One user said: "I hope you will deploy the same level of resources to domestic burglaries from now on?"

Riot police have arrived [*pic.twitter.com/pxTm1ROOdc*](https://t.co/pxTm1ROOdc) - Jessica Frank-Keyes (@JessicaFKeyes) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/JessicaFKeyes/status/1503346888715771904?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) And another said on Twitter: "Interesting use of police resources on display today in #BelgraveSquare, London - eight vans outside #Deripaska's mansion to evict five (5!) squatters."When asked by The Independent why so much police resource has been sent to evict the squatters, a spokesman for the Met said the "response would be proportionate to the circumstances and I believe this has changed throughout the day".Mr Deripaska, an industrialist who has had close links with the British political establishment, was targeted with sanctions by the Government last week.If your home is ever broken into and a lone police officer turns up three days later, remember how the Metropolitan Police respond to people breaking into Russian billionaire oligarchs' homes.[*pic.twitter.com/Kemyz5WZXQ*](https://t.co/Kemyz5WZXQ) - Damon (@damocrat) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/damocrat/status/1503337649389592584?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He was described as "a prominent Russian businessman and pro-Kremlin oligarch", who is "closely associated" with both the Russian government and president Vladimir Putin.

His wealth is estimated to be £2.3bn and he has a multimillion-pound property portfolio in the UK which, according to a 2007 High Court judgment, includes the house at 5 Belgrave Square. Records indicate it has not changed hands since and is owned by an offshore British Virgin Islands company.

The squatters call themselves the London Mahknovists - after Nestor Makhno, who led an anarchist force that attempted to form a stateless society in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) during the Russian Revolution of 1917-1923.

Scotland Yard said in a statement: "Officers have completed a search of the property in Belgrave Square and are satisfied there are no protesters inside.

"We continue to engage with those on the balcony as we balance the need for enforcement with the safety of all involved."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tory MP suggests Ukrainians fleeing Russian invasion should apply for UK's seasonal work visas*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W8-8Y51-JBNF-W4HY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 12:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 499 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon criticises now-deleted tweet, saying 'I hope this is not a Home Office position'

**Body**

A Conservative MP has suggested that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion could apply for the seasonal worker scheme in order to get into the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk).

[*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) , MP for Torbay, was replying to Labour's shadow armed forces minister [*Luke Pollard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luke-pollard) in an exchange on Twitter.

Mr Pollard had raised concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the conflict still have to apply for a visa to enter the UK, something other countries -such as Ireland and Portugal -have waived in response to the invasion.

He wrote: "I'm looking for a route for people fleeing Ukraine who might not have a family link in the UK. We have a moral obligation to help them. Will you now change policy to do exactly that?"

[*Follow the latest in our Ukraine war live blog here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-latest-news-putin-war-zelensky-today-b2023848.html%22%20title=%22%20Ukraine-Russia%20latest%20news:%20Kyiv%20braced%20for%20Putin's%20advancing%20troops%20as%20West%20to%20ban%20Russian%20banks%20from%20Swift)

Conservative MP Kevin Foster then replied, in a now-deleted tweet, saying: "As you will be well aware there are a number of routes, not least our seasonal worker scheme you will recall from your Shadow Defra days, which Ukrainians can qualify for, alongside the family route for those with relatives here."

Kevin Foster MP has now replaced his previous message with the simpler: "Hi Luke. It's just one of several routes and we will do more as the PM has made clear."

The tweet, which Mr Foster has now taken down, was widely criticised on social media, with Labour and Co-op MP for Leeds, Alex Sobel, replying: "Kevin this is beneath you. I hope you can apologise to the people of Ukraine fleeing for their lives and join the voices calling for the UK to match what our European friends are offering the oppressed masses of Ukraine."

Scottish first minister [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) responded to Mr Foster's words, saying: "I hope we get clarity asap Priti Patel that this is not a [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) position.

"Migrant seasonal workers make a valued contribution to our economy -but this is not the route to the UK that we should expect those seeking refuge from war to rely on."

Yvette Cooper, shadow home secretary, said: "My God. People are fleeing war in Europe, the like we haven't seen in generations, in search of swift sanctuary.

"Yet the immigration minister says the answer is they should put in an application to pick Britain's fruit & veg."

Home secretary Priti Patel has announced visa concessions for Ukrainians who are already in Britain for work, study and tourism, extending the time period before they must leave the country.

But there has been no announcement of a resettlement scheme or other measures in response to an expected exodus of refugees.

Prime minister Boris Johnson, when questioned on the UK's support for Ukrainians fleeing their country, said on Saturday night: "Of course we're going to take refugees. This country's had a historic and proud role in taking refugees from all conflicts."

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugees Welcome: Joely Richardson and Erin O'Connor add support to our Ukraine appeal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-0S91-DY4H-K3MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 12:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 544 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** Two more celebrities have backed our Refugees Welcome campaign, which includes a fundraiser and petition to help those trying to flee Ukraine following the Russian invasion

**Body**

More stars of the entertainment and fashion world have backed our appeal for [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugees*** as the number of people escaping the Russian invasion passed 1.5 million, with no signs of the human tide abating.

Actress Joely Richardson and model Erin O'Connor said the distress faced by Ukrainians forced to flee their homes was "unimaginable" and called on people to donate generously as the amount raised by our [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) appeal passed £100k.

Together with government match-funding of £56k and the appeal of our sister title the Evening Standard, the aggregate raised by our joint appeals now exceeds £250k.

As Russia laid siege to key Ukrainian cities, O'Connor said: "Over the past days Ukrainians have watched their homes, lives, schools and workplaces be destroyed.

"They've been forced to flee or hide in basements. They've been torn apart from family and friends.

"As a parent, I cannot begin to imagine the distress and heartache these brave parents are facing and the decisions they've had to make to keep their children safe. Please donate generously."

Richardson said: "No one should have to flee their homes or witness their family being torn apart and no child should have to endure that level of distress.

"As an ambassador of Save the Children, a beneficiary of your appeal, I've seen first-hand the support they and other organisations within the [*Disasters Emergency Committee*](https://www.dec.org.uk/) provide families affected by conflict.

"Whatever you're able to give will help ensure fleeing families have food, water and shelter - and that children will be offered psychosocial support."

Save the Children's head of news, Dan Stewart, who is on the Romanian Ukraine border, said: "At our distribution point, the question, 'where are you from?' was enough to bring tears to the eyes of a mother as she picked up a stuffed toy for the toddler she was carrying.

"One family told us how they were forced to abandon their car and walk through fields. Another spent six days sheltering in a basement while their town was bombarded. When they emerged they saw their home had been hit. Mums are doing everything they can to shield and protect their children from the scale of the horror that has been unfolding around them."

All donations go to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukrainian Humanitarian Appeal, which is bringing together 13 leading UK aid charities including the Red Cross and Save the Children. The DEC will ensure your money is efficiently disseminated to help people displaced from their homes in Ukraine or fleeing across the border.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More stars rush to back our appeal as fund tops £100K*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-KG01-JCS0-D50M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 8, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 513 words

**Byline:** DAVID COHEN

**Body**

More stars of the entertainment and fashion world have backed our appeal for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as the number of people escaping the Russian invasion passed 1.5 million, with no signs of the human tide abating.

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Richardson said: "No one should have to flee their homes or witness their family being torn apart and no child should have to endure that level of distress. As an ambassador of Save the Children, a beneficiary of your appeal, I've seen first-hand the support they and other organisations within the Disasters Emergency Committee provide families affected by conflict.

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**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Use Russia sanctions cash to mitigate rise in energy prices, says Lib Dem leader*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VY-0VJ1-JBNF-W2V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 4:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 494 words

**Byline:** Craig Paton

**Highlight:** Sir Ed Davey was speaking to journalists during a visit to Scotland.

**Body**

[*Liberal Democrat*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liberal-democrat) leader Sir [*Ed Davey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-davey) has called on the UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to use cash from Russian sanctions to mitigate energy price rises in the UK.

The recent invasion in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is expected to drive up the price of gas if supplies from Russia are impeded or stopped altogether, with fears household bills could see a further increase.

But Sir Ed has urged the Prime Minister to increase the sanctions on associates of Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , and use the cash to fund a package of measures to help Britons mitigate any rises.

I think whether it's Putin's cronies or Russian energy firms, I think they should foot the bill of any gas price hike following Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Sir Ed Davey

Speaking to journalists during a visit to Scotland on Friday, Sir Ed said there were "far more" people with links to Mr Putin who could be on the receiving end of sanctions.

"One thing I think we should look at is we go after their assets, freezing them and beginning the process of seizing the assets of Putin's cronies who have money and property in the UK and using that as a sort of oligarch tax and using some of that money for insulating the UK from the gas price spike that we're seeing," he said.

"I think whether it's Putin's cronies or Russian energy firms, I think they should foot the bill of any gas price hike following Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

Money seized should go to doubling winter fuel payments and expanding the warm home discount to include up to 7.5 million people in the UK, Sir Ed said.

He also pushed the Government to "do more" from a humanitarian standpoint, saying that the UK should be prepared to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"I think the UK should be leading an internationally co-ordinated humanitarian response where the UK is welcoming and prepared to house far more refugees from Ukraine," the Lib Dem leader said.

"Activists, journalists and others who will be targeted by the Putin regime are desperate to leave Ukraine and I think we need to be part of a co-ordinated effort to host those refugees - and I just think we're not anywhere near where we need to be."

Sir Ed has repeatedly called on the Prime Minister to resign over allegations of parties in and around Downing Street during lockdown which are now subject to a police investigation.

He said on Friday that the crisis in Ukraine should not stop Boris Johnson resigning if he is found to have broken the law.

"Yes, of course he should go," Sir Ed said.

"I absolutely think that Tory MPs need to stand up and be counted, they're the ones that can make sure that happens and it is a question for Tory MPs to focus on."

When asked if a resignation could impact the response of the Government to the crisis in Ukraine, he said he had not been "impressed" by the Prime Minister's response to the issue or to the cost-of-living crisis, adding: "Frankly, I don't see a problem.

"The UK could manage these problems probably even better with cabinet government, that's my experience."

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US House 'staunchly, proudly' passes resolution for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-2251-JBNF-W48F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 11:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 532 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The U.S. House has overwhelmingly approved a resolution "steadfastly, staunchly, proudly and fervently" in support of Ukraine

**Body**

The U.S House has overwhelmingly approved a resolution "steadfastly, staunchly, proudly and fervently" in support of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Lawmakers said Wednesday that history was watching the way the world responds as Ukrainians fight to save their Western-style democracy from invasion by Russia. With intensifying urgency, many in [*Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) said more must be done to help Ukraine and cut off Russian President Vladimir Putin's ability to wage war.

In the Senate, [*Lindsey Graham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lindsey-graham) , R-S.C., was also introducing a resolution that would back Ukraine's claim in international court that Putin and his "cronies" have committed war crimes.

"The camera of history is rolling on all of us today," said Rep. Gregory Meeks, D-N.Y., the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee during a House floor debate.

He urged his colleague to provide a unanimous vote to overwhelmingly show "whether or not we stood up and stood out to protect freedom."

The resolve comes after the blue and yellow colors of the Ukraine flag were on view in the House chamber for President Joe Biden's State of the Union speech Tuesday night, a display of bipartisan common ground for the often divided Congress.

While resolutions do not carry the force of law, Congress is working quickly to produce a supplemental funding package of at least $6.4 billion of military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine.

Lawmakers warned the war was taking an ominous turn as Russian troops encircled Kyiv and other major Ukraine cities, and citizens took up arms to stop the invasion.

The resolution approved by the House says it "stands steadfastly, staunchly, proudly and fervently behind the Ukrainian people in their fight against the authoritarian Putin regime."

It calls for an immediate cease-fire and the removal of Russian forces from Ukraine, pledges U.S. support for the Ukrainian resistance and vows to provide "significant additional aid and humanitarian relief to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing Russia's aggression."

All but three members of the House voted for the resolution: Republican Reps. Paul Gosar of Arizona, Thomas Massie of Kentucky and Matt Rosendale of Montana.

The Senate unanimously approved a similar measure in support of Ukraine last month.

Graham said Wednesday that he is introducing a new resolution to hold Putin and those around him accountable for the assault on Ukraine in international courts.

"Enough of the murder, enough of the destruction and carnage," Graham said Wednesday in a press conference at the Capitol.

Graham said of Putin: "The world has let him get away with too much for too long."

A former military lawyer, Graham is introducing a measure that would back Ukraine's claim in international court of war crimes by Putin. He is joined by Ukraine-born Rep. Victoria Spartz, R-Ind., who has spoken passionately in favor of a U.S. role in saving her country.

Congress largely backs Biden's strategy of economic sanctions against Russia, even as lawmakers push for more. Many want Biden to cut off Russian oil and gas exports to the U.S. as a way to clip Putin's economy and deprive him of resources. Lawmakers of both parties want to send Ukraine more ammunition, anti-aircraft weapons and other military and relief aid.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine ambassador to UK struggled to get visa for his wife to join him*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-YBJ1-JBNF-W34S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 12:27 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 483 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Vadym Prystaiko says UK Home Office system has long-standing issues even before war

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ambassador to Britain has revealed that he struggled to get a visa for his wife to come with him to Britain when he was appointed.

Vadym Prystaiko said the UK's [*immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/immigration) policy had been bureaucratic and out of line with the rest of Europe "even before the war".

It comes as the UK refuses to grant open door entry to Ukrainians fleeting the Russian invasion of their country, even as the rest of Europe drops all entry requirements.

Mr Prystaiko, a former foreign minister and ex head of his country's mission to Nato, assumed office as ambassador to the UK in July 2020.

Describing the evolution of the UK's visa process for Ukrainians he said:

"You used to produce visas in Ukraine in Kyiv, which allows all Ukrainians to get one, but that's the biggest-by-territory nation in Europe. So even travelling to one particular place was hassle already.

"Then you moved it to Poland years ago. It was much more difficult to get to Poland. Then you moved it all the way to these islands. To process visas it was always bureaucratic hassles."

Turning to his own experience, he told MPs on the Home Affairs select committee: "I have to tell you that even when I was coming here as ambassador, I got my visa on time, and although I was already approved by your government for half a year, my wife didn't have it. So even simple things like that, bureaucracy is so tough."

Mr Prystaiko also contrasted the UK's approach with the Schengen visa zone, which has given Ukrainians visa free entry for tourism purposes for around a decade. Britain has enjoyed visa free tourist entry to Ukraine since 2005.

"When we reached agreement for a visa free regime with Europeans, which worked quite beautifully for almost 10 years we never managed to open this particular nation," he said.

"I know that you have strict immigration policies but all Europeans also have them at the same time. We opened up for your citizens in 2005!"

UK government has said it will only grant visas to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with family connections or sponsorship by a third party.

Immigration ministers have suggested people could be pretending to be Ukrainian and that they might consider coming to Britain on work visas to pick fruit.

The approach has sparked anger in other countries, with France's interior minister accusing the British government of a "lack of humanity".

The European Union has activated a special law which will allow all people fleeing the conflict to access housing and other public services for an initial period of three years. They will not be asked to apply for asylum or visas.

The latest official stats suggested 300 Ukrainians have been granted visas to come to Britain - dwarfed by the two million who have actually fled the country. Poland hosts 1.2 million and the UK's neighbour Ireland has taken 2,000 people so far, with its government saying it expects to take between 80,000 and 100,000 people in total.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Here's how to support women affected by the crisis in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-G241-JBNF-W0NJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 3:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 515 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** Women's lives are at risk as Russia continues its invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

In the days since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , more than 1m Ukrainians have fled the country. As men between the ages of 18 and 60 remain to fight the Russian forces, the majority of the [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) leaving Ukraine are [*women*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/women) and [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children).

Ukrainian women's lives are being placed at risk as a result of the attack. An estimated 80,000 women will give birth in the next three months in Ukraine, as some pregnant women have already been forced to [*give birth in bomb shelters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-pregnant-women-birth-shelter-b2028865.html) with a lack of medicine and equipment. Experts also warn that women in Ukraine will endure sexual violence wielded as a [*weapon of war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sexual-violence-women-russia-b2023618.html) , as crisis and displacement put them at [*increased risk*](https://www.unfpa.org/ukraine-conflict) of gender-based violence.

On International Women's Day 2022 -which takes place on Tuesday 8 March -and in the days that follow, it is important to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian women impacted by the humanitarian crisis. Here are some of the ways in which you can support women in Ukraine.

Donate to funds prioritising the support and protection of women and girls, both internationally and at the grassroots level.

[*UN Women*](https://donate.unwomen.org/en/ukraine?utm_source=UNW_Partner&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Ukraine2022) has established a fund to address the needs of Ukrainian women and girls, by working closely with women's civil society organisations, the UN Resident Coordinator, and the UN Country Team to deliver aid on the ground.

[*Save The Children*](https://support.savethechildren.org/site/Donation2?df_id=5751&mfc_pref=T&5751.donation=form1) , a UK organisation based in London, developed the Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund to provide children and families with food, water, hygiene kits, psychosocial support and cash assistance.

[*Host A Sister*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2Fhostasister%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/how-to-help-women-ukraine-donate-b2031101.html) is an online community that started in 2019 to help women and nonbinary individuals find find free accommodations, and has now [*pivoted*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/2022/03/01/help-ukraine-refugees-online-resources/9329728002/) to a community of women helping refugees. [*Transport A Sister*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F2182253995256054&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/how-to-help-women-ukraine-donate-b2031101.html) , which was started by a member of the Host A Sister community, is organising transport for people fleeing from Ukraine free of charge.

CARE's [*Ukraine Crisis Fund*](https://my.care.org/site/Donation2?df_id=31071&mfc_pref=T&31071.donation=form1&s_src=172220UCFM00&s_subsrc=FY22UkraineCrisisFundMO) aims to rush water, food, and hygiene kits to four million Ukrainians, especially women and children.

[*Global Empowerment Mission*](https://www.globalempowermentmission.org/mission/ukraine-crisis/) , in partnership with Bethenny Frankel's [*BStrong*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bethenny-frankel-ukraine-aid-b2027162.html) , is using donations to pay for basic necessities, relocation assistance, and stability housing.

[*Voices of Children*](https://voices.org.ua/en/) has provided psychological and psychosocial support to children affected by war in Ukraine since 2015.

Two experienced aid workers set up a [*crowdfund*](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ukrainesupportforwhrdandactivists?fbclid=IwAR0DHaT53oCgVhl_HbRuV5-NZ2vQBc11x5-MT0DYVkiEhkVfoRGcPk8BUsI) to provide urgent support to women human rights defenders and activists in Ukraine. Amy Greenbank and Almut Rochowanski -a UK-based activist and a women's rights activist with connections in the Ukraine, respectively -have collaborated with women activist groups in Ukraine since 2014. As of 2 March, the crowdfund has raised £4,600 to send to at least 17 women's human rights defenders.

Apart from women and children, vulnerable communities such as BIPOC ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, disabled Ukrainians, and LGBTQ people are being discriminated against at the border as they flee Ukraine. This [*one-page*](https://ukrainewar.carrd.co/) site offers a compiled list of where to donate to help vulnerable communities affected by the war.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Aid truck prepares to leave Northern Ireland destined for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-G961-DY4H-K1M6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 9:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 470 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Black

**Highlight:** Paul Doherty said their priority is to get the aid to the people of Ukraine as quickly and safely as possible.

**Body**

One of several collections of aid donated in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) is due to set out across Europe.

Paul Doherty, founder of Foodstock in west Belfast, said their donations were bolstered by a shipment from Co Armagh on Tuesday evening that a number of schools had been involved with collecting.

He described the aid including many priority need items such as baby food, food, nappies and toiletries.

"Our mission now is to get that to people in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as quickly and safely as possible," he said.

Incredible coming together of communities to ensure this lorry with aid is on its way to people fleeing Ukraine. [*https://t.co/YYxUYXodPe*](https://t.co/YYxUYXodPe) - Foodstock -Community Response West Belfast (@Foodstock\_\_) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Foodstock__/status/1500808061388271624?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"We're going to hit the road, we have a 40-foot container headed towards the [*Romanian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) border with Ukraine. We're going to meet with [*NGOs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngos) on the ground and distribute these items to people who are fleeing Ukraine.

"There is a real movement of people going towards this border region of Romania and that is where we are hearing there is a real need and that's why we're prioritising it.

"It's quite a frightening prospect (going near a warzone) but we're committed and we want to see this job done.

"We have seen a lot of generosity and a lot of good will from people in Belfast and across Northern Ireland, and now we want to get that aid to people. We have seen the scenes of TV of the distress and what people are going through out there, and we just want to help. It's people looking out for people."

Earlier, an east Belfast restaurant owner told how she has been overwhelmed by the generosity of people after she began collecting items for those caught up in the humanitarian crisis caused by the invasion of Ukraine.

Monica Rawson, originally from [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , runs the Smokey Deli in east Belfast which has been transformed into a store for items which will be shipped out to help refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Ms Rawson said she first made the appeal for donations after she was left "heartbroken" by the scenes in the war-torn country.

Since then she has collected several tons of clothes, toys and food.

She said: "We have been doing this collection for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"The donations have been overwhelming, lots of people supporting, it has been great.

"It is breaking my heart because these are my neighbours and I need to do something to support them in this crisis."

Ms Rawson said that her grandparents are originally from Ukraine and she has family in Poland who live just 40km away from the border.

She said: "We have been asking for what is needed at the moment. We have asked for clothes, blankets, baby clothes, toys, food, medicine.

"At this moment we need more medicines, baby foods and cosmetics."

Ms Rawson said the goods would be taken by lorry to Poland to be distributed to refugees.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Nuremberg-style tribunal needed to prosecute Putin for invasion - Starmer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-C2D1-JBNF-W1VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 10:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 525 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** The Labour leader said a tribunal would be the best way of trying the Russian leader for a 'crime of aggression'.

**Body**

A Nuremberg-style tribunal should be established to prosecute Vladimir Putin's regime over the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in a similar way to how the [*Nazis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazis) were tried, according to Labour's leader.

Sir Keir Starmer said a special tribunal was needed to close a "gap" in prosecuting Russia's unprovoked attack on its neighbour as a "crime of aggression".

The former director of public prosecutions said the move would let the Russian president know the "world will hold him to account" for what his troops are doing in Ukraine.

Labour said the [*International Criminal Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-criminal-court) (ICC), which has already started investigating Mr Putin's regime for war crimes, cannot investigate the crime of aggression because Russia has not ratified the statute of the court.

Any referral from the United Nations Security Council for the ICC to probe the potential charge would be likely to be vetoed by Moscow, the party said.

Sir Keir, speaking to reporters in Westminster, said: "Russia did not sign up to the provision for crimes of aggression, so therefore, under the existing provisions, that crime of aggression - going in without justification - can't be prosecuted.

"So this fills that gap with a new tribunal.

"It is what happened with [*Nuremberg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nuremberg) , so it is based on that model.

"It is very important that it is done now because events are unfolding on the ground and Putin and everyone else needs to know that the world will hold him to account."

The opposition leader also called on the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) to "get its act together" on providing a "safe route to sanctuary" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

It comes after the UK Government department revealed on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme, although updated figures on Monday said 300 had been confirmed.

"I'm very concerned with the complete mess the Government has got into in relation to refugees," Sir Keir said.

"There are echoes of Afghanistan here - lack of planning, the Government behind the curve.

"The Home Office just really needs to get its act together on this."

Sir Keir met Justin Trudeau during the Canadian prime minister's visit to the UK on Monday.

It was a pleasure to meet with [*@JustinTrudeau*](https://twitter.com/JustinTrudeau?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , for a productive conversation about our mutual solidarity with the Ukrainian people and our unshakeable commitment to NATO. Unity amongst democratic nations is vital in the face of Russian barbarism. [*pic.twitter.com/2J3BD6xif3*](https://t.co/2J3BD6xif3) - Keir Starmer (@Keir\_Starmer) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1500920169903927303?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The pair were joined by Canadian High Commissioner Ralph Goodale, Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner and shadow foreign secretary David Lammy.

Mr Trudeau and Sir Keir "reaffirmed their unshakeable commitment to Nato" during their discussion and "praised the work being done by UK and Canadian forces as part of the Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic states", according to Labour.

A spokesman added: "They spoke about the need for unity amongst democratic nations and to fight for our values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

"On energy security there was recognition of the need to go further and faster in the push for renewables to create the next generation of jobs."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office condemned for claim that Ireland's welcome for Ukraine refugees is UK security threat*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-TGX1-JBNF-W51P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 11:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 495 words

**Byline:** Rob Merrick

**Highlight:** Backlash against briefing that Ukrainians will be able to travel on to Britain without biometric checks

**Body**

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) has been condemned for "dirty propaganda" after protesting that [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) 's welcome for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) refugees is a security threat to the UK.

Dublin is expected to admit 100,000 refugees from the invasion, after joining the rest of the EU in easing visa rules - which the UK has refused to do, [*triggering chaos and mounting criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-visa-priti-patel-home-office-uk-b2030499.html).

The Home Office is already under fire for a series of false claims about its hardline stance, including that is offering help to people stranded in Calais without visas when there is none.

Now the UK is reported to have raised concerns about Ireland's liberal policy, claiming Ukrainians will be able to travel on to the UK without biometric checks because of the common travel area (CTA).

"Ireland has basically opened the door to everyone in Ukraine, which creates a problem due to the CTA," a government source told The Daily Telegraph.

"We've seen before with migrants from Albania that they have come through Dublin, into Belfast and across to the mainland to Liverpool. That's created a drug cartel route."

But it was quickly pointed out that the visa-free common travel area only applies to UK and Irish citizens, not to migrants from other countries.

Simon Cox, a barrister at the Doughty Street Chambers firm, attacked the claim that refugees would not face security checks - which Ireland has said will be carried out after arrival.

"Home Office anonymous dirty propaganda. Ireland has security checks on Ukrainians arriving without visas. Just as UK has for French people arriving without visas," he tweeted.

[*Donald Tusk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-tusk) , the former president of the European Council, poured scorn on [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) 's claim of being "very, very generous" to refugees.

"Solidarity in action. The UK has granted 50 visas to the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** while the Poles have welcomed 1.2 million Ukrainians in two weeks," he tweeted.

That number has now increased from 50 to 300, but it represents just 3.4 per cent of the 18,900 applications for visas made so far.

Meanwhile, officials in Calais have reported that almost 300 Ukrainians attempting to reach the UK have been turned away and told to go to Paris or Brussels to apply.

There is no Home Office team in Calais - despite [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) telling the Commons on Monday that "we have staff in Calais, we have support on the ground".

The home secretary sparked confusion by saying she is "investigating the legal options to create a humanitarian route" - but appeared to be talking about a scheme, already promised, for firms and individuals to sponsor refugees.

The UK is allowing family members to join Ukrainians already in this country, but has refused to copy the EU in offering asylum to all Ukrainians for three years.

[*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) is leading a group of nearly 40 Tory MPs who have signed a letter calling on the prime minister to "provide a more generous system for those fleeing the war"

He said: "1.7 million people have now fled and no one could possibly argue they don't have good cause."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Lufthansa: Flight bookings within Europe rise above pre-pandemic levels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-FNW1-JBNF-W03W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 8:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** TRAVEL,NEWS & ADVICE; Version:1

**Length:** 529 words

**Byline:** Simon Calder

**Highlight:** 'Our airlines connect people, cultures and economies. We stand for international understanding and peace' - Carsten Spohr, CEO, Lufthansa

**Body**

Germany's national airline says flight bookings for Easter and summer are "partially above pre-crisis levels" as travel restrictions are eased and passenger confidence returns.

[*Lufthansa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lufthansa) Group, which includes Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines and Swiss, says summer capacity on short-and medium-haul routes are almost back to 2019 levels.

The firm lost 1.8bn (£1.5bn) in 2021, excluding restructuring expenses - an average of £48 per second during the year. But that was barely one-third of the 5.2bn (£4.4bn) the previous year.

The chief executive, Carsten Spohr, said: "The Lufthansa Group used the past financial year to further renew itself. We have decisively and consistently advanced and implemented the transformation and restructuring of the company.

"Today, the Lufthansa Group is more efficient and more sustainable than before the pandemic.

"Even in the financially most difficult two years in our history, in which painful cuts were unavoidable, we acted in a socially responsible manner and sustainably secured 105,000 jobs in the Lufthansa Group.

"We are very certain that air traffic will experience a strong upswing this year. Our strategy of expanding the private travel segment has proved successful and is paying off.

"People want to travel. They seek and need personal contact - especially after two years of pandemic and the associated social restrictions. The pent-up demand for leisure and business travel was already significantly noticeable in 2021 -and this trend is set to intensify in 2022.

"We are now leaving the crisis behind us, mentally and - in view of the strong booking figures this year - also commercially and face the next challenge strengthened."

But Mr Spohr also spoke of "developments that worry us as citizens of this continent".

Addressing the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , he said: "Our airlines connect people, cultures and economies. We stand for international understanding and peace in Europe and around the world.

"Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine and with our colleagues on the ground, to whom we are providing every possible support."

In response to the results, Peter McNally of the research firm Third Bridge said: "Having just closed the books on a turbulent 2021 Lufthansa now faces another unpredictable outlook.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine has triggered sanctions and additional travel restrictions just as Europe was emerging from the Omicron variant."

"This is bound to sap the public's appetite for discretionary air travel. Conflict in Europe will dent consumer confidence and cause travellers to take a more sober look at their finances before booking flights."

"Lufthansa has managed through the last two years through cost cutting and capital injections, but the full recovery of the industry looks to be delayed once again."

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Third day of London travel chaos as Tube strike continues - follow live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/tube-strike-london-tfl-today-update-b2027449.html)

[*When are the tube strikes this week and which lines are affected?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/tube-strike-today-when-end-b2027434.html)

[*How can I get around London during the Tube strike?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/london-tube-strike-alternative-bus-train-b2027433.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*People are paying not to stay in Airbnbs to help Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XK-R771-JBNF-W4PT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 10:14 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:1

**Length:** 502 words

**Byline:** Lucy Thackray

**Highlight:** Airbnb waives fees so Ukrainian hosts receive maximum amount

**Body**

A trend for booking Airbnb apartments in Ukraine in order to send money directly to locals has started among industry workers and travel fans alike.

After the idea for booking [*the platform's rental apartments*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.airbnb.co.uk%2Fs%2Fukraine%2Fhomes&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/airbnb-booking-ukraine-donate-b2029209.html) -which transfers money straight to the renter -circulated online yesterday, Airbnb announced that it would waive all fees for bookings in the country.

More than a million Ukrainians have already been displaced following [*Russia's invasion of the country,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine-invasion-latest-news-b2020162.html) with many overseas looking for ways to help.

Sarah Archer, UK sales manager for Beachcomber tours, wrote on Twitter: "Booked a weekend in Kyiv on [Airbnb].

"Pick closest date, random apartment run by an individual not a company, book, pay and send a message of support while telling them you're a no show."

Airbnb announced a few hours later that it would waive both host and guest fees for bookings in Ukraine.

Another Twitter user, Mario DiMaggio, wrote: "HOW TO HELP -just booked a Kyiv AirBnb for one week, simply as a means of getting money directly into the hands of residents.

"It's really cheap and can make a small difference right now. Please share this idea."

Users of the rental platform can leave a message of support as they book a room anywhere in Ukraine -often at very cheap per-night rates -in order to donate money directly to a local.

"I will book my imaginary week tomorrow morning, l am amazed by the discovery of these new ways of solidarity, and support, thanks to everyone for the idea!" commented follower Susanna Antico.

Just made a booking, I got this message[*#Ukriane*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukriane?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#refugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/refugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0QusYockkC*](https://t.co/0QusYockkC) - Capricorn (@UnrealRated) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UnrealRated/status/1499637462179536903?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I just booked five and a tour. Feels so good to connect with Ukrainians directly," wrote @DominicaDailey."We appreciate the generosity of our community during this moment of crisis," said an Airbnb spokesperson."Airbnb is also waiving all guest and host fees on all bookings in Ukraine at this time."Airbnb's fees usually account for 3 to 15 per cent of a payment, but with these waived for Ukraine bookings, the owner will receive the full amount.The platform has more than 300 listings across Ukraine. On Monday, it set up a [*dedicated hub*](https://www.airbnb.org/help-ukraine) to help people abroad host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their spare rooms.Just made a booking -great idea. Just got this message back from the host.. [*pic.twitter.com/bL6W3KS1an*](https://t.co/bL6W3KS1an) - John Mitchell (@seagullsmitch) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/seagullsmitch/status/1499456836348616717?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It's worth noting that not all listings on Airbnb are owned by local residents -privately owned apartments and even big-brand hotel rooms can be listed on the platform.

Others on social media flagged concerns about verifying that listings are owned by Ukrainian locals, not by Russians or landlords abroad.

DiMaggio suggests finding a local's name as the contact and messaging them before booking. Many users have received heartfelt replies from apartment owners in the country.

"When this hell ends, we, with bread and salt and open arms, are waiting for you to visit peaceful Odessa!" wrote one Airbnb host.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Senator: Biden could seek over $10B for Ukraine, allies*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W0-0S41-DY4H-K0P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 10:41 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 529 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A leading Democratic senator says he thinks the Biden administration could ask Congress for $10 billion or more to finance the U.S. response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

The Biden administration is expected to ask [*Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) for a spending package that could significantly exceed $10 billion for the U.S. response to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , a leading Democratic senator said Friday.

The estimate by Sen. [*Chris Coons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chris-coons) , chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that controls foreign aid and State Department expenditures, provided an initial look at the costs American taxpayers could bear as a result of Russia's attack on its western neighbor.

Coons, D-Del., told reporters that he is expecting the request to cover the costs of helping millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who could flee to Poland and nearby NATO countries and supporting those nations' armed forces.

He also seemed to suggest that U.S. aid to Ukraine could continue should it fall to Russian forces, saying there is "strong enthusiasm" for providing money to resupply, train and "whatever other covert and overt support is necessary and appropriate for the Ukrainian resistance."

Coons said the money would also cover the expenses of monitoring and enforcing U.S. sanctions against Russia and for the Pentagon's bills for deploying the 7,000 additional American troops that President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has ordered be sent to Europe.

"I expect that there will be a supplemental request well above $10 billion," Coons told reporters, calling it "an initial guess."

Republican lawmakers would seem likely to strongly support money to help Ukraine and counter Russia, and Coons said he believed the request would get strong bipartisan backing. Spokespersons for leading Republicans did not immediately return requests for comment.

Coons spoke after returning from an extended trip to Germany, Poland and Lithuania, where he and other members of Congress discussed the crisis with European leaders.

Biden is expected to address the invasion during his State of the Union address to Congress on Tuesday.

Lawmakers, returning from a recess, plan to focus next week on writing bipartisan legislation financing federal agencies for the rest of this year. Leaders hope to approve that roughly $1.5 trillion measure by March 11, when money temporarily financing government will run out.

It was initially unclear whether the Ukraine money would be part of that broader budget legislation, if not how quickly it would move and whether lawmakers would attempt to attach additional U.S. sanctions against Russia.

Earlier this week, Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., who chairs the House Appropriations subcommittee overseeing foreign aid, said the administration was expecting to need at least $1 billion for humanitarian assistance and another $1 billion in loan guarantees for economic support.

With lawmakers trying to wrap up budget work, administration officials have already informally told Congress that they'd like an additional $30 billion to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. That would include money for vaccines, testing and covering care for the uninsured.

That proposal has drawn strong opposition from the GOP and is expected to face an uphill climb to survive. Republicans say the administration should instead use unspent funds from multi-trillion COVID-19 relief measures already enacted.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hill Dems, GOP show signs of backing $6.4B for Ukraine aid*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WX-2T21-DY4H-K3R5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 11:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 556 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Congressional Democrats and Republicans are showing signs of support for providing $6.4 billion or more in aid to Ukraine and its European neighbors

**Body**

[*Congressional*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) and Republicans showed signs of support Tuesday for providing $6.4 billion or more in aid to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and its European neighbors as Russian forces intensified their attacks on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities.

Lawmakers were hoping Congress could approve the assistance by the end of next week, possibly by adding it to a bipartisan, roughly $1.5 trillion bill financing federal agencies for the rest of this year.

Biden administration officials told congressional aides last week that their request includes $3.5 billion for the Defense Department and $2.9 billion for humanitarian assistance for the hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to nearby countries. Some Democrats said that total could grow to $10 billion or more.

"There's broad support for the president and what he's doing now," Senate Minority Leader [*Mitch McConnell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mitch-mcconnell) , R-Ky., said of President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) 's handling of the crisis. "Our biggest complaint is, what took him so long?" he added, saying providing more support earlier "might have deterred heavy aggression in advance."

McConnell complained that bargainers had "hit a snag." He said Democrats wanted to carve the defense assistance for Ukraine from the military spending in the larger $1.5 trillion government-wide legislation, but add the humanitarian aid on top of that measure's domestic programs. "We're not going to do that. This is an emergency," McConnell said.

But congressional support for helping Ukraine and financing government agencies is strong and bipartisan, and the problem seemed unlikely to cause serious problems. Some Democrats denied McConnell's description and said the extra defense and humanitarian spending for Ukraine would be treated the same.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., did not respond with specifics when asked about the dispute.

"We should be bipartisan on this issue. Nothing would make Putin happier than having Democrats and Republicans" divided, Schumer said. He said earlier congressional efforts to impose sanctions on Russia before it invaded Ukraine, backed by lawmakers from both parties, "would have torn the alliance apart," a reference to widespread international opposition to Russia's attack.

Schumer said bargainers were working on "a bipartisan, robust aid package with both military and security needs" and that "very good discussions" were underway. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said his chamber could vote on the legislation next Tuesday. The Senate would follow.

With Russia's military superiority suggesting it might achieve a quick victory, several senators said they'd like Congress to approve the Ukraine aid this week. "It's so fast moving that the sooner we can get assistance, the better," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine. But she and others who attended briefings from administration officials said the briefers had not expressed an urgency that the aid be approved this week.

"There is very possibly a limited window in which you can get weapons" to the Ukrainians, said Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. But the need for humanitarian aid will be "ongoing," Murphy said.

Others said that practically speaking, there was little chance of Congress approving the aid before next week.

"As soon as you can here is never as quick as you and I both think it should be," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine ally Kallas fights for reelection in Estonia vote*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67P6-SJD1-DY4H-K23N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2023 Saturday 7:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 652 words

**Byline:** Jari Tanner

**Highlight:** Estonia is holding a general election Sunday that will determine whether it can sustain its high level of support for war-torn Ukraine

**Body**

Estonia, which is providing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) with more weapons than any other country relative to its economic might, is holding a general election Sunday that will determine whether it can sustain that high level of support.

Prime Minister [*Kaja Kallas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kaja-kallas) , 45, has emerged in the past year of war as one of Europe's most outspoken supporters of Ukraine. She's seeking a second term, with her standing enhanced by her international appeals to impose sanctions on [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow).

A Baltic nation of 1.3 million people that borders Russia to the east, Estonia broke away from the Soviet Union in 1991 and has taken a clear Western course, joining NATO and the European Union.

Polls indicate Kallas' center-right Reform Party is likely to win more votes than any other party. Her main challenger is Martin Helme, head of the nationalist EKRE party that faults Kallas for the country's inflation rate of 18.6% — one of the EU's highest — and accuses her of undermining Estonia's own defenses by giving weapons to Ukraine.

Kallas argues it's in her country's direct interests to help Kyiv.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine sparked fears in Tallinn that a Russian victory could embolden Moscow to switch its attentions to other countries it controlled in Soviet times, including Baltic nations Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — now all NATO members.

"We face (Parliament) elections at a very difficult time," Kallas told party officials in a recent speech. “The war (in Ukraine) continues and it leaves its mark on the whole of Europe, indeed the whole world. I don’t know when the war will end ... but I know it won’t end with a victory for (Russian President Vladimir) Putin.”

She said Russia was unlikely to “ever again” become a reliable partner, adding that Estonians “have to get used to the idea that we live in the neighborhood of a terrorist pariah state and that we must not lose our vigilance for a moment.”

Kallas argues that Estonia’s defenses remain strong as the United States and other NATO allies have supplied top-notch weapons like the HIMARS rocket system to compensate for the older material that is being donated to Ukraine.

As well as weapons, Estonia is providing Kyiv with substantial humanitarian assistance and has welcomed more than 60,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The populist EKRE, which runs largely on an anti-EU and anti-immigration platform, has called for a cap on the number of refugees from Ukraine, saying Estonia can't cope with so many people.

Kallas, in office since 2021, is part of a generation of young women who rose to the top of international politics in recent years and became strong voices for Ukraine.

Along with Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, Kallas has strongly condemned Russian atrocities in Ukraine and called on the Western world not to succumb to the Kremlin's nuclear threats.

Five parties are currently represented in Estonia's 101-seat legislature. Many Estonians have already voted electronically, casting votes from their computers.

Kallas' Reform Party heads the current three-party coalition government with the small conservative Fatherland party and the Social Democrats. Polls indicate EKRE — which is strong in rural areas — would likely take second place on Sunday, followed by the Center Party that's traditionally favored by Estonia’s sizable ethnic Russian minority.

Nevertheless, if Kallas’ coalition partners do poorly on Sunday, her opponents could still end up in a stronger position to form a government.

Political analyst Tonis Saarts says Kallas got off to a rocky start as prime minister due to bickering with other parties, but believes her image has been boosted domestically by her strong statements on the international stage in support of Ukraine.

“It has made Kallas much stronger and increased her authority in domestic politics as well,” said Saarts, an associate professor in comparative politics at Tallinn University.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis opens up about childhood move from Ukraine to New York -and why she hates pizza*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66H0-N9X1-JBNF-W455-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 29, 2022 Thursday 4:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 507 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** Kunis was born in 1983 in the city of Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) has opened up about her family’s move from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to the United States when she was just seven years old, and why she now hates pizza as a result.

The Black Swan actor, 39, made an appearance on [*Jimmy Kimmel Live!*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnvyYhgqxy4) on Wednesday evening, where she spoke about her brief stay in [*New York City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-york-city) after she left her home of Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine.

“I was born in Ukraine but when I came to the states, I came through New York,” she said, with cheers from the audience. This week, New York-native Jimmy Kimmel returned to his hometown to host a series of shows at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Howard Gilman Opera House.

“Except, I think it was, like, Queens,” Kunis continued. “And then you’re put up in a hotel to go through your medical checks to make sure you can be entered into the country. But it’s next to a cemetery, this is what I remember.”

While the Friends With Benefits star could only recall a cemetery across the street from the “weird” hotel she was in with her family, she did remember that it was the first time she ever had a burger and Coca-Cola soda.

“What I recall is a cemetery across the street and this weird hotel that I was in, but I did have a burger for the first time in New york and a Coca-Cola,” she said.

Kimmel noted that Kunis had a “pretty great memory”, before asking whether she had pizza for the first time in New York as well.

“Are you ready?” Kunis said, anticipating boos from the crowd of New Yorkers in the audience. “No.”

Kunis was then teased by the audience for her opinions on pizza, but tried to make up for it by sharing that her father worked as a Dominos Pizza delivery man when they moved to Los Angeles. However, that only elicited more boos from the audience, who suggested that New York pizza is superior to the pies in Los Angeles.

The That 70’s Show alum went on to say that due to her father’s job, she grew to hate pizza because it was all her family ate at the time.

“I had it every day for a year, possibly more,” she explained. “It was too much. Because we were so poor, my dad would make us pizza for dinner, and he tried really hard to get creative but you can only be so creative.”

“My brother came out of it loving pizza and my mom and I to this day are like, ‘Ugh, pizza,’” she added. “I’ll choke it down because my kids like pizza, my husband likes pizza, but I’m never the person that goes, ‘You know what I feel like? Pizza.’”

However, Kunis’ husband and notorious prankster, Ashton Kutcher, decided to give his wife a pizza oven for their anniversary. “But here’s the irony, guys. My husband for our anniversary got me a pizza oven,” she said, laughing. “Now not only do I not like pizza, I make them!”

Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher were married in 2015 and share two children – Wyatt, seven, and Dimitri, five. Earlier this year, the couple [*raised nearly $35m for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/zelensky-mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-b2040240.html) amid Russia’s ongoing invasion of the country.

Because of her humanitarian efforts, Mila Kunis was recently included on [*Time*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/time-100-list-influential-2022-b2085518.html) magazine’s list of 100 most influential people of 2022.

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*‘Please don’t forget us’ – Welsh Parliament stages solidarity with Ukraine event*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67N6-K8C1-DY4H-K50C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2023 Monday 6:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 589 words

**Byline:** Bronwen Weatherby

**Highlight:** Ukrainians, host families and dignitaries gathered in the Senedd to mark one year since the Russian conflict began.

**Body**

Dozens of Ukrainians, host families and dignitaries from across Wales have gathered at the Welsh Parliament to show continuing support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) more than a year on since the Russian invasion.

The peace and solidarity for Ukraine event was held at the [*Senedd*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senedd) in Cardiff Bay on Monday and heard from a number of speakers.

Minister for social change Jane Hutt told Ukrainian guests: “This is your home for as long as you need it.”

The leader of the Ukrainian Catholic community in the UK, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, relayed a request from those still stuck inside the conflict: “Please, please do not forget us.”

Please, please continue to support us. We need your help. Only together we can make Ukraine victorious in 2023

Svitlana Phillips, Voice of Ukraine Wales

In an emotional speech, Svitlana Phillips, from Voice of Ukraine Wales, urged people to continue supporting Ukraine, and said: “We hope one day that we can repay you.”

Ms Phillips said: “The past year has been a rollercoaster of emotions for each of us.

“Fear, anger, pride, hope and, of course, gratitude and appreciation for the kindness, love and hospitality we’ve received.

“But please, please continue to support us. We need your help. Only together we can make Ukraine victorious in 2023.”

Also at the event were the Senedd speaker, Elin Jones, the Welsh Government’s Counsel General Mick Antoniw, the Lord [*Mayor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mayor) of Cardiff Councillor Graham Hinchey and the High Sheriff of South Glamorgan Rosaleen Moriarty-Simmonds.

Musician sisters Kateryna and Lisa Kalianova played traditional songs to attendees before and after the ceremony.

Speaking afterwards, mother-of-one, Lana Kovalova, who found sanctuary for herself, her son and mother with a family in Chepstow, South Wales, said she had been in tears listening to the speakers.

“It was very emotional for us and we cried because it’s very hard for us all the time, we’re so worried about what’s going to happen,” Ms Kovalova said.

She said she left Ukraine to protect her 11-year-old son, Matvii, after continued air strikes had made the country too dangerous.

“It was a hard decision for us to leave, but it is no place for children right now,” she added.

“We now feel supported and safe. We have a beautiful family and we’re trying to live and be happy.

“And we can do this because of the support of your country and your people.”

It's been an absolute pleasure to have them in my home

Caroline Harvey

The family’s hosts Caroline and Alex [*Harvey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harvey) said they would encourage others to open their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Mrs Harvey said: “If you’ve got a room, think about a family that could be in there warm, safe and no longer having to run.

“It’s been an absolute pleasure to have them in my home.

“The whole experience I feel has changed me, I feel a better person.”

Rosemary Toll, who lives in Pentrefelin, Gwynedd, North Wales, had a similar message.

The law lecturer at Aberystwyth University and her husband [*John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john) , a software engineer, have had three generations of one family living with them since May last year.

She said: “If you are somebody who has been thinking about sponsoring but thinks maybe ‘nobody is looking for a sponsor now, the war started a year ago’, I’d say there’s probably more need than ever right now for people to open their homes.

“We must not forget that as things progress and worsen in different cities, towns and regions, that people will want, naturally, to find safety.”

Despite saying it was “nerve-racking” to begin with she said the benefit has been to be able to make a “real difference”.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Love blossoms in Serbia between Ukrainian, Russian 'enemies'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67JC-9CD1-DY4H-K3G8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 14, 2023 Tuesday 7:46 AM GMT

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**Length:** 613 words

**Byline:** Jovana Gec

**Highlight:** She is Ukrainian, he is Russian

**Body**

She is from Ukraine and he is from Russia. Their love blossomed online, but with their nations at war, the odds of carrying on their relationship were stacked against them. Even so, it didn't take long for the young couple to beat the odds.

Mariia Vyhivska and Iurii Kurochkin, now both 23, fell in love while playing an online video game. But Russia's invasion of its neighbor threatened to scuttle their relationship before it even got off the ground. They boldly turned their backs on the war-engendered enmity pervading their homelands and chose to be together.

Vyhivska was living in Zvyagel, near Ukraine's capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , and Kurochkin in St. Petersburg in Russia. Despite the seemingly insurmountable distance, the couple didn't give up.

“It wasn't hard,” said Vyhivska, smiling. “I wasn't afraid, not at all. I am happy. Because I am loved.”

Kurochkin recalled how the couple started making plans to meet in person.

“It was a year ago ... I started to organize my international passport, to visit Mariia in Ukraine." recalled Kurochkin. "I finished it in January, and as you know, the war started in February and it crashed all our plans.”

It seemed that all hope of meeting evaporated amid the Russian onslaught in Ukraine that drew global condemnation and saw millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** stream out of the country.

Vyhivska and Kurochkin were at a loss. She moved to Czechia soon after the war started while he stayed at home in Russia. But they didn't give up. They started sizing up “some options to live together," said Kurochkin.

The answer turned out to be Serbia, a fellow-Slavic nation in the Balkans that remained friendly with Russia, and where Russians could enter without a visa. Serbia's capital [*Belgrade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgrade) was where Vyhivska and Kurochkin met for the first time.

“I arrived to Serbia on 27th of April and I waited for her for several days,” he said. “She arrived from the Czech Republic and we met each other at the central bus station."

He was all that she imagined, said Vyhivska.

“There was this moment of unbelievable joy,” she said. “I traveled for 16 hours and had no sleep, I couldn't sleep. So, I came out of the bus and I fell into his arms.”

Their new life together began in that instant. A hostel served as their first abode before the couple found a small flat in a Belgrade suburb. They took up various jobs while pursing IT studies online at a St. Petersburg university.

[*Life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/life) together hasn't been without its problems. Last July pro-Russian extremists in Serbia drew a huge Z sign — a symbol of Russia’s invasion — on their building and assailants broke into their flat. They were also attacked by a group of hooligans, Kurochkin said.

An estimated 200,000 Russians and some 20,000 Ukrainians have come to Serbia in the past year. Many Russians set up businesses in the Balkan country, which has refused to join Western sanctions against Russia despite seeking European Union membership.

“We talk about the war sometimes but we don’t have any problems between each other,” said Kurochkin. “With other people, of course (we have), because there are a lot of people, there are a lot of points of view, so it is impossible to handle them all.”

For Vyhivska, the biggest concern has been how she'll be perceived by fellow Ukrainians because of her relationship, even through own family has no objections at all.

“What happens next? We'll see,” she said. “We don't know what happens tomorrow, there is danger even of nuclear war, they are frightening us with that now. I can't look too far ahead.”

Kurochkin said they will just take things as they come: “We are happy because we are together.”

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Find more [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) coverage at https: apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine

**Load-Date:** February 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Mass refugee reception centres ‘considered for Ukrainians arriving in Scotland’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6697-8PK1-DY4H-K07X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 2, 2022 Friday 4:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 599 words

**Byline:** Hannah Carmichael

**Highlight:** Dormitory-style emergency accommodation in halls could also be created as part of the emergency measures, a newspaper reported.

**Body**

Mass refugee reception centres could be opened in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) to temporarily house thousands fleeing the war in Ukraine, it has been suggested.

Preparations for a “worst-case scenario” – where almost 18,000 people from Ukraine could arrive after being granted super sponsor visas – are being considered by government officials, the Scotsman reported on Friday.

Dormitory-style emergency accommodation in halls could also be created as part of the emergency measures, the newspaper said.

The Scottish Government’s super sponsor scheme was paused in July in order to provide safe accommodation to those who had already applied following unprecedented demand.

At the time the scheme was suspended, visa applications listing the [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) as a sponsor had increased by 21% while arrivals under the super sponsor scheme had gone up by 20%.

The report claimed there are now concerns that huge numbers of those who have been granted a visa but have not yet travelled to Scotland could still arrive in the country at a time where many are still waiting to be matched to suitable longer-term accommodation.

A full review of the situation is not due to be published for a number of weeks.

It comes as a second cruise ship chartered to provide accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arrived in [*Glasgow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/glasgow) on Thursday.

The MS Ambition, located at King George V docks on the River Clyde, will provide shelter for up to 1,750 people in 714 cabins and has restaurants, child play facilities, shops and communal spaces.

It joins the MS [*Victoria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/victoria) , which is currently housing hundreds of Ukrainians in Leith, Edinburgh.

Earlier this week, Scottish Government minister Neil Gray said he was working to “maximise” all options for long-term accommodation.

A Scottish Government spokesman said: “The Scottish Government continues to explore all options to ensure that there is sufficient and safe accommodation for any displaced people from Ukraine arriving in Scotland.

The welfare of all displaced Ukrainians staying across the country remains the Scottish Government’s absolute priority

Scottish Government spokesman

“This includes contingency plans for emergency accommodation as well as increasing temporary accommodation, by for example getting the second ship, which has now docked in Glasgow, prepared to safely host displaced people from Ukraine.

“The welfare of all displaced Ukrainians staying across the country remains the Scottish Government’s absolute priority.

“Almost 16,000 displaced people have arrived with a sponsor located in Scotland, the most per head of any of the four nations across the UK.

“This represents 18% of all UK arrivals with more than three-quarters of these arrivals coming through the successful super sponsor scheme.”

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton said: “When the Russian invasion happened, the Nicola Sturgeon spin machine leapt in to action to promise the world.

“Unfortunately, just like every other [*SNP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/snp) promise, once the press conference was done, actually doing the hard work of securing housing didn’t seem quite so important.

“As a result, we are facing the prospect of Hurricane Katrina-esque scenes of refugees crammed into sports halls.

“It certainly means Scottish Government claims that the use of cruise ships is merely a temporary solution is dead in the water.

“The Scottish Government needs to launch a fresh public call for homes and hosts, and increase support for local authorities to conduct disclosure checks of hosts, vetting of accommodation and matching of guests.

“The people fleeing here from Ukraine need long-term solutions, not short-term fixes.”

**Load-Date:** September 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*European summit opens in Moldova with Ukraine war, regional conflicts on agenda*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68C6-63B1-DY4H-K3BC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 1, 2023 Thursday 7:47 AM GMT

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**Length:** 708 words

**Byline:** Justin Spike

**Highlight:** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has arrived at a sprawling summit of some 50 European leaders in Moldova, becoming the focal point of an event that seeks to quell regional conflicts and shore up unity in the face of Russia’s war

**Body**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy arrived at a sprawling summit of some 50 European leaders in Moldova on Thursday, becoming the focal point of an event that seeks to quell regional conflicts and shore up unity in the face of Russia’s war.

The meeting of the European Political Community, a pan-continental gathering of heads of state and government from 47 countries, brings together leaders from [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) nations and others to the 27-member bloc's south and east — a region pushed to a turning point in its relationship with Moscow by Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last year.

The EU, represented at the summit by the bloc's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel, wants to use the summit to reach out to many Eastern European countries that spent decades either within the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) or under its immediate sphere of influence, and to bolster the continent’s unified response to Russian aggression.

The choice to hold the summit in Moldova, a former Soviet republic of around 2.6 million people, is seen as a message to the Kremlin both from the EU and the pro-Western Moldovan government, which received EU candidate status in June of last year at the same time as Ukraine.

Moldova, Europe’s poorest country which is cradled by Ukraine on three sides, aspires to join the EU by the end of the decade, and has consistently signaled its support for Ukraine and taken in refugees fleeing the war.

Speaking from the summit venue, a 19th-century castle and vineyard around 35 kilometers (21 miles) from the capital, Chisinau, Moldovan President Maia Sandu said a major aim of the summit was “restoring peace on the continent” and protecting democracy in Moldova and Ukraine from threats posed by Russia.

“We need to reconfirm our support for Ukraine as it resists Russian aggression,” she said. “Ukraine keeps Moldova safe today, and we are very, very grateful for that.”

Zelenskyy, the first foreign leader to arrive at Thursday's summit, entered an expansive courtyard of the castle in his trademark olive green shirt and cargo pants before meeting with Sandu on a red carpet.

He thanked the Moldovan people for hosting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and said both Ukraine and Moldova were destined to work “shoulder to shoulder” for EU membership.

“What is very important: our future in the EU,” he said, adding that his country is ready to enter NATO whenever the Western military alliance is ready to accept it.

"I think security guarantees are very important, not only for Ukraine, but for our neighbors, for Moldova, because of Russian aggression in Ukraine and potential aggression in other parts of Europe," Zelenskyy said.

Other summit participants include German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Scholz and Macron will join European Council President Michel for one of the summit's major meetings: discussions with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, two former Soviet Caucasian neighbor nations that have fought wars over a contested territory.

That territory, Nagorno-Karabakh, was the site of a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020 that killed more than 6,000 people. The war ended in a Russia-brokered armistice under which Armenia relinquished territories surrounding the region.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan, but ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia had controlled the region and surrounding territories since 1994. Recent negotiations between the two nations over the territory have raised hopes that a breakthrough could come at the Moldova summit.

Another lighting rod will be the recent flareup in ethnic tensions between neighboring Serbia and Kosovo, whose leaders are also expected at the summit. NATO has announced it will send 700 more troops to northern Kosovo to help quell violent protests after clashes with ethnic Serbs there left 30 international soldiers wounded this week.

The latest violence in the region has stirred fear of a renewal of the 1998-99 conflict in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives, left more than 1 million people homeless and resulted in a NATO peacekeeping mission that has lasted nearly a quarter of a century.

**Load-Date:** June 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[*A-level results: Ukrainian student studying in Britain as father fights on front line earns four A grades*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6662-WKR1-DY4H-K1XH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 18, 2022 Thursday 10:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 523 words

**Byline:** Jane Dalton

**Highlight:** ‘I cannot think too deeply about my father as it would drive me mad with worry, but I am very proud of him,’ says 18-year-old

**Body**

A Ukrainian teenager has achieved four A grades at A-level in Britain and has been offered a place at a prestigious university while his father fights against Russian forces on the front line.

Zorian Tytych, 18, from [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , said he cannot bear to think too much about his father because he would worry too much.

The teenager studied for his GCSEs and [*A-levels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/a-levels) at Cardiff Sixth Form College in [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) , while his family remained in the war-torn country.

His father signed up to the Ukrainian military the day after Vladimir Putin’s army invaded the country on 24 February, and is now on the Belarus border.

His cousin is also fighting, and his uncle is signing up.

Mr Tytych’s mother was forced to flee Kyiv to Lviv in western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for a month.

But despite fearing for his family, he earned top grades in physics, maths, biology and chemistry and will read biological sciences at [*Durham University*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/durham-university).

Mr Tytych has also found time to do voluntary translation for families in Cardiff who have taken in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“Before the war started, my mother and father were lawyers,” he said.

“Dad was on the Ukrainian committee for judicial reform, taking things up to European Union level.

“He joined the military the day after the war started, signing up to the territorial defence and receiving basic training.

“He did this because he wanted to protect his home and support his country.

“As the war has progressed, he has moved on. He has been assigned to the military and is now seeing active service on the front line.”

Mr Tytych said his father was on the Belarus border where he looks at routes, surveillance and communication and connecting regiments and their communities.

“My cousin is doing the same and is now based near Kherson, where he is right in the thick of it and all the shelling,” he said.

“My uncle is currently in the recruitment process for joining the army.”

He added: “I cannot think too deeply about my father as it would drive me mad with worry, but I am very proud of him.

“I know he would feel it was a disgrace if he didn’t join the army.

“But I cannot think about it too much as it just makes me really concerned.”

Over the summer, Mr Tytych joined a British army training programme to become a translator.

“Britain now has 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers receiving training from the British army here in the UK and they need translators and helpers,” he said.

Cardiff Sixth Form College principal Gareth Collier said: “We have received glowing reports from the host family who described him ‘as an example of an outstanding, selfless individual willing to help others where he can’.

“He has been an active member of the school community, and we are delighted that he is able to continue his education here in the UK with these tremendous results.”

A-level results across the UK have dropped from last year but are still higher than the last time pupils took exams.

A near-record number [*were accepted into their preferred or second-choice university*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/a-levels-results-released-grades-university-b2147450.html).

The overall pass rate fell to 98.4 per cent from 99.5 per cent last year, when grades were awarded by teachers.

In 2019, the proportion of entries awared A\* to E grades was 97.6 per cent.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government urged to double £350 payments for Ukrainian refugee hosts or risk mass homelessness*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:665T-S0T1-DY4H-K0TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 17, 2022 Wednesday 3:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 594 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** One in four hosts plan to end arrangement due to cost of living pressures – as Treasury urged to boost payments

**Body**

The government has been urged to consider proposals to double the £350 payment to British families hosting Ukrainians, amid growing fears that thousands of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) could be left homeless.

It comes as more than a thousand hosts of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have signed an open letter urging ministers to make it easier for them to move on into permanent homes.

Around 79,000 refugees came to Britain under the Homes For [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) sponsorship scheme, after hosts agreed to provide accommodation for at least six months – but some placements are approaching their end.

Almost one in four hosts were planning to end the hosting arrangement at the end of six months, according to recent ONS figures – with many people citing pressure from the cost of living crisis.

The letter from the hosts – organised Sanctuary Foundation – echoed calls from the Local Government Association (LGA) to increase the £350 a month “thank you” payment, which would help hosts provide accommodation for longer than six months.

A source close to the scheme told PoliticsHome that the Treasury has been presented with a proposal to increase the payment to £700 for all hosts willing to extend their welcome beyond the six months to stop refugees from being left homeless.

The source told the website that they hoped an increase could be signed-off in the coming weeks, despite the change of prime minister on 5 September.

The proposal is said to have been put forward “not on moral grounds, purely on financial grounds”, since the doubling of payments would be less expensive than housing refugees declared homeless.

The government is continuing to monitor and review the support provided under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, it is understood.

Already, more than 1,300 Ukrainian single households and families have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness, as of 2 July.

Some hosting arrangements have broken down, and some of the housing provided to refugees proved to be unsuitable. Councils fear that homelessness could rise as more of the initial six-month placements with some hosts end.

The Sanctuary Foundation, which organised the letter from around 1,200 hosts, said finding appropriate and affordable long-term accommodation “is one of the greatest challenges” to the scheme.

The government has been warned that “there is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes” amid pressures on social housing and the private rented sector.

The hosts’ letter reads: “As hosts who care deeply about the future of the Ukrainians in our homes, we ask the government to help us ensure they are able to take the next steps towards integration in our communities.

“There is currently no simple way for them to find their own homes, with social housing and the private rental sector already stretched and difficult to access.”

The group called for the government to take a series of practical steps to help refugees find permanent accommodation, including for Universal Credit housing allowance to be topped up for 12 months to enable refugees to remain in their local area.

They are calling for local authorities to be guarantors for those trying to rent a home, and for the government to outline a clear re-matching process and to recruit more hosts.

The letter adds: “Knowing that our guests can move on swiftly and safely when they and we are ready to do so will make a big difference, and will reduce stress for those who have already faced so much trauma fleeing a war, as well as for those of us hosting them.”

The Independent has approached the Treasury for comment.

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Seven cities shortlisted to host Eurovision Song Contest 2023*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664P-R6F1-DY4H-K07T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 12, 2022 Friday 9:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 630 words

**Byline:** Ellie Iorizzo

**Highlight:** The European Broadcasting Union previously decided the event cannot be held in Ukraine following Russia’s invasion.

**Body**

[*Birmingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/birmingham) , [*Glasgow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/glasgow) and Leeds are among the seven cities shortlisted to host the Eurovision Song Contest 2023 in place of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

They will battle it out alongside Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield in the next stage of the bidding process to host the 67th Eurovision Song Contest.

Ukrainian entry Kalush Orchestra triumphed at this year’s competition in Turin, Italy, but the [*European Broadcasting Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-broadcasting-union) (EBU), which produces the annual event, decided the event cannot be held in the war-torn country following Russia’s invasion.

Introducing the Sensational Seven! One of these cities will host [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 2023!‍ Find out more right here: [*https://t.co/xQJO6meK1W*](https://t.co/xQJO6meK1W) [*pic.twitter.com/wVsmy3cDUh*](https://t.co/wVsmy3cDUh) — Eurovision Song Contest (@Eurovision) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Eurovision/status/1557996650236370946?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The UK was given the chance to host Eurovision for the ninth time, more than any other country, after Sam Ryder came second in the competition.London was one of the 20 cities who submitted an “expression of interest” to host, with applicants demonstrating how they would reflect Ukrainian culture, music and communities.Scott Mills joined Zoe Ball on her BBC Two Breakfast show to announce the shortlist of host cities, alongside Eurovision executive supervisor Martin Osterdahl.Mr Osterdahl said: “We’ve waited 25 years for Eurovision to be hosted in the UK, so very excited.”After the announcement, Mills said: “It’s huge, it’s a beast and it’s complicated as an event to put on.Eurovision 2023 will be hosted in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [*pic.twitter.com/SaW8iUlWaR*](https://t.co/SaW8iUlWaR) — Eurovision Song Contest (@Eurovision) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Eurovision/status/1557999736640180224?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “But also it’s cities who have the passion to put on a contest like this, because of time, past experience with huge international events and also being able to host a celebration of modern music.“The next thing that happens, these cities go through to the second and final stage, they have to give a bit more detail about their plans.“The final, final decision gets made based on what city and region scores highest against the BBC’s criteria.”Reacting to news that Birmingham is on the shortlist, city council leader Ian Ward said he is “delighted” and that the city “would love the honour of hosting”.It’s got to be Glasgow! [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#TeamGlasgow*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TeamGlasgow?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/YaTsrPYQU2*](https://t.co/YaTsrPYQU2) — Nicola Sturgeon (@NicolaSturgeon) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon/status/1557998034927116288?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon tweeted: “It’s got to be Glasgow!”

The BBC, which broadcasts the contest in the UK, and the EBU made the shortlist selection based on the cities’ “capacity, capability and experience to host an event of this scale and complexity”.

The winner will need a large events space, suitable accommodation and international transport links for the competing countries and their delegations.

Kate Phillips, the BBC’s director of unscripted content, said: “We would like to thank all of the cities and regions that submitted bids to host next year’s Eurovision Song Contest. We have seven fantastic cities who we are taking through to the next round.”

“Congratulations to Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield – it’s exciting to see such a breadth of bids going through from across the UK.

“We are committed to delivering a truly unique Song Contest that celebrates wonderful Ukraine and champions British music and creativity in all its diversity.”

Ukraine will automatically qualify for the Eurovision grand final alongside the so-called big five nations – the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain – who each get a free pass because of their financial contributions to the event.

On Friday, UK-based think tank and charity British Future called for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their UK host families to be given “priority tickets” to Eurovision 2023.

The host city is expected to be announced by the autumn.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rishi Sunak says immigration is ‘too high’ but says he won’t ‘put a number’ on plan to cut it*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688D-R4P1-JBNF-W3R8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 19, 2023 Friday 8:41 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:6

**Length:** 676 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** But prime minister suggests he wants to cut migration to below the 500,000 level he inherited

**Body**

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) has said he believes migration into Britain is “too high” and indicated he wants to bring the level down to below the level he “inherited”.

The prime minister insisted he would not “put a number” on a target but suggested he could cut numbers to below the level when he took the job – around 500,000.

But Downing Street dismissed speculation the half a million figure would be set in stone and said the PM was not committed to a specific targets. Mr Sunak also declined to commit to cutting numbers by the general election, which is expected next year.

The PM is under pressure after apparently abandoning a Tory manifesto commitment to reduce net migration to 2019 levels, of around 226,000.

The figure exceeded 500,000 in the year to June 2022 – roughly doubling, and new figures due in the coming weeks are widely expected to show a further increase.

Home secretary [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) has been publicly pushing for lower immigration, but Mr Sunak has taken a more pragmatic approach and said more people are required to fill labour shortages in industries like fruit picking.

“I’m not going to put a precise figure on it but I do want to bring them down,” the prime minister told BBC News,

“The numbers are too high and we want to bring them down. Now, the numbers last year were impacted by the fact that we welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to the UK. Again, that’s something I think we are proud of.”

During a round of interviews at Hiroshima’s Seifukan tea house before attending the G7 summit, Mr Sunak said he is “crystal clear” he wants to reduce net migration.

Pressed by broadcaster Sky News about whether he would bring numbers below 500,000 by the next election, he said:

“I’m committed to bringing down the levels of migration that I inherited, and I’m relentlessly focused on stopping the boats, that’s one of my five priorities, and we’re doing absolutely everything we can to do that.”

Asked about the 500,000 figure a No 10 spokesperson said Mr Sunak would “take stock” of figures in the coming months but noted that the PM specifically said he would not set a target.

“[The prime minister] said specifically ‘I won’t put a number on it’. We don’t know what the numbers will be next week and it’s right we take stock of those,” Downing Street said.

“But of course, the Prime Minister speaks to his Cabinet colleagues and the Home Secretary specifically, they’ve worked incredibly closely on the ‘stop the boats’ Bill and the work the Government’s taking forward to try and tackle illegal immigration.”

“Of course the Prime Minister will work closely with Cabinet ministers on the ambition to reduce overall migration.”

The 2019 Conservative manifesto promised that “overall numbers will come down” as the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) ends freedom of movement in the wake of Brexit.

But the reduction in immigration, a key issue in the 2016 Brexit referendum, has not materialised.

Despite some polls showing softening public attitudes to immigration compared to previous years, the issue has also moved up the political agenda following an increase in small boats arriving on England’s southern coast.

Mr Sunak raised migration with allies at a Council of Europe meeting in Iceland on Tuesday and said he believes he made “another big step forward” with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen to discuss the UK working with the bloc’s border force, Frontex.

Labour meanwhile said immigration could need to increase in the "short term" to fill skills gaps in the UK economy.

"What we would see if we had an immigration system that was working properly would be potentially in some areas where there's a short-term need for skills, you could see in the short term actually people who are coming in increasing in number," party chair Anneliese Dodds told Sky News on Friday.

"But in the medium and long-term, a reduction, because we would be training people up in our own country.

"We've not had that unfortunately under the Conservatives. We've got skills shortages and those shortages are not being filled because there's not the domestic upskilling that needs to be taking place."

**Load-Date:** May 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Sandi Toksvig writes powerful letter to Archbishop Justin Welby on gay sex is sin declaration*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6631-YXD1-JBNF-W376-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 4, 2022 Thursday 2:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:3

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** Ellie Harrison

**Highlight:** ‘The lives of LGBT+ people are at stake here,’ wrote broadcaster and author

**Body**

[*Sandi Toksvig*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sandi-toksvig) has condemned Archbishop of Canterbury [*Justin Welby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-welby) after he “affirmed the validity” of a 1998 declaration that [*gay sex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gay-sex) is a sin.

In a speech made at the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference, to over 650 bishops, the leader of the global Anglican Church said: “For many churches, to change traditional teaching challenges their very existence.”

He said the 1998 declaration, which is the church’s official stance on sexuality and is known as Lambeth 1.10, was “not in doubt”.

While adding that “a large majority” of conservative Anglicans agree questioning biblical teaching is “unthinkable”, Welby said he would not seek to challenge churches that conduct same-sex marriages.

In a letter published on Twitter on Wednesday evening (3 August), broadcaster and author Toksvig wrote: “It was a sin in 1998 and you just wanted to make clear in 2022 that no one in your finely frocked gang has moved on from that. Seriously, with the state the world is in, that is what you wanted to focus on?”

Toksvig, who has been married to her wife Debbie for 16 years, wrote about the death threats she has faced herself for being gay and pointed out that a higher rate of young LGBT+ people contemplate suicide than their non-LGBT+ peers. “Do you know why?” she asked. “For many it’s because they don’t feel loved and love, Justin, is supposed to be at the core of what you do. It’s like top of the job description… The lives of LGBT+ people are at stake here.”

She later added: “Jesus doesn’t mention sexuality at all. It clearly wasn’t a big deal for him.”

Toksvig wrote that, this weekend, she will be hosting a concert at her local church to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but she vowed that afterwards would “never set foot” inside an Anglican building again.

“Call me, Justin. Let’s have coffee,” she ended her letter. “Let me talk you round. You never know, I might even forgive you.”

FAO The Archbishop of Canterbury [*pic.twitter.com/UYyVWUsdyB*](https://t.co/UYyVWUsdyB) — Sandi Toksvig (@sanditoksvig) [*August 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/sanditoksvig/status/1554948904881381377?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In response, the Archbishop tweeted a letter back to Toksvig, telling her “I would love to sit down over a coffee to talk with you about it”.Dear [*@sanditoksvig*](https://twitter.com/sanditoksvig?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ,Thank you for your letter. I would love to sit down over a coffee to talk with you about it. [*pic.twitter.com/kX39hKwmkZ*](https://t.co/kX39hKwmkZ) — Archbishop of Canterbury (@JustinWelby) [*August 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/JustinWelby/status/1555243418154065924?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Many campaigners for LGBT+ equality [*have also criticised Welby’s words.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/justin-welby-lambeth-conference-gay-sex-sin-lbgt-b2137284.html)

Jayne Ozanne, a gay evangelical who advocates for inclusion LGBT+ people of faith, said: “I feel deeply angry that yet again priority has been given to saving a man-made institution over protecting LGBT+ people’s lives.

“Let us be clear that Lambeth 1.10 encourages ‘conversion therapy’. It is a stick with which many will continue to be beaten and suffer around the world.”

Reverend Richard Peers, an openly gay priest, said: “It would be very good if bishops at Lambeth Conference 2022 would acknowledge the pain caused to LGBT+ people by the discussions ‘about us’.

“There seems to be a real failure of empathy and kindness.”

Around 90 bishops, including eight archbishops, have since signed a statement saying they believe “LGBT+ people are a precious part of God’s creation”.

But Anglican bishops who say they represent 75 per cent of Anglicans across the globe are also pushing for all registered bishops at the Lambeth Conference to “reaffirm” Lambeth 1.10 as the “official teaching of the Anglican Communion on marriage and sexuality”.

**Load-Date:** August 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Thousands' of Ukraine refugees forced into overcrowded homes as UK system branded 'dysfunctional disaster'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C1-P691-DY4H-K034-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 2, 2022 Monday 9:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1280 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Families living in single rooms and forced to declare themselves homeless after fleeing war

**Body**

Thousands of [*Ukrainians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) seeking refuge in the UK have been forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, with whole [*families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) sharing single rooms, charities have warned.

Many of the [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have come to Britain to join relatives after fleeing the war are affected, organisations working to help them say, with hundreds having registered as homeless due to poor living conditions.

It comes amid claims the [*Home Office's*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) Ukraine family scheme is "half-baked", with a senior MP branding the situation a "dysfunctional disaster" - while The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing their country.

Charities warn the majority of those arriving under the route are experiencing overcrowding because their relatives in the UK do not have spare rooms and no checks are carried out on these properties pre-arrival.

A survey carried out by the Greater London Authority of nine charities in the capital found that of 83 Ukrainian clients on the family scheme seeking support, more than half (58 per cent) were in unsuitable accommodation and nearly one in five (17 per cent) were at immediate risk of homelessness.

Meanwhile the government is refusing to publish national data it holds on the number of Ukrainians presenting to councils as homeless.

Andrei Savitski, service provider at the Work Rights Centre, said more than half of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the charity supports are in overcrowded conditions, and that there would be thousands nationally given family sponsors often live in housing that is "already only just about suitable".

He described one case of a Ukrainian family of five, with one disabled child, all living in one sublet bedroom in Nottinghamshire after the wife and children arrived at the start of April to join the husband, who was already living in precarious conditions as a night shift delivery driver.

"They've approached the council and said they need housing. Someone from the council has come to the flat and seen the conditions and said it's not suitable, but their appointments for new housing have been postponed a number of times and they're still there," he said.

Government data shows that 16,000 have arrived under the Ukraine Family scheme, which allows refugees to join UK-based relatives, while 11,100 have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme - a separate route which allows refugees to live with volunteer hosts in the UK.

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but receive no money for those arriving under the family route.

Calls are mounting for councils to be given funding to support those arriving under the family scheme, and for the government to allow refugees on this scheme to be able to switch to the Homes for Ukraine route.

Tatiana Miller, 44, who lives Wokingham, said her mother, sister and her sister's two children arrived under the family route in mid-April. But they returned to Poland - where they had fled after the invasion - two weeks later because the living conditions were too overcrowded in the UK.

"We made it work for a short period of time. We did what we could, but on arrival it became obvious that it wasn't sustainable. They went back to Poland even though they know no one there," she told The Independent.

"The family scheme is unfair. We got no financial support, as sponsors do under the other scheme. The government seems to be on another planet. There is a desire to help, but they give with one hand and take away with the other. It's half-baked. It's heartless and not thought through."

Svitlana Opanasenko, a volunteer at Ukraine social Club, said that of the approximately 200 households on the family scheme that the charity has supported since the start of March, between 90-95 per cent have been living in overcrowded conditions.

She said that at least a dozen of the families they support had been forced to move out of their relatives' home and register as homeless with the local council because the situation was unsustainable, or because landlords had ordered them to leave due to the overcrowding.

"The families are desperate to get their relatives out of Ukraine, and they're not looking at the square footage of their apartments. They just try to bring everyone in. People have nowhere else to go," she said.

Ms Opanasenko added that refugees were also struggling to access financial support and were having to rely on food banks, adding: "We refer most of them for universal credit, but it takes time. You need to register, prove the address, get a bank card, then wait a month.

"People are desperate. The majority of families have little kids, so they need baby food, nappies. These are expensive, as is food in general. They don't get information on how to get support."

A survey of councils by the Local Government Association last month revealed that 144 Ukrainian households had presented as homeless across 190 local authorities since the start of the war.

The government has since carried out its own survey, but it is refusing to publish the resulting data.

A spokesperson said it was "gathering this information for monitoring purposes and to help us establish if any local authority needs additional support".

Clive Betts, Labour MP and chair of the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee, said the scheme was a "dysfunctional disaster", adding: "Local authorities need to know how many refugees are here, what services they need. It's information that should be in the public domain."

He added that it was "ridiculous" that councils weren't receiving funding for refugees on the family scheme, and said that in cases where families need to present as homeless they should be allowed to switch onto the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Jon Featonby, policy and advocacy manager at the British Red Cross, said it was wrong that there wasn't the same amount of wraparound support being provided through the family scheme compared to the other route.

"We would like to see families getting the support they need regardless of the scheme they arrived under, including giving sponsors and refugees the same level of financial support and providing local authorities with the funding they need to make sure suitable housing is available," he said.

A government spokesperson said: "These schemes are designed to ensure people who are coming to the UK fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine are provided with accommodation by their family or sponsor. Under both schemes councils have a duty to provide support where someone is left without accommodation."

The criticism came as Priti Patel, the home secretary, reportedly faced legal action over delays which have left ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in limbo.

Charities including Save the Children and the Refugee Council are preparing a class action lawsuit on behalf of hundreds of refugees who applied to travel to the UK weeks ago but have been caught up in a visa backlog, according to The Guardian.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sabina Higgins ‘dismayed’ by criticism as she defends Ukraine letter*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:662M-NRF1-DY4H-K028-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 2, 2022 Tuesday 6:34 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 571 words

**Byline:** Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** The president’s wife also addressed concerns about why her letter about the war in Ukraine was published on the official presidential website.

**Body**

Sabina Higgins, the wife of Irish President [*Michael D Higgins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-d-higgins) , has defended a letter she wrote which critics claimed drew an equivalence between the actions of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

In a statement released on Tuesday evening, Mrs Higgins condemned Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine and said she was “dismayed” at the criticism she has received in recent days.

“I have from its outset strongly condemned the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine and I cannot be but dismayed that people would find anything unacceptable in a plea for peace and negotiations when the future of humanity is threatened by war, global warming and famine,” she said.

It comes after she wrote a letter to the [*Irish Times*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish-times) last week to criticise an editorial on the conflict.

Having put my letter up, I subsequently took it down when I saw it being presented as not being from myself, but from the general president.ie website

Sabina Higgins

The letter said the fighting would go on until the world “persuades President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) of Russia and President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine to agree to a ceasefire and negotiations”.

Government senators and commentators criticised Mrs Higgins for the letter.

Fianna Fail senator Malcolm Byrne said Mrs Higgins was “totally wrong to try to see an equivalence in the positions of Ukraine and Russia”, while Fine Gael senator John McGahon said “interventions like this are seen as a tacit endorsement of the Russian regime”.

In recent days, pressure has been mounting for an explanation why the letter was reportedly published for a brief period on the Irish president’s official website.

Mrs Higgins said in Tuesday’s statement: “For the last 11 years since coming to Aras an Uachtarain (official residence of the Ireland’s president) as the wife of the president, I have continued my longstanding interests on a number of important issues.

“Since 2014, I have had a dedicated section on the president.ie website. This section contains details of activities I have been undertaking including speeches and work towards the implementation of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, health issues, breastfeeding, issues affecting the Traveller community, human rights, supporting the arts and a range of other issues.

He has repeatedly condemned what he has described as the illegal, immoral and unjustifiable Russian invasion of Ukraine

Spokesperson for Michael D Higgins

“Last week I had been asked about my letter to the Irish Times, which I had written in a personal capacity, by a number of people who had missed it, and had not been able to access it online.

“I therefore put it on my dedicated section of the website as I have done for the last number of years. Having put my letter up, I subsequently took it down when I saw it being presented as not being from myself, but from the general president.ie website.”

On Monday, a spokesperson for Mr Higgins issued a statement to the Irish Times reiterating his condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine.

“He has repeatedly condemned what he has described as the illegal, immoral and unjustifiable Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“He has called for an immediate Russian withdrawal and end to the violence. He has voiced his steadfast support for the victims of this terrible conflict and met with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Ireland and the Ukrainian ambassador many times.

“President Higgins has stressed the importance of using every available ‘chink of diplomacy’.”

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin’s forces step up air strikes on Ukraine regions bordering Nato*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68Y7-GD01-DY4H-K2PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 15, 2023 Tuesday 4:47 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 794 words

**Byline:** Andriy Perun

**Highlight:** Russia unleashes missile barrage that kills three in the region of Volyn, with other strikes hitting Lviv

**Body**

Russia has launched its largest aerial attack on regions bordering [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) in western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the start of its invasion nearly 18 months ago.

Russian air strikes hit two western regions of Ukraine bordering [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) – a Nato member – and other areas on Tuesday, killing three people in a factory and wounding more than a dozen, according to officials.

The deaths were reported in the northwestern region of Volyn. Officials said an industrial enterprise in the regional capital Lutsk was struck in the overnight attack. Several people also needed hospital treatment, Governor Yuriy Pohulyaiko said.

Swedish industrial bearings maker SKF said its factory in Lutsk was hit by a missile overnight, killing three employees. Footage released by Ukraine's state emergency service showed rescuers pulling a man from the rubble.

Fifteen people were also wounded in the Lviv region, Governor Maksym Kozytskyi said. Six missiles damaged dozens of buildings and a kindergarten playground in and around the regional capital. Kozytskyi said the youngest victim was 10 years-old.

Both Volyn and Lviv border Poland and are hundreds of miles from the front line, where Ukraine's military is fending off Russian troops.

"The children are very scared. They were hysterical, they were shaking. One of them even vomited from fear," said Lviv resident Dmytro Ivaschyshyn outside an apartment block as firemen dug through debris. "Thank God we are all alive."

National grid operator Ukrenergo said power lines in the region were also damaged but that electricity was being restored to those affected.

Lviv city had been spared much of Russia's air attacks until July, when seven people were killed by a missile that slammed into a residential building near the historic centre.

The city has generally been seen as a safe haven from the conflict, with some government offices moving there and international NGOs using it as a base. It has also been a transit point for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** en route to Poland and beyond.

"These are the parts of the country where millions of people are seeking safety and refuge after fleeing the horrors of Russia's invasion," Denise Brown, the United Nations resident coordinator in Ukraine, said in a statement condemning the attacks. "Russia's persistent attacks hitting essential infrastructure in populated areas cause immense human suffering."

At least two people were also wounded in the southeastern city of Dnipro, where Governor Serhiy Lysak said a business enterprise and a sports complex had been hit. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said civilian infrastructure including schools and a hospital had been damaged in a total of eight regions in Tuesday's attacks. Part of the central town of Smila was left without water after two missiles struck the Cherkassy region, the governor said.

"The daily terror of the Russians has a single goal: to break us, our spirit for fighting," Andriy Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential administration, wrote on Telegram. "This will not happen."

The air force said the strikes involved at least 28 cruise missiles and that 16 had been shot down. Spokesman Yuriy Ihnat told Ukrainian television that incoming missiles constantly changed course to make it harder for air defences to operate.

Poland itself staged a massive military parade on Tuesday to showcase its state-of-the-art weapons and defense systems. President Andrzej Duda, the chief commander of the armed forces, said in his opening speech that the protection of Poland's eastern border is a key element of state policy.

"The defense of our eastern border, the border of the European Union and of Nato is today a key element of Poland's state interest," Mr Duda said.

Crowds waving national white-and-red flags gathered in scorching temperatures that reached 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit) to see U.S.-made Abrams tanks, mobile artillery systems and Patriot missile systems. Also on display were F-16 fighter planes, South Korean FA-50 fighters and K9 howitzers. A US Air Force F-35 roared overhead, in a sign that Poland was also purchasing these advanced fighter planes.Some 2,000 troops, 200 vehicles and almost 100 aircraft took part in the parade. Poland's armed forces have more than 175,000 troops, up from some 100,000 eight years ago, Mr Duda said.

In Russia on Tuesday, Vladimir Putin addressed a security conference outside Moscow in a pre-recorded video statement, taking his usual stance of accusing the West of fueling the conflict "by pumping billions of dollars" into Kyiv and "supplying it with equipment, weapons, ammunition, sending their military advisers and mercenaries."

"Everything is being done to ignite the conflict even more, to draw other states into it," Mr Putin said.

Reuters

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Lee Anderson expressing public’s ‘deep frustration’ with barge remarks – Jenrick*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68WX-B5G1-DY4H-K0HK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 9, 2023 Wednesday 9:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 733 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** Home Office minister Robert Jenrick said he agreed with the deputy Tory chairman over his comments on refugees complaining about accommodation.

**Body**

Ministers have continued to back senior Conservative [*Lee Anderson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lee-anderson) after he reportedly said asylum seekers complaining about being moved to an accommodation barge should “f\*\*\* off back to France”.

Immigration minister [*Robert Jenrick*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-jenrick) said the deputy Tory Party chairman was expressing the “deep frustration of a large body of the British public” through his remarks about those objecting to being given a bed on board the Bibby Stockholm in Portland, Dorset.

“I think everyone chooses their own language but I think the point Lee Anderson was making is a fair one which I agree with,” Mr Jenrick told LBC.

Justice Secretary [*Alex Chalk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alex-chalk) said on Tuesday that there was “a lot of sense” in what the former [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) aide had said.

We are in Government and we have failed on this — there is no doubt about it

Deputy Conservative chairman Lee Anderson

Labour criticised the comments, calling them “wrong” and accusing the Tories of using them to distract from their record on immigration.

But despite agreement on the Ashfield MP’s barge comments, Mr Jenrick said he did not concur with Mr Anderson’s argument that the Government had “failed” to stop migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has made stopping the boats one of his five key pledges ahead of next year’s likely general election.

Mr Anderson told GB News on Tuesday: “I’m not going to sit here and make excuses to anyone. This is out of control.

“We are in power at the moment, I’m the deputy chair of the Conservative Party. We are in Government and we have failed on this — there is no doubt about it.

“We have said we are going to fix it — it is a failure.”

Mr Jenrick told BBC Breakfast he disagreed with that part of the deputy chairman’s claims, arguing that “we’ve put in place a number of things in the course of the last few months which are already seeing dividends”.

He said the migrant crisis was an “incredibly complex international challenge” and proposed that the UK had the “most comprehensive plan of any European country to tackle this”.

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) minister told broadcasters that, as of Wednesday, about 20 men were on board the Bibby Stockholm barge, with the plan to steadily increase that number over several weeks.

The Government has said the vessel, which was initially designed to fit about 200 people, has a 500-person capacity, with occupants due to share rooms.

While asylum seekers started boarding on Monday, around 20 migrants challenged the decision through lawyers.

On those complaining about the accommodation, Mr Anderson told Express.co.uk: “If they don’t like barges then they should f\*\*\* off back to France.”

Defending the comments, Mr Jenrick told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme: “I think what Lee was expressing was the fact that the accommodation we are providing as a country at huge expense – billions of pounds a year – is decent, it is good quality, it meets our legal obligations.

“It doesn’t need to be luxurious, we shouldn’t be putting people up in four-star hotels. The barge we are using in Portland that has been the subject of some interest has been used for oil and gas workers, it has been used by other countries.

“Barges like this are used in Belgium, in the Netherlands. The Scottish Government have used a similar vessel for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. So if it is good enough for all those people then it should be good enough for the migrants.”

But shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said the Conservative Government was “promoting division” and “lashing out” due its own failures on tackling unlawful migration and the asylum backlog.

The senior Labour MP told Today: “It is clearly the wrong language to use and it is ramping up the rhetoric as a distraction from the fact the Government is failing.

“One thing Lee Anderson did say, he did admit that the Government is failing to tackle the boats crisis. What we need is grip rather than gimmicks, we need solutions rather than just this ramping up the rhetoric all of the time.

“And that is the problem — because they are failing, because they have been flailing around for years while they have just made things worse with the policies they have pursued, they have ended up now lashing out trying to promote division and trying to find someone else to blame.

“That is not what responsible governments do. They should be getting on with trying to solve the practical problems around the gangs and around the backlog.”

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Poland to hold parliamentary election on Oct. 15, launching campaign in shadow of war in region*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68WR-HP61-DY4H-K0YD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 8, 2023 Tuesday 3:47 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 747 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gera

**Highlight:** Poland’s president has announced that the country will hold its parliamentary election on October 15

**Body**

Poland's president announced on Tuesday that the country would hold its parliamentary election on Oct. 15, marking the official start of an electoral campaign that has informally been underway for months and is being shaped by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

President Andrzej Duda said in a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the elections for the 460-seat lower house of parliament, the Sejm, and for the 100-seat Senate will both take place on that same date. Lawmakers will be elected for a four-year term, and the party with the most votes will be tapped to form the next government.

Polls show that Law and Justice, the conservative party which has governed Poland since 2015, is heading toward the election as the most popular party, but is likely to fall short of an outright majority in parliament.

It holds a small lead over a centrist bloc, the Civic Coalition, headed by Donald Tusk, a former Polish prime minister and former president of the European Council. Support for Tusk’s party has grown in past months but mostly at the expense of other opposition parties.

The election campaign begins as anxieties in Poland are rising over the presence of Russia-linked Wagner mercenaries across the NATO nation's northeastern border in Belarus, where they have arrived by the thousands since a short-lived mutiny in Russia in June. Tensions have also been growing with ally Ukraine, on the country's southeastern border, over grain imports and historical memories of past ethnic conflicts.

The ruling party has been seeking to present itself as strong on national defense given the turmoil across its eastern borders. It has ordered more soldiers to beef up security at the Belarus border and is planning a large military parade on the Aug. 15 Armed Forces Day holiday next week to show off new military equipment as its modernizes its defenses.

Poland's leaders have made multiple visits to Kyiv to support the Ukrainian war effort. But recently they have been taking a more confrontational stance with Ukraine as a far-right political group that has been critical of helping Ukrainians, Confederation, has been rising in the opinion polls.

Poland’s geographical position and support for Ukraine and acceptance of large numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have attracted two visits since Russia's February 2022 invasion from President Joe Biden.

The praise [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) has gained for helping Ukraine has allowed the government to avoid some of the scrutiny it has faced in past years over concerns in the West that its approach to the judiciary, media and LGBTQ+ people and other minorities amounts to democratic backsliding.

The party has gained popularity with many Poles for its conservative values and increase in state help for the elderly and families with children. Early in its first term it introduced a monthly cash payment of 500 zlotys ($123) per month for each child under 18.

President Duda, who is aligned with the party, on Monday signed legislation raising that monthly payment to 800 zlotys ($196) per month, starting next January.

Though popular with many, the policy also has its critics, among them economists who argue that that cash payments have helped to fuel a double-digit inflation rate, business people and young adults who resent funding the free money for others with their taxes.

Criticism of the policy is also a factor behind the growing popularity of Confederation, whose members include both far-right nationalists and pro-business libertarians. Some members of the group have pushed the slogan “Stop the Ukrainization of Poland.”

Last week, Poland and Ukraine called in each other’s ambassadors after an advisor to Duda said Ukraine needed to start showing appreciation to Poland for the help it was providing Kyiv in the war. Bad feelings have also been revived with a focus on massacres of Poles by Ukrainians that occurred 80 years ago, during, World War II.

Tensions with Ukraine have additionally been aggravated by a ban on Ukrainian food imports by Poland and other countries in the region — grain and other products which have caused a glut on local markets that has depressed prices for farmers. Polish farmers are a key constituent of the ruling party’s voter base, with other agrarian groups vying for their voters.

With the elections approaching, the ruling party on Tuesday fired the health minister, Adam Niedzielski, who faced criticism for revealing the personal details of a doctor who had criticized a government health policy.

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*As Slovakia's trust in democracy fades, its election frontrunner campaigns against aid to Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696D-H521-JBNF-W1TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 18, 2023 Monday 5:12 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1820 words

**Byline:** Karel Janicek

**Highlight:** A populist former prime minister whose party is favored to win Slovakia’s early parliamentary election plans to reverse the country’s military and political support for neighboring Ukraine if he returns to power

**Body**

A populist former prime minister whose party is favored to win Slovakia’s early parliamentary election plans to reverse the country’s military and political support for neighboring [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , in a direct challenge to the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) and NATO, if he returns to power.

[*Robert Fico*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-fico) , who led Slovakia from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2012 to 2018, is the frontrunner to occupy the prime minister's office after the Sept. 30 election. He and his left-wing Direction, or Smer, party have campaigned on a clear pro-Russian and anti-American message.

His candidacy is part of a wider trend across Europe. Only Hungary has an openly pro-Russian government, but in other countries, including Germany, France, and Spain, populist parties skeptical of intervention in Ukraine command significant support. Many of these countries have national or regional elections coming up that could tip the balance of popular opinion away from Kyiv and towards Moscow.

“If Smer is part of the government, we won’t send any arms or ammunition to Ukraine anymore,” Fico, who currently holds a seat in Slovakia's parliament and is known for foul-mouthed tirades against journalists, said in an interview with The Associated Press before a recent campaign rally.

Fico, 59, also opposes EU sanctions on Russia, questions the Ukrainian military's ability to force out the invading Russian troops and wants to use Slovakia's membership in NATO to block Ukraine from joining. His return to power could lead Slovakia to abandon its democratic course in other ways, following the path of Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orban and to a lesser extent, Poland under the Law and Justice party.

The small Central European nation created in 1993 following the breakup of Czechoslovakia has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine since Russia invaded more than 18 months ago. Slovakia was the second NATO member to agree to give its fleet of Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets to Kyiv and also donated an S-300 air defense system.

But it also has seen public trust in liberal democracy and Western organizations decline to a greater extent than other parts of the region that shook off decades of Soviet domination.

According to a March survey commissioned by the Bratislava-based Globsec think tank, a majority of Slovak respondents, 51%, believe the West or Ukraine are responsible for the war. Half saw the United States as posing a security threat for their country, up from 39% in 2022. Of the eight nations surveyed, Slovaks were by far the most distrustful of the U.S.; Bulgaria was a distant second with 33% and Hungary third on 25%.

“We have a big problem,” Katarina Klingova, a senior research fellow at Globsec’s Center for Democracy and Resilience, said.

The survey was conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Each of the eight Central and Eastern European countries had 1,000 respondents, and the survey findings had a margin of error of plus or minus 3%.

Only 48% of Slovaks consider liberal democracy good for their country, the second-lowest result after Lithuania (47%).

In February 2022, Slovakia opened its borders to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as well as sending arms to Kyiv. Nonetheless, many Slovaks still have a soft spot for their Russian Slavonic brothers and sisters and are grateful for the Red Army for liberating the country at the end of WWII. Russian disinformation operations have also played their part: pro-Moscow propaganda is now widespread in the Slovak media.

The views reflected in the Globsec survey reflect frustration following the chaotic tenure of a center-right coalition government that collapsed in December and a pro-Russian disinformation campaign that intensified after the invasion of Ukraine, Klingova said.

“A number of local politicians have adopted the narratives and terminology of the Russian propaganda,” and amplified its impact, she said. Fico, whose party also campaigns against immigration and LGBTQ+ rights, is among them.

In his interview with the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) , he maintained that no amount of Western weapons going to Ukraine would change the course of the war. He said the European Union and the United States should use their influence to force Russia and Ukraine to strike a compromise peace deal.

“It’s naive to think that Russia would leave Crimea,’’ Fico said, referring to the peninsula that Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. “It’s naive to think that Russia would ever abandon the territory it controls” in Ukraine.

Fico was speaking in Michalovce, a small town near Slovakia’s border with Ukraine. Not far away lies the city of Uzhhorod, one of the main border crossings for freight and individuals. In the spring of 2022, thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entered Slovakia here, while humanitarian aid — and sometimes foreign fighters — flowed the other way.

More recently, shipments of Ukrainian grain have crossed the border, much to the unhappiness of local farmers, who say it’s undercutting their markets. When an EU deal to keep Ukrainian grain in transit and out of local markets lapsed earlier this month, Slovakia said it would extend its own ban on imports until the end of the year.

But at the same time as the war in Ukraine was driving down grain prices in Europe, it was pushing up the cost of energy. Until the invasion of Ukraine triggered EU sanctions, Russia supplied most of Slovakia's oil and gas.

In 2022, inflation rose to 12.13% percent, driven by soaring energy prices. In September 2022, thousands joined a protest organized by Fico's party at which he said the government's support for Ukraine was partially responsible for the rise in inflation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with backing from his country's Western supporters, has ruled out negotiating with Moscow until Russian troops withdraw from his country. He has also pressed NATO to provide a clear path for his country's membership.

At their summit in July, NATO leaders pledged to keep supplying arms and ammunition to Ukraine but offered no protection under the alliance’s security umbrella. Fico told the AP he opposes “on principle” putting Ukraine on a membership path, saying, “That would result in the Third World War.”

Fico's position could further complicate Ukraine's aspirations to join the alliance. At the summit, NATO allies said that “We will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the alliance when allies agree and conditions are met.”

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This story, supported by the Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting, is the first part of an Associated Press series covering threats to democracy in Europe.

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The former prime minister and his party have shown pro-Russia tendencies during their on-off relationship with voters. In 2015, after Russia annexed Crimea, Fico was one of the few European leaders to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow to discuss business, despite EU sanctions.

However, Fico in office also took care to cultivate ties with the U.S. In 2018, he began negotiations on a defense treaty with Washington. The agreement was ratified last year, but not before Fico had organized a protest where he told a crowd of thousands that the treaty was “treason.” He said the pact would compromise Slovakia's sovereignty and provoke Russia -claims rejected by the Slovak and U.S. governments.

Now, Fico repeats the Russian narrative about the causes of the Ukraine war, including Putin's unsupported claim that the current Ukrainian government runs a Nazi state from which ethnic Russians living in the country's east needed protection.

“I say it loud and clear and will do so: The war in Ukraine didn’t start yesterday or last year. It began in 2014. when the Ukrainian Nazis and fascists started to murder the Russian citizens in Donbas and Luhansk,” Fico told a cheering crowd of supporters in his hometown of Topolcany on Aug 30.

Grigorij Meseznikov, president of the Institute for Public Affairs, a pro-democracy non-governmental organization based in Bratislava, said the Fico voters are seeing now is “the most authentic of all his career" as well as "the worst and the most radical.”

“The position of anti-system forces has never been so strong here since 1989,” Meseznikov said, referring to the year of Czechoslovakia's anti-communist Velvet Revolution.

Fico used to be more pragmatic. During his first four-year term as prime minister, Slovakia was accepted into the EU’s visa-free Schengen Area in 2007 and adopted the euro as the national currency in 2009. Following the fall of the government that replaced his, Fico returned to office in 2012.

He unsuccessfully ran for president in 2014 and reclaimed the premiership in 2016, but was forced to resign two years later after the slaying of an investigative journalist, Jan Kuciak, and his fiancée.

Shortly before his death, Kuciak had been writing about alleged ties between the Italian mafia and people close to Fico and about corruption scandals linked to Fico’s party. The killings prompted major street protests and led to the collapse of Fico's coalition government. Fico's deputy in Smer, Peter Pellegrini, took over as prime minister.

The scandal-tainted Smer, campaigning on a anti-migrant ticket, lost the 2020 election and ended up in opposition with Pellegrini leaving Fico to create a new leftist party, the Voice. The four-party coalition government that took over made fighting corruption a key focus.

Dozens of senior officials, police officers, judges, prosecutors, politicians and business people linked to Smer have been convicted of corruption and other crimes.

Fico himself faced criminal charges last year for creating a criminal group and misuse of power, but Slovakia's pro-Russian prosecutor general stepped in and threw out the indictment.

Almost all public polls predict Smer will place first in the snap parliamentary election, with about 20% of the vote. Fico would then need the support of other parties in order to form a government.

He said he hopes to join forces with the Voice.

Another option would be The Republic, a far-right group currently on 5-10% in the polls. The ultra-nationalist Slovak National Party is another possibility.

“His strong motivation is to avoid criminal investigation,” Meseznikov of the Institute for Public Affairs said, adding: “His return to power will be a problem for Slovakia in every aspect.”

Fico threatened to dismiss the investigators at the National Criminal Agency and special prosecutor Daniel Lipsic who investigate the most serious crimes and corruption after the election.

Fico vowed to “be more sovereign in expressing my views” but said it’s not his intention to lead his country out of the EU or NATO.

“The international public should know that NATO is currently extremely unpopular in Slovakia," he warned. "If we hold a referendum today, I can guarantee that people would say no to NATO.”

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Find more of AP's Europe coverage at [*https://apnews.com/hub/europe*](https://apnews.com/hub/europe)

**Load-Date:** September 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Pope decries nationalism in Europe on visit to Hungary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6844-8KD1-F072-4084-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 29, 2023 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 17

**Length:** 733 words

**Byline:** PHILIP PULLELLA, KRISZTINA THAN

**Body**

Pope Francis has warned of the dangers of rising nationalism in Europe, and told the Hungarian government that accepting migrants, as the rest of the continent does, would be a true sign of Christianity.

At the start of a three-day trip to Hungary, the pontiff made a hard-hitting speech to government leaders including the prime minister, Viktor Orban, who has had a series of run-ins with the European Union. Francis urged a rejection of "self-referential forms of populism" and strictly nationalist interests.

The Pope also called for a return to the "European soul" envisioned by those who had laid the groundwork for modern Europe after the Second World War, saying nations had to "look beyond national boundaries". Speaking on a day on which Russia hit Ukraine with the first large-scale air strikes in nearly two months, Francis made another appeal for an end to the war there, calling for "creative efforts for peace" to drown out the "soloists of war".

Hungarian officials said the Pope's visit was designed primarily to let him minister to the country's Catholic community. But with the war in neighbouring Ukraine, and Mr Orban butting heads with other EU nations over rule-of-law issues and LGBT+ rights, the pontiff's words and deeds in the heart of Europe carried strong political undertones.

The visit is the 86-year-old Pope's first trip since he was admitted to hospital for bronchitis in March. Looking cheerful, Francis, who has a knee ailment, used a cane to walk past dignitaries and children in national dress who had gathered to welcome him at the airport. On other recent visits, he has used a wheelchair.

Asked about his health by reporters who joined him on the flight from Rome, the pope joked, saying "I'm still alive" and "Stubborn weeds never die."

Francis is keeping his promise to make an official visit to Hungary, after a stop-off for only seven hours to close a Church congress in Budapest on his way to Slovakia in 2021 left many feeling slighted.

The views of Mr Orban, 59, differ from those of the Pope on how to handle migration from the Middle East and Africa to Europe. Francis believes that migrants fleeing poverty should be welcomed. Mr Orban, whose government built a steel fence on the border with Serbia to keep these people out, has refused to let Hungary be transformed into an "immigrant country" like he says others in Europe have become. He asked the Pope in 2021 "not to let Christian Hungary perish".

In his speech in the presidential palace overlooking the River Danube, following separate private meetings with Hungary's president, Katalin Novak, and Mr Orban, Francis quoted St Stephen, the 11th-century founder of Christian Hungary.

"Those who profess themselves Christian, in the company of the witnesses of faith, are called to bear witness to and to join forces with everyone in cultivating a humanism inspired by the gospel and moving along two fundamental tracks: acknowledging ourselves to be beloved children of the father, and loving one another as brothers and sisters," Francis said.

"In this regard, St Stephen bequeathed to his son extraordinary words of fraternity when he told him that those who arrive with different languages and customs 'adorn the country'," Francis continued, quoting the saint's command to "welcome strangers with benevolence and to hold them in esteem".

In her address to the Pope before he spoke, Ms Novak praised him as a man of peace and urged him to do everything he could to stop the war in Ukraine, on Hungary's eastern border. Francis has called for peace in Ukraine in nearly every public appearance since Russia's invasion in February 2022, and has said he wants to go to Kyiv and Moscow in a single peace mission.

Mr Orban has said that Hungary and the Vatican are the only two European states that can be described as "pro-peace".

Hungary supports a sovereign Ukraine, but still has strong economic ties to Russia. Mr Orban's government has refused to send weapons to Ukraine. While the Pope has often called for a general ban on arms trafficking and a reduction in weapons manufacturing, he has also said that sending arms to Ukraine is morally acceptable if they are used for self-defence.

Pope Francis plans to meet over the weekend with some of the 35,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who remain in Hungary. Nearly 2.5 million refugees entered the country during the initial months following Russia's invasion.

Reuters

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach Micheal Martin to consider invite to visit Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65RW-KS31-DY4H-K3P2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 22, 2022 Wednesday 4:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 585 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian president also thanked the Taoiseach for Ireland’s support to Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) Micheal Martin has not ruled out visiting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) invited him to travel to the war-torn country.

Mr Martin said he will keep the invitation, in what would be the first State visit from [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , under review.

Mr Zelensky invited the Fianna Fail leader to the eastern European country during a phone call between the two leaders on Tuesday.

The Ukrainian president also thanked the Taoiseach for Ireland’s support to Ukraine.

Delighted to talk to President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and confirm Ireland's support for Ukraine's EU Membership at this week's European Council.We are, and will be, with [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) every step of the way. [*pic.twitter.com/kIdsA6bsGg*](https://t.co/kIdsA6bsGg) — Micheál Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*June 21, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1539291490328924167?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Asked if he will visit Ukraine, Mr Martin said: “These are things we keep on a constant review and I had a good discussion yesterday with President Zelensky.

“I’ve kept in regular contact with all members of the Ukrainian government and would have met with the deputy prime minister the week before last at the ALDE conference in Dublin and also with the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) earlier when he came through Shannon (airport).

“So we keep that under review, we keep in touch with the Ukrainian government to support them in their endeavour to withstand the ferocity of the Russian attack.”

Mr Martin said Ireland’s motivation is to help people fleeing war, and help the families that have been uprooted from their homes.

“They’ve left their loved ones at home back in Ukraine to protect their children, essentially, in many instances and we’ve got to do everything we can, along with all of our European Union colleagues,” Mr Martin added.

The Taoiseach is to travel to Brussels for a meeting of EU and Western Balkans leaders, a two-day meeting of the European Council, and a Euro Summit on Thursday and Friday.

In my view, Putin has clearly weaponised migration as a tool to terrorise people to leave Ukraine with the indiscriminate bombing.

Micheal Martin

Leaders are expected to discuss Ukraine, including its application for membership of the EU, as well as that of Moldova and Georgia.

It is expected that an historic decision to confirm EU candidate status for Ukraine and Moldova will be taken in line with the European Commission’s recent recommendations.

Mr Martin said helping Ukrainians is a European Union-wide response.

Almost 36,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Ireland in recent months.

“Six million people have been displaced within Ukraine, millions going to neighbouring countries in Europe,” Mr Martin added.

“In my view, Putin has clearly weaponised migration as a tool to terrorise people to leave Ukraine with the indiscriminate bombing.

“He’s weaponised energy, and he has weaponised famine and food security and that to me is reprehensible.

“We have to respond from a humanitarian perspective as best we can and we’re doing that.

“I think it is important this week as I head out to Brussels this evening for tomorrow morning’s series of meetings with the Western Balkans and the European Council, that the European candidacy application by Ukraine looks like now we’ll get support.

“I look forward to that, because that is significant message from the people of Europe, to the people of Ukraine and that we understand that you’re standing by democracy, that you are fighting for the same values that we all cherish, the freedom of the individual, free media and that is something that we can’t ever take for granted.

“So we have to play our part.”

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Happy List 2022: GoFundMe wants you to ask: ‘How can I help?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N8-JM31-DY4H-K41D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 10, 2022 Friday 8:44 AM GMT

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**Section:** HAPPY LIST; Version:1

**Length:** 575 words

**Highlight:** At GoFundMe thousands of people sign up to help others everyday, says Helen Whitehouse

**Body**

None of us make it through life on our own. Whether it’s a big leg up or a smaller helping hand we all need support sometimes. It’s part of being human -as social creatures we lift each other up when we need it. Most people would be happy to help a friend, neighbour, colleague or even a stranger if they needed it -but a lot of people are too afraid to ask.

In fact, according to online research from YouGov into the cost of living, even if people are struggling financially, 77 percent would be very unlikely to ask for help. We think that needs to change. There is power in asking for help and there is joy in giving it.

At GoFundMe we see thousands of people sign up to help others everyday. In February, as Russia invaded Ukraine, fundraisers sprang up offering support to those who needed it the most. During the first week of the war a donation was made every minute towards the people of Ukraine. Every single one of those donations came from someone who wanted to help.

From the word go, the Association of Ukrainian’s in Great Britain started a fundraiser to get humanitarian aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. They managed to raise more than £2,600,000 so far -making it the biggest campaign ever seen on GoFundMe in the UK. That’s a record breaking amount of help.

We’ve seen help from individuals who were so affected by coverage they were seeing on the news they were moved to help. Laura and Ken packed up their motorhome Molly with essential supplies and sweets and drove to the Ukrainian border to help refugees who had just fled. By asking people to sponsor their trip they raised more than £6,000 to donate to British Ukrainian Aid.

David Fricker and his friends have travelled to Ukraine to deliver thousands of teddy bears for displaced children -complete with translated messages of love from kids in the UK. His main goal is to make children feel safe when they cross the border.

Closer to home, as the UK experiences a major cost of living crisis, the most vulnerable in our society are choosing between heating, eating or paying their bills. In April, after Ofgen lifted the energy cap, bills rose by a massive 54 percent and they are expected to go up again come autumn.

Lancashire plumber James Anderson has been helping those in need since last year with his community initiative Depher, fixing boilers for free and paying off heating bills. And when the crisis hit this year, he teamed up again with GoFundMe to launch an emergency appeal to help those struggling with the rising costs.

One woman helped by the initiative described how she was left ‘actually in tears’ when she found out she would be able to put her heating on.

As times get tougher help, happiness and community is needed more than ever. That’s what society is all about -stepping up and helping those when help is needed. That’s why GoFundMe is supporting the Independent’s Happy List, which shines a light on the people who’ve changed the world for the better by offering a helping hand. Each of the people or groups chosen have done something which is worth celebrating.

If you’re reading this and thinking that there’s something, someone or charity you want to support, why not ask ‘’how can I help?’’ and start a GoFundMe today.

\*YouGov cost of living research was carried out with 2,144 adults between 5th -6th April 2022. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine end Scotland's World Cup dreams in emotional qualifier*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KC-V3B1-DY4H-K0W5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 1, 2022 Wednesday 2:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** SPORT; Version:11

**Length:** 587 words

**Byline:** Andrew Naughtie

**Highlight:** Andrew Naughtie in Glasgow finds Ukrainian football fans determined not to be defined by war

**Body**

To compete against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in 2022 is a delicate thing. What is a worthy victory, and what is actually fair? The mammoth public vote for the Ukrainian Eurovision entry was one thing, but international [*football*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/football) raises emotions (and tempers) to a whole other level.

Fortunately for Scotland, facing a World Cup qualifier against the Ukrainians, the atmosphere at Hampden Park was not of pity, but joy.

Artem, a young Ukrainian who has lived in Edinburgh since long before Russia's invasion, said the game means a lot more than simply proving that Ukraine and Ukrainians are surviving.

"Being in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) , there's not been a lot of opportunities to celebrate being Ukrainian without the backdrop of the war," he explained. "For example, there's quite a lot of events, like demonstrations and protests and sort of gatherings, with a lot of refugees attending these in a few different cities in Scotland, just wherever they settled.

"But these are difficult to attend, not because of logistics, but because it's mentally difficult to confront the reality of a lot of these people, and to process everything that's happening. So a game like this is a great opportunity to celebrate being Ukrainian, and not necessarily forget about the war, but just be there."

The war aside, this was still a football game, meaning joyful is as joyful does. A great prize was dangled in front of Scotland -a win would have put them closer to their first World Cup since the 1998 tournament.

But in the end it was not to be, with Ukraine securing a 2-0 commanding lead that led ultimately to a 3-1 victory that sent the estimated 3,500 fans at the stadium wild.

Let's do this together [*#SCOUKR*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SCOUKR?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/AipqF8lUz9*](https://t.co/AipqF8lUz9) - Scotland National Team (@ScotlandNT) [*May 31, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ScotlandNT/status/1531722520810123264?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Earlier, many at Hampden Park had a tear in their eye as Ukraine's team entered the pitch, each draped in a Ukrainian flag, prompting a deafening roar.

Ukraine's national anthem was roundly applauded by the Tartan Army who then belted out Flower of Scotland before the long-awaited game got going, if rather nervously.

Back in December, before [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) began its brutal and unprovoked assault on its neighbour, it was the Ukrainian manager, Oleksandr Petrakov, who had to consider Scotland's feelings after he was seen jumping for joy when he found out who his team had been drawn against.

"Yes, I was joyful when the draw was made," he later said, "but that was a natural reaction because we weren't drawn against Italy or Portugal. We weren't seeded. We could have had a horrible draw, so of course I was happy that we got Scotland. We avoided the really big teams.

"That's all. It wasn't a slight on Scotland. I apologise if people thought I looked too happy!"

The world has changed since then, not least by opening its arms to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - though sign-ups to the UK's already muddled sponsorship scheme have slowed down, meaning that Ukrainians leaving the areas currently under fire are at a huge disadvantage compared with the first wave.

But the goodwill, for what it's worth, remains, and sport will be the better for it. To Artem, some of whose family are now gathered together for the first time since the conflict started, the game and its outcome transcend all that's happened since before Russia started the war.

"For me, it's celebrating belonging to both the Ukrainian community and the Scottish community," he said. "It's not really about who's winning. Because after all, sport is more a celebration of one of the things it means to be human."

**Load-Date:** June 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Joyful night of sport where camaraderie mattered most*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KH-XRX1-JCS0-D0SD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

June 2, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 565 words

**Byline:** ANDREW NAUGHTIE IN GLASGOW

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** June 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson is no party leader*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65JP-1X91-JCS0-D4GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 29, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 34

**Length:** 569 words

**Body**

Maybe we are being too hard on Boris Johnson. Perhaps when he read the job description for prime minister he misunderstood the phrase "party leader"?

Geoff Forward Stirling

Who would have believed that even Boris Johnson, contemptible reflection of the modern Conservative Party that he is, would have the gall to change the ministerial code to save his own skin with such effrontery? Perhaps, contrary to public perception, he thinks that some rules might possibly apply to him after all. But that won't be a problem as long as he can use his position to get rid of any rules that might prove inconvenient.

David Maughan Brown York

<strong>Armed police</strong>

The cowardice the Texas police showed during the massacre of 19 children and two teachers by a gunman at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, is a stark contrast to the "courage" heavily armed US police officers show when they confront, in numbers, innocent, unarmed Black people.

Sasha Simic London

<strong>Man the lifeboats</strong>

If the Tory party is the ship, Boris its captain and the Tory MPs its crew, then the crew seems unwilling to mutiny and stop the captain scuttling the ship. Better man the lifeboats then, boys and girls! Sad that you're willing to sacrifice both party and country to keep Boris in Clowning Street. Shame on you.

Ian Henderson Norwich

<strong>This is doing untold damage</strong>

I read Andrew Woodcock's article ('Banana republic' move: PM rewrites ministerial rules on code-of-conduct breaches, yesterday) with so much dismay that the ministerial code is being subjugated to yet more "get out of jail free" clauses, by being watered down and diminished by a prime minister and government who are running scared of continuing scandals and unedifying shenanigans in Downing Street.

This is no example for our children and young people, that rules are being watered down to suit particular circumstances of rule breaking. I agree that this is fast turning into a banana republic, and it is so dispiriting. This is doing untold damage and reinforcing the public's opinion that politicians are all the same and none are worth voting for.

Political cynicism is being rooted into our once decent country and it is entirely shameful. I want to feel a sense of pride again, even if I disagree with the government on mostly everything.

But this modus operandi is fast becoming untenable, while many Conservative MPs are too scared to place their heads above the parapet and declare that this isn't the way to run a government.

I applaud the brave and stalwart ones and sincerely hope their constituents are justifiably proud of them for standing up and being counted. Because I am.

Judith Daniels Cobholm

<strong>Sunak's latest short-term fix</strong>

Escalating inflation, higher borrowing costs and global supply problems mean the chancellor Rishi Sunak's latest short-term fix won't resolve the "eat or heat" crisis.

Funds are, however, available long term if our richest citizens act in the same generous spirit as Captain Tom and other heroes during the pandemic, as well as those who opened their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

If in this spirit our top 1 per cent donate 5 per cent of their assets, it won't change their lifestyles, but it will provide a long-term solution to the most devastating domestic humanitarian crisis of our times - and do more to level up our country than any government can achieve.

Trevor Lyttleton London

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Perhaps Boris Johnson misunderstood the meaning of 'party leader'?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65JJ-3VY1-DY4H-K45C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 28, 2022 Saturday 3:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 660 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

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Stirling

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London

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Take care of your freedom, Zelensky says in address to Irish students*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WN-6DR1-DY4H-K3FW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 18, 2022 Friday 4:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 646 words

**Byline:** By Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** Minister for Higher Education Simon Harris said it was a momentous occasion and an ‘important and historic day’.

**Body**

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has addressed third-level students at 20 locations across [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) via video link, advising them to “take care of your freedom”.

In his address, the Ukrainian president said that the list of sanctions against 52 [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) politicians “don’t really affect anything, it’s more of a propaganda thing”.

He also said that he was grateful to Ireland for its “incredible warmth” in taking in 63,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the invasion began, with hundreds of young students attending schools and 500 students attending universities.

He said: “I can tell you, select any time and you know that you and your government and your society have helped Ukraine in many ways. And as you mentioned that no matter your neutral status, you’re absolutely not neutral in your attitude, in your assistance.

“Take care of your freedom. And glory to Ukraine.”

Hundreds of students gathered in an auditorium at The Helix on Dublin City University’s campus, with several asking questions of the president, including how he handles the pressure of leading a country under attack.

When asked if he found that social media was a new battlefield of war, Mr Zelensky said “absolutely”.

He added: “A battlefield that’s full of capabilities and unfortunately, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has been using that.

“They’ve spread the disinformation in many African and Asian countries, they have a powerful impact on Israel, on Germany and many other European countries, their TV channels with disinformation until recently worked in the United States and many other countries of the world.

“For the truths to be spread, it’s very difficult. It’s hard to overcome the false information… and it’s a component of this information war.

“We were powerful in the beginning of the war, we realised that we cannot (fight) Russia only with weapons on the battlefield because they have more of those weapons.

“But in the informational domain, we knew that if we would be able to penetrate this wall, to penetrate this informational lies, if we would be able to overcome this, in that case, would be able to unite the whole world and I believe that we did very well.

“This is not over yet, but still we’re hoping (Russian President Vladimir) Putin can hear us and that the information that we have is becoming a weapon and becoming a powerful weapon.”

When asked how he deals with the pressure of leading a country fighting off an invasion, Mr Zelensky said “perfectly normal, it’s not pressure for me”.

“I’m a calm person… Well, not every day surely. My team knows because there’s different days, different moments. That’s frankly speaking.”

He said that as a country and as a people, they had survived “many challenges” in their history.

“Some challenges are 10 years old, some challenges are 100 years old. So we are fighting for independence,” he said.

Preparation for the event has been in the works since the summer, when the Ukrainian Ambassador to Ireland Larysa Gerasko suggested it to the Irish government.

Addressing the conference, Ms Gerasko said that Russia was attempting “to punish those who openly defend international law, rule of law and democracy, and support Ukraine”.

She added: “As our president mentioned, the recent decision to ban the 52 Irish politicians from entering Russia is yet another demonstration of such blatant conduct.”

Minister for [*Higher Education*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/higher-education) Simon Harris said it was a momentous occasion and an “important and historic day”.

He said: “I think it’s fair to say that this is a moment of history, as President Zelensky takes time to speak to students here in Ireland, the future leaders of this country, to speak to students here in The Helix but also in 20 other locations right across our country today, students listening in to the President of Ukraine at this truly important time in global history.

“When history is written, let it be clear, we stood up and we spoke out, and we supported Ukraine.”

**Load-Date:** November 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Vatican minister visits Ukraine as pope toes delicate line*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G5-87F1-DY4H-K54J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 8:33 AM GMT

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**Length:** 543 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The Vatican's foreign minister is heading to Kyiv this week as the Holy See seeks to balance its concern for Ukrainians with its efforts to keep open a channel of dialogue with Russia

**Body**

The Vatican's foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, is heading to Kyiv this week as the Holy See seeks to balance its concern for Ukrainians with its efforts to keep open a channel of dialogue with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Gallagher is due to arrive Wednesday and meet Friday with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, a visit that was originally scheduled for before Easter but was postponed after Gallagher came down with COVID-19.

The trip comes as the Holy See toes a delicate line in trying to keep alive newly improved ties with the Russian Orthodox Church while offering support to the "martyred" Ukrainian faithful. At the same time, the Holy See is reconciling Pope Francis' frequent denunciation of the weapons industry and "crazy" recourse to re-arming [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) with Catholic teaching that says states have a right and duty to repel an "unjust aggressor."

"It has to be proportional," Gallagher told RAI state television in announcing his trip. "Yes, Ukraine has the right to defend itself and it needs weapons to do it, but it has to be prudent in the way it's done."

Gallagher, a 68-year-old career [*Vatican*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vatican) diplomat from Liverpool, becomes the third papal envoy dispatched to the region by Francis, after two trusted cardinals went to Ukraine and bordering countries to assess the humanitarian needs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and bring them the pope's solidarity.

Francis has drawn criticism from some for refusing to condemn Russia or President Vladimir Putin by name, though he has stepped up his criticism of the "barbaric" war and recently met with the wives of two Ukrainian soldiers holding out at the besieged steel mill in Mariupol, a gesture of "our concern and participation in the suffering of these families," Gallagher said.

Francis' down-the-middle line is evidence of the Holy See's diplomatic tradition of not calling out aggressors by name and its efforts to keep open paths of dialogue with both sides in a conflict. This so-called "Ostpolitik" dictated the Vatican's Cold War policy of maintaining relations with the same Communist regimes that were persecuting the Catholic faithful on the ground.

In the case of Ukraine, the Holy See is keen not to sever newly improved relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, which took a big step forward in 2016 when Francis met in Havana with the Russian Patriarch, Kirill.

Francis has so far declined an invitation from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to visit Ukraine, recently saying he wants to go to Moscow first. Francis has said he asked early on to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but that the Russian leader hasn't yet replied.

Francis, however, called off a planned June meeting with Kirill, who has justified Putin's war on ideological and spiritual grounds. Francis has said the Vatican's diplomats - presumably Gallagher and his boss, the secretary of state Cardinal Pietro Parolin - realized the optics would be bad.

But the Vatican is still pursuing its diplomatic efforts in hopes of bringing about at the very least a cease-fire.

"The Holy See has this vocation," Gallagher told RAI. "We try never to put ourselves on one side or the other, but to create a space for dialogue and be available to everyone for the sake of peace, and find solutions to these terrible conflicts."

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jill Biden heads to Latin America before hemispheric summit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G7-8801-DY4H-K4H3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 9:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 539 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The White House says Jill Biden will visit Ecuador, Panama and Costa Rica this week as the United States finalizes plans for a hemisphere-wide summit to be held in Los Angeles in June

**Body**

[*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) will visit Ecuador, [*Costa Rica*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/costa-rica) and Panama this week to help lay the groundwork as the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) finalizes arrangements for a hemisphere-wide summit being held in Los Angeles in June, the White House announced Tuesday.

The first lady departs Wednesday on her second solo trip abroad this month.

She spent Mother's Day weekend in Eastern Europe executing a high-profile show of U.S. support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, mostly women and children who fled to neighboring Romania and Slovakia to escape Russia's war against their country. The trip included an unannounced trip into western Ukraine by Biden for a surprise meeting with first lady Olena Zelenska.

Biden's trip through Ecuador, Costa Rica and Panama is meant to serve as a warm up of sorts for a gathering of leaders from Latin American and the Caribbean being held June 6-10 in Los Angeles. The weeklong Summit of the Americas is a key part of President Joe Biden's outreach to a region that increasingly is being courted by U.S. adversaries, such as China and Russia.

Throughout the trip, she will highlight U.S. support for programs that help children, women and young people across the countries on her itinerary, according to her schedule.

In Quito, Ecuador, on Thursday, the first lady will meet with President Guillermo Lasso and first lady María de Lourdes Alcívar de Lasso at the Carondelet Palace. The first ladies will visit a child development center to learn about government efforts to improve childhood nutrition.

Biden will also visit an elementary school that hosts a U.S.-backed accelerated learning program that helps Ecuadorian, Venezuelan and Colombian dropouts return to school.

In Panama City, Panama, on Friday, Biden will visit the Presidential Palace to sit down with first lady Yazmin Colón de Cortizo. They will also tour a school to learn about Cortizo's "See and Hear to Learn" program, which offers students eye and hearing exams, and eyeglasses and hearing aids.

On Saturday, Biden and Cortizo will tour The Good Samaritan Home to visit with residents with HIV/AIDS. The people at the shelter benefit from HIV/AIDS relief programs funded through a U.S. program, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the White House said.

Later Saturday, in San Jose, Costa Rica, Biden will address women who participated in U.S. State Department programs designed to help them become entrepreneurs. Her schedule Saturday also includes a meeting with President Rodrigo Chaves and first lady Signe Zeikate.

On Sunday, Biden will highlight joint work by the U.S. and Costa Rica to combat cancer when she tours the National Children's Hospital of Costa Rica.

On Monday, Biden will visit a community center supported through the Sembremos Seguridad, or "Planting the Seeds of Security" program, which is led by the Costa Rican government with an assist from the U.S. State Department. Local governments, non-governmental organizations and law enforcement work to provide safe spaces and healthy outlets for Costa Rican youth.

She returns to [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) on Monday night.

President Biden was also leaving Washington on Thursday for his first official visit to Asia as president. He has scheduled stops in Seoul, South Korea, and Tokyo through May 24.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What the papers say - May 9*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DD-NW61-DY4H-K3CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 9, 2022 Monday 4:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 660 words

**Byline:** PA Reporter

**Highlight:** The working week begins with splashes on Ukraine, Brexit and cost-of-living pressures for people across the UK.

**Body**

The front pages feature Vladimir Putin's Russia being compared to Nazi Germany, economic struggles for Britons and the death of TV actor Dennis Waterman.

The Daily Telegraph says Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) will deliver a speech claiming Mr Putin is mirroring Adolf Hitler's fascism, with Metro reporting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has made the same comparison.

The front page of today's Daily Telegraph:'Putin is mirroring Nazis, says Wallace'Sign up for the Front Page newsletter[*https://t.co/x8AV4OoUhl*](https://t.co/x8AV4OoUhl) [*pic.twitter.com/rO8NuYCZAl*](https://t.co/rO8NuYCZAl) - The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1523437847407374336?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "Victory Will Be Ours... Again" Putin branded a 21st century Nazi by Volodymyr Zelensky.[*#tomorrowspaperstoday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/nos2pxLMiL*](https://t.co/nos2pxLMiL) - Metro (@MetroUK) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK/status/1523403641914241024?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The US is attempting to tighten sanctions against Russian financial executives as the EU struggles to finalise its latest batch of penalties, according the Financial Times.Just published: front page of the Financial Times, UK edition, for Monday 9 May [*pic.twitter.com/E6GZQEhlWj*](https://t.co/E6GZQEhlWj) - Financial Times (@FinancialTimes) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/FinancialTimes/status/1523399383240167425?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Independent says ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are living with unvetted hosts in unsuitable homes because the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has failed to provide councils with funding for necessary safety checks.Monday's INDEPENDENT Digital: "Ukraine refugees forced to live in unvetted homes" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/KuVoyhlU9t*](https://t.co/KuVoyhlU9t) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1523408426822672384?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The i, meanwhile, reports the Government has threatened to tear up its [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) deal within weeks if it does not secure changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol.Monday's i -UK threatens to tear up Brexit deal within weeks" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/uXP2PF9EG2*](https://t.co/uXP2PF9EG2) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1523408809917808641?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Prime Minister Boris Johnson will unveil a series of post-Brexit reforms designed to "boost the economy and reunite the coalition of voters who brought him to power", says The Times.Monday's TIMES: "Bonfire of EU laws in bid to boost economy" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/RUaxaVTsRf*](https://t.co/RUaxaVTsRf) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1523414543895957505?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) A survey in The Guardian shows more than 2 million adults in the UK have gone without food for a whole day over the past month as they cannot afford to eat, while the Daily Mirror carries research claiming direct debit payments have at least doubled for at least one in four energy users.Guardian front page, Monday 9 May 2022: More than 2m Britons can't afford to eat every day [*pic.twitter.com/HSeQOD2Lu9*](https://t.co/HSeQOD2Lu9) - The Guardian (@guardian) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/guardian/status/1523437591416107008?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tomorrow's front page: Minder legend Dennis dies, 74[*#tomorrowspaperstoday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/PMc5WMmVVg*](https://t.co/PMc5WMmVVg) - The Mirror (@DailyMirror) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DailyMirror/status/1523419413353238528?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Thousands of "frustrated" GPs tell the Daily Express their patients are being failed due to "unsustainable" workloads which have left medics at breaking point.Monday's Daily EXPRESS: "Patients At Risk! GPs Cannot Cope With Workload Pressures" [*#TomorrowsPapersToday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/VTmKSs4IsR*](https://t.co/VTmKSs4IsR) - Allie Hodgkins-Brown (@AllieHBNews) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/AllieHBNews/status/1523419278900228096?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Daily Mail says Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has cancelled a major speech amid ongoing pressure over so-called "beergate".Monday's [*@DailyMailUK*](https://twitter.com/DailyMailUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#MailFrontPages*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/MailFrontPages?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/yBdLQjWA3Y*](https://t.co/yBdLQjWA3Y) - Daily Mail U.K. (@DailyMailUK) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DailyMailUK/status/1523413457848070146?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Sun covers the death of Mr Waterman - who starred in TV shows Minder, The Sweeney and New Tricks - at the age of 74.On tomorrow's front page: Actor Dennis Waterman has died aged 74 after a career spanning seven decades[*https://t.co/XGByKPHvdE*](https://t.co/XGByKPHvdE) [*pic.twitter.com/0XGRRkXMZX*](https://t.co/0XGRRkXMZX) - The Sun (@TheSun) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TheSun/status/1523416744966389763?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) And the Daily Star looks ahead to the "hottest summer ever" as it anticipates five "sizzling" heatwaves which will have the UK "warmer than Italy".Tomorrow's front page: Hottest summer ever! [*#tomorrowspaperstoday*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/TomorrowsPapersToday?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) More here: [*https://t.co/Y9lNBmLimn*](https://t.co/Y9lNBmLimn) [*pic.twitter.com/tM0FjYoEOn*](https://t.co/tM0FjYoEOn) - Daily Star (@dailystar) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/dailystar/status/1523411817547976706?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugees arriving under Ukraine visa schemes up 10,000 in just over a week*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CT-YF61-JBNF-W3YJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2022 Friday 10:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 601 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** The number of people who have received visas and are reaching the UK is growing, but the majority have not yet arrived.

**Body**

The number of refugees arriving in the UK under [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) visa schemes has risen by more than 10,000 in just over a week, figures show.

Some 37,400 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Tuesday, according to [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) figures published on Friday.

This is up from 27,100 by Monday April 25.

The latest arrivals include 19,500 under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine sponsorship scheme - a rise of three-quarters from 11,100 last week.

And 17,900 people have arrived under the family scheme, up from 16,000.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme in particular has faced widespread criticism over the length of time it has been taking for refugees to receive visas and come to the UK.

The latest figures show the number of people who have received visas and are reaching the UK is growing, but the majority - around six in 10 - have not yet arrived.

The PA news agency has reported on multiple cases where families are unable to travel to the UK because not all family members have received permission to travel letters or visas.

Government officials believe some people applied for visas so they have the option of coming to the UK but are staying near Ukraine so they can return home sooner, or have since changed their minds.

Earlier this week Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) admitted the UK could have reacted faster in helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but told ITV's Good Morning Britain "large numbers" are now coming to the UK.

Also this week, a group of would-be hosts threatened the Government with legal action on behalf of hundreds of refugees who have been waiting since March to receive their visas.

The latest figures show 33% of people who have been granted visas under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have travelled to the UK, up from around a fifth last week.

And 49.3% of those with visas under the family scheme have arrived, up from 45.8%.

By Thursday, around 125,100 applications had been made for visas, and 95,500 had been issued.

These include 44,200 applications under the family scheme, of which 36,300 visas have been granted, and 80,900 applications under the sponsorship scheme, of which 59,100 visas have been granted.

More than three-quarters of applications for visas under both schemes have been granted, the figures show.

An indication in advance of individuals or families with care, disability or other vulnerabilities would be useful to enable local services to be put in place to meet specific needs

James Jamieson, LGA chairman

This includes 82.1% of applications under the family scheme, and 73% of Homes for Ukraine applications.

The Local Government Association (LGA) said councils need information on people due to arrive "as quickly as possible" so they can ensure sponsors and accommodation are safe.

LGA chairman and councillor James Jamieson said: "[*Data*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/data) does not always arrive in time to enable this and many councils are still reporting significant issues with this data.

"An indication in advance of individuals or families with care, disability or other vulnerabilities would be useful to enable local services to be put in place to meet specific needs."

Councillor Jamieson also said new arrivals must be swiftly rematched with other sponsors if their match breaks down.

Of those arriving with relatives in the UK, he said: "Some of those families present as homeless once they have arrived, but we are asking that they should be able to be rematched with a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

"Urgent work is needed on how councils can work with government and the community, faith and voluntary sector so those offering their homes can be quickly matched with a family in need."

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US defense secretary blames Putin's war for Poland explosion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WW-GKV1-DY4H-K039-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 19, 2022 Saturday 6:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 621 words

**Byline:** Rob Gillies

**Highlight:** U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin says the deadly missile explosion in Poland this week is a consequence of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s “war of choice” against Ukraine

**Body**

U.S. Defense Secretary [*Lloyd Austin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lloyd-austin) said Saturday the deadly missile explosion in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) this week is a consequence of Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's “war of choice” against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , and said international stability and prosperity are at stake in the conflict.

Austin made the remarks at the annual Halifax International Security Forum which attracts defense and security officials from Western democracies.

“The tragic and troubling explosion in Poland this week reminded the whole world of the recklessness of Putin’s war of choice,” Austin said.

On Tuesday, two workers were killed when a projectile hit the grain-drying facility close to Poland's border with Ukraine. While the source of the missile is under investigation, NATO officials have said they suspect it was fired from a Ukrainian missile battery.

Officials from Poland, NATO and the United States have blamed Russia for the deaths in any case, saying a Ukrainian missile would not have misfired had the country not been forced to defend itself against heavy Russian attacks that day.

Russian officials have cast the conflict as a struggle against NATO — though Ukraine is not a NATO member even if it has been receiving aid from NATO member states.

Austin said NATO is a defensive alliance and poses no threat to Russia.

“Make no mistake: we will not be dragged into Putin’s war of choice. But we will stand by Ukraine as it fights to defend itself. And we will defend every inch of NATO territory,” Austin said.

A Polish investigation to determine the source of the missile and the circumstances of the explosion was launched with support from the U.S. and Ukrainian investigators joined the probe on Friday.

Andriy Yermak, head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, said in an interview broadcast live at the forum that “It’s not right to say it’s a Ukrainian rocket, or a Russian rocket, before the investigation is over.”

Austin called Putin’s invasion the worst crisis in security since the end of the Second World War and said the outcome "will help determine the course of global security in this young century,” Austin said.

“Stability and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic are at stake. The U.S. trading relationship with the European Union is the largest in the world. So when an aggressor manufactures a huge security crisis in Europe, it hits home for everyday Americans and Canadians.”

Austin said the U.S. has deployed or extended more than 20,000 additional U.S. forces to Europe since late February, bringing the total to more than 100,000 American service members across Europe.

“Russia isn’t just waging a war of aggression. It’s also deliberately attacking civilian targets and civilian infrastructure — targets with no military purpose whatsoever. Now, these aren’t just lapses. These aren’t exceptions to the rule. These are atrocities,” Austin said.

He added that the war "shows the whole world the dangers of disorder. That’s the security challenge that we face. It’s urgent, and it’s historic.

But we’re going to meet it ... the basic principles of democracy are under siege around the world,” he said.

He dismissed Putin's claims that “modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia,” calling it a vision of “a world in which autocrats decide which countries are real and which countries can be snuffed out.”

He drew comparison to China's increasing military activities in the Taiwan Strait.

“Beijing, like Moscow, seeks a world where might makes right, where disputes are resolved by force, and where autocrats can stamp out the flame of freedom,” he said.

In its 14th year, about 300 people gather each year at Halifax International Security Forum held at Halifax’s Westin hotel, where about 13 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** now work.

**Load-Date:** November 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Switzerland's top lawyer seeks tools to curb financial crime*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BC-4RN1-DY4H-K497-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2022 Friday 5:05 PM GMT

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**Length:** 616 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Switzerland's new attorney general is pushing parliament to give his office more tools to fight white-collar crime

**Body**

Switzerland's new attorney general is pushing parliament to give his office more tools to fight white-collar crime.

The country's maximum financial penalty on corporations for wrongdoing is just 5 million Swiss francs ($5 million), and that's "ridiculous," Stefan Blaettler said Friday in an interview on the sidelines of his first press conference as attorney general.

Not yet four months into the job, the former police chief of [*Bern*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bern) laid out his ambitions to fight money laundering, terrorism and corruption in Switzerland and to contribute to international justice efforts in the wake of Russia's war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Blaettler said it's been an uphill battle to convince Swiss lawmakers to adopt tougher penalties for wrongdoers.

"This week, I was in parliament and told them, 'You know what you are doing? You can condemn (convict) a bank --a global working bank --and the maximum fine is five million? It's ridiculous'," he said. "That's a third of the pay of a manager."

Speaking in English, Blaettler, 62, said he'd like the legal means afforded to counterparts in countries like the U.S. and Britain to spell out to corporations that "'if ever you want to continue your activity, this is the fine, and these are the rules for the coming 10 years'."

Blaettler also alluded to what anti-corruption groups have decried as an abortive effort in parliament last year to tighten the rules governing the activities of "third parties," such as lawyers who set up and administer huge funds in Switzerland, largely outside of any strict legal boundaries.

He said Switzerland's image was at stake.

"Reputation means business," said Blaettler. "And this country wants to make (do) business, but we want to make sure that the business is correct ... (and) plays by the rules."

"But give us also the instruments which give us the possibility to combat those who won't play by the rules," he said.

As for the war in Ukraine, Blaettler's office last month announced the creation of a task force charged with interviewing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and working with international and European prosecutors.

The attorney general said Friday he had a "duty" to help gather information from refugees and to build case files that could be used to bring to justice any war criminals who might come to Switzerland.

"I'm interested in the second, the third level," Blaettler said. "Every army commander who launches the missiles against the churches and schools and hospitals is a potential war criminal. So as a potential war criminal, that means if he sets foot in Switzerland, we will start an inquiry."

The Swiss government, straying somewhat from its long-touted neutrality, has lined up with European Union sanctions against [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) oligarchs, political elites, and companies.

The Swiss Bankers Association has estimated that the assets of Russian clients deposited in Swizerland's banks total 150-200 billion Swiss francs (about $160-$215 billion), making the country a key repository of Russian money abroad.

Blaettler said his office is gearing up to work with Eurojust, an EU agency that works to fight crime, and the International Criminal Court, whose prosecutor has launched a probe into possible war crimes in Ukraine.

His office has suspended legal cooperation with Russian counterparts, but Swiss authorities have been in contact with Ukrainian law enforcement, notably police.

Swiss federal prosecutors have been in touch with Ukrainian counterparts only "indirectly" so far, through Eurojust, Blaettler said.

"They are struggling for survival," he said. "They are not struggling for getting back $100 million now. That will come."

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Follow [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) 's coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Evidence of war crimes 'beyond comprehension' handed to Metropolitan Police*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658V-GW21-DY4H-K3J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 22, 2022 Friday 12:26 PM GMT

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**Section:** CRIME,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 618 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Police have received around 50 referrals as they gather material for International Criminal Court investigation

**Body**

British police are assessing around 50 allegations of [*war crimes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war-crimes) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , after receiving graphic footage that a senior officer said was "beyond comprehension".

The [*Metropolitan Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/metropolitan-police) is continuing to call for material as they gather evidence in support of the [*International Criminal Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-criminal-court) 's ongoing investigation.

It said specialist officers and detectives were assessing the referrals made so far and expect to receive more.

Although the investigation stretches back to November 2013, Scotland Yard said the majority of allegations relate to incidents since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February "and specifically what appear to be attacks against the civilian population".

Detective Chief Superintendent Dominic Murphy, head of operations for the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, told the PA news agency: "What we're seeing is incredibly harrowing, beyond comprehension.

"In not far off 17 years in counterterrorism, (it is) some of the worst possible footage you could imagine seeing."

The material and testimonies gathered are being tested to a UK evidential standard before being passed onwards, as police continue to speak to Ukrainian communities in the UK.

"This is to make sure anyone here in the UK who has received direct evidence of potential war crimes knows that this can be reported to us, but also to make sure that anyone affected by these terrible events can also be given the support and help that they might need," Det Ch Supt Murphy said.

"We've had around 50 referrals into us and we expect that number to grow over the coming weeks as more and more people who fled from Ukraine arrive here in the UK."

He urged families who have volunteered to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to let anyone who may have witnessed war crimes know how to contact them.

The renewed appeal came as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said evidence of war crimes was mounting.

Michelle Bachelet warned that international humanitarian law had been "tossed aside", adding: "The scale of summary executions of civilians in areas previously occupied by Russian forces are also emerging."

The UN said Russian armed forces have indiscriminately shelled and bombed populated areas, killing civilians and destroying infrastructure in potential war crimes.

Its monitors have also documented indiscriminate weapon use causing civilian casualties and damage by Ukrainian armed forces.

The UN has verified 2,345 civilian deaths and almost 3,000 more injuries since 24 February.

It estimates that at least 3,000 more civilians have died because they couldn't get medical care, and allegations of sexual violence by Russian soldiers are increasing.

In an intelligence update on the war in Ukraine issued on Friday morning, the Ministry of Defence said Russian forces were attempting to "contain Ukrainian resistance" in the city of Mariupol, while heavy fighting continues in Donbas.

The mayor of Mariupol made a new appeal for the "full evacuation" of the city, which Vladimir Putin says is now controlled by Russian forces.

Vadym Boichenko said around 100,000 people remained in the city, where heavy bombardment and siege has left them without electricity, heating or water.

The Metropolitan Police are seeking evidence from people who are currently in the UK. It can include messages, images or videos sent from Ukraine by friends and relatives.

Investigators are also looking to speak to people who may have witnessed or been a victim of a war crime and have since travelled to the UK.

They are not seeking information from the general public highlighting what they have seen in the news or online.

Anyone with information can report it here [*https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/war-crimes/af/report-a-war-crime/*](https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/war-crimes/af/report-a-war-crime/)

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine families' visas must be processed together, says peer offering home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658N-C651-DY4H-K07V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 5:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 574 words

**Byline:** Edd Dracott

**Highlight:** The children of the family Baroness Finlay of Llandaff is helping received their visas days before their mother.

**Body**

A crossbench peer offering her home to a Ukrainian family has said the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme is "demoralising" for refugees and changes must be made to it so families are processed together.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff is offering her [*Cardiff*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cardiff) home to a family but waited over a month for all their visas to be cleared.

After applying for the scheme on the day it launched, March 18, the children received visas separately earlier this week but it was only on Thursday afternoon that their mother received hers.

"They haven't given up and we haven't given up and we're communicating with them almost daily ... but I could really understand if they feel completely demoralised," Baroness Finlay told the PA news agency.

"It is absolutely essential refugees are processed in family groups. Some of us were calling for that from day one."

[*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) figures show fewer than a third of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been issued with visas have arrived in the UK.

A total of 71,800 visas had been issued as of Wednesday under the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, the Government said, but as of Monday, just 21,600 Ukrainians had arrived in the UK - according to figures from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office.

On this discrepancy, Baroness Finlay said: "Emotionally, it is understandable if people have applied for visas and want to hold them almost like an insurance policy, but aren't quite sure how it's all going to pan out, hoping they might get back home.

"The other thing is, because the system has been so clunky and slow, people may have got used to where they are.

"If you've got traumatised children and they're starting to play with some others nearby, you'd be a bit hesitant about breaking that up.

"They're living with uncertainty on absolutely every front, so any crumb of certainty, such as just children forming relationships with other children, is something parents will cling on to."

Baroness Finlay said refugees may also be facing travel issues and be put off by the UK's "unfriendly" approach to immigration, including the Government's new policy of sending some asylum seekers 4,000 miles to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda).

"We've got this reputation of being unfriendly ... and this latest policy involving Rwanda, I think, sullied the overall image," she said.

"These are completely separate schemes, I know they are, but the overall message is not good."

We've got this reputation of being unfriendly... and this latest policy involving Rwanda, I think, sullied the overall image.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

The father of the family Baroness Finlay is helping is a doctor who had worked with her husband, Professor Andrew Finlay, before the Russian invasion.

Baroness Finlay said he has remained in Kyiv to "serve his country", but they have also submitted an application for him in the event he also leaves Ukraine due to injury or other reasons.

The family will live in the home with Baroness Finlay and her husband, who have bought an extra bed and fridge to accommodate the whole family, clearing kitchen cupboards so they can have space to cook their own meals.

They also installed another television and a radio which can be tuned to Ukrainian radio stations so that the refugees can have a link to their home country.

With two children of her own, who have left home, Baroness Finlay has washed some soft toys so that the younger child can have something soft to comfort them.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: It is working! Join us in putting pressure on the government to make our solidarity with Ukrainians count*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657M-9Y61-JBNF-W46T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 16, 2022 Saturday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 627 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** The Independent's Refugees Welcome petition has reached 250,000 signatures

**Body**

People power can make a difference. The outpouring of sympathy for the Ukrainian people has pushed the British government to act - too slowly, but gradually in the right direction. Our [*Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) , revived seven years ago during the Syrian crisis, has mobilised once again to help express the British people's sense of practical solidarity with the Ukrainians in their fight for the right to self-determination.

Now that our petition calling on the government to go further and faster to support [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) has reached a quarter of a million signatures, we are asking our readers to keep up their efforts on behalf of the Ukrainian people.

The resistance of Ukraine's armed forces has been inspiring. But their success in repelling the first wave of Vladimir Putin's invasion may be only the first stage of a long and difficult war. Every setback endured by Mr Putin's forces on the battlefield, however welcome, only increases the chances that Russian forces will intensify their attacks on civilian populations.

So far, the UK government has led the way in supplying the Ukrainians with the defensive weapons they need - a record of which we can be proud. But the Ukrainian people need practical solidarity on the civilian front as well, in the form of protection for the millions displaced by the horrors of war.

Here, Boris Johnson has lagged behind the generosity of the British people, appearing to be happy to allow other countries - Poland, in particular - to play the leading role. On Thursday, as the prime minister set out his unworkable and cruel plan to [*send some non-****Ukrainian******refugees*** *to Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/priti-patel-alf-dubs-rwanda-geneva-b2059272.html%22%20title=%22Priti%20Patel's%20'unworkable'%20Rwanda%20plan%20'may%20breach%20Geneva%20convention%20on%20refugees') , he boasted that his government had "continued the great British tradition of providing sanctuary to those in need", including to "around 50,000 Ukrainians".

Let us file that 50,000 figure as a target to be met and exceeded in short order, because the government's own statistics suggest that only 12,000 Ukrainians fleeing the war had arrived in the UK as of the previous week. And only 1,200 of those had come as part of the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme, which was set up to match refugees with volunteer hosts. Meanwhile, Ireland, with a population one-tenth that of the UK, has already [*taken in nearly twice as many refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/ireland-refugees-direct-provision-scheme-b2044708.html) from the war in Ukraine.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been obstructed by bureaucracy, as the government appears to want to hold back the generosity of the British people and in effect privatise the management of refugees, instead of providing the leadership that is needed.

However, as a young, compassionate and optimistic news organisation, The Independent is determined to focus on the positive side of the story, and to celebrate the pressure brought to bear on the government by active and concerned citizens across the country.

We hope that the first 250,000 signatures on our petition will spur the government to further action, and encourage people to do more to offer practical expressions of support to the Ukrainian people in their long hour of need.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome) campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Sociopathic self-regard backed up by absolutely nothing – Truss is out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66NF-PS11-JBNF-W290-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 20, 2022 Thursday 3:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 594 words

**Byline:** Tom Peck

**Highlight:** The Tory party has now completed its extremely high-budget advertising campaign to prove that it is entirely incapable of governing the country

**Body**

The national lottery runs a game called Set for Life, in which the winner receives £10,000 a month for the rest of their earthly days.

So if you’re trying to work out quite what it was that [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) was smiling about as she absolutely smashed the record for shortest ever British prime minister (and without even having to die to do so), it’s important to remember there are upsides.

That’s exactly what she’s won. A £120,000 a year payout, for evermore, is what ex-prime ministers receive. A token of the nation’s eternal gratitude for absolutely, absolutely nothing. Humiliated forever but, you know, still set for life.

Is it a farce? Fawlty Towers was a farce. Farces are funny. Liz Truss clearly thinks, on some level, it’s hilarious. But we all have our coping strategies. If it feels surreal for all of us, imagine being her. It’s barely two months since she bought her Margaret Thatcher costume. She must regret not renting it.

Still, no one can say she didn’t get a lot done. Alright, so she got nothing done, but there were some great moments. [*Sacking your chancellor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/kwasi-kwarteng-sacked-liz-truss-friendship-b2202835.html) for the crime of agreeing with you about absolutely everything, and then [*appointing a replacement with whom you disagree*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/jeremy-hunt-chancellor-liz-truss-new-prime-minister-b2202928.html) about everything, and then telling him to reverse all of your policies in the hope it might help you cling on? That kind of dysfunction is one for the Guinness books, even these days. And all who witnessed it should, in some regard, consider themselves grateful.

[*Not even the eight sentences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/liz-truss-full-resignation-statement-b2206908.html%22%20title=%22Liz%20Truss’s%20resignation%20statement%20in%20full:%20‘I%20cannot%20deliver%20the%20mandate%20on%20which%20I%20was%20elected’) she could be bothered to read out came close to articulating that she had a clue what she’d done or what had happened. There are rising interest rates everywhere, rising energy prices. The consequences of Putin’s war in Ukraine are felt everywhere. Poland is trying to find homes for five million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. So how do you get to the bottom of Britain being the only country that is making an international tit of itself?

Liz Truss clearly hasn’t. Nor will she ever. The self-regard is too sociopathic, the cocksuredness backed up by considerably less than nothing.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

We should know by now that things only ever get worse. The TV cameras had not yet panned away from the Downing Street door before odd little Tory MPs had appeared, agitating for the return of Boris Johnson. The Tory party has now completed its extremely high-budget advertising campaign to prove that it is entirely incapable of governing the country. It should surely be able to work out that if it returns to the person it threw out before this one, it will only be making that case ever more forcefully.

Already the evidence is clear that they’re going back to the only thing they actually know how to do. Manoeuvring and machinating, factionalising. That a once-serious country seriously has to hear, yet again, talk of who is backing who in a Tory leadership contest. Suella? What’s Gove up to? [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) ’s ruled himself out. Rishi Sunak’s the bookie’s favourite.

Just spare us. Please, please just spare us. A week from now, in theory, there’ll be somebody else standing on the steps of Downing Street, giving yet another moist-eyed, breathy speech, about how much they love their country, about everything it has given them. About unleashing Britain’s potential.

Enough’s enough. No more now. Just unleash yourselves, gallop off over the horizon and never come back. No one even cares if you take your winnings with you.

**Load-Date:** October 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin 'resettling Ukrainians 5,500 miles away in Siberia and far east Russia' -report*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656N-YSX1-DY4H-K4KH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 12, 2022 Tuesday 6:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Shweta Sharma

**Highlight:** People in Mariupol are being asked to sign papers claiming Ukrainian troops shelled their city

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has sent almost 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** thousands of miles away from their home, to resettle in remote corners of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , including [*Siberia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/siberia) and the [*Arctic Circle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/arctic-circle) , according to [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) documents.

[*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) made the emergency order last month to move 95,739 people of the Russian Federation, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Donetsk, and Lugansk away from the war zones to be resettled as far as 5,500 miles away from their homes, the Kremlin decree seen by [*The i*](https://inews.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ukraine-russia-mariupol-siberia-kremlin-1569431) stated.

It comes amid several reports that Russian forces have allegedly [*forcibly disappeared, held captive or interrogated*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-troops-killed-war-video-b2052778.html%22%20title=%22Video%20appears%20to%20show%20Ukrainian%20troops%20killing%20captured%20Russian%20soldiers) people in Ukrainian towns since Mr Putin's invasion of the country on 24 February.

The decree stated that "taking into account the current situation" in Ukraine, the Russian federation "approves the distribution" of citizens to the "constituent entities of the Russian Federation" and asked authorities to "ensure the reception" of 95,739 people.

It included provisions to send 11,398 people to Siberia, 7,218 to the Far East and 7,023 to the North Caucasus, including other regions such as the heavily-militarised republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan.

Citing separate documents, the report added that people in the port city of Mariupol were being asked to sign papers that claimed Ukrainian troops shelled their city. The signatories were reportedly told they cannot return to Ukraine because they will face "persecution".

The number of Ukrainians that have been internally displaced has reached[*over 7.1 million since the invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-unicef-moldova-b2055969.html%22%20title=%22UN:%20Nearly%20two-thirds%20of%20Ukraine's%20children%20have%20fled%20homes) of the country, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

Sima Bahous, director of UN Women, said the "mass displacement with the large presence of conscripts and mercenaries, and the brutality displayed against Ukrainian civilians, has raised all red flags".

Demanding an end to the war, she said: "We are increasingly hearing of rape and sexual violence. These allegations must be independently investigated to ensure justice and accountability."

Meanwhile, an eight-mile convoy of Russian troops seen in [*satellite imagery heading towards Ukraine's Donbas region*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-joe-biden-united-states-donbas-b2055216.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainian%20defenders%20dig%20in%20as%20Russia%20boosts%20firepower) is the latest evidence to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's claim that Russia is preparing for renewed attacks.

Mr Zelensky said Russia's war on Ukraine could be entering a "new stage of terror" citing threats from the use of chemical weapons in the besieged city of Mariupol. The Ukrainian parliament also said that it received reports of Russian forces firing "nitric acid" in the Donetsk region.

It follows inputs from British intelligence on Monday that warned of the potential use of phosphorous by Russian forces in Mariupol.

The US Defence Department has said they are monitoring the unconfirmed reports of the use of chemical munitions.

"These reports, if true, are deeply concerning and reflective of concerns that we have had about Russia's potential to use a variety of riot control agents, including tear gas mixed with chemical agents, in Ukraine," Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

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**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*BBC-Lineker talks 'inching forward' amid staff boycott*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67S3-TG31-JCS0-D3JX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 13, 2023 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 717 words

**Byline:** THOMAS KINGSLEY

**Body**

The BBC is locked in urgent talks with Gary Lineker to get him back to work and end the staff boycott that crippled the broadcaster's weekend sports schedule, The Independent understands.

Senior sources at the BBC said that talks with the Match of the Day host were "inching forward", with the aim of getting Lineker back to work this week. A breakthrough would be announced immediately if reached.

BBC director general Tim Davie has made it clear he wants to see the presenter back on air after he was suspended on Friday for comparing the government's asylum crackdown to 1930s Germany.

His suspension led to dozens of pundits, commentators and presenters staging a mutiny, causing its weekend sports coverage to descend into chaos - with the BBC forced to axe Football Focus, Fighting Talk and Final Score from its schedule.

Match of the Day was replaced on Saturday night by a shortened highlights reel featuring no commentary and without studio punditry, with last night's Match of the Day 2 also set to air without presenters.

Lineker, who has not made any public statements since being taken off air, was tight-lipped as he left his home yesterday, telling reporters "I can't say anything" when asked if he had spoken to Mr Davie.

His son George, however, tweeted his support for his father yesterday, saying: "Proud of the old man after a busy few days. Shouldn't need to apologise for being a good person and standing by his word. The reaction of the public has been overwhelming. Thanks for the support."

Talks come after The Independent revealed the BBC fears it cannot sack Lineker or force him to follow social media rules on impartiality because of ambiguities in his contract. The corporation would be forced to pay millions if they wanted to oust Lineker and would probably lose any legal claim brought by the Match of the Day presenter, senior figures believe.

In his first interview since the fallout, Mr Davie apologised for the disruption caused to the corporation's coverage while praising Lineker as "the best in the business" and said he wants to find a "reasonable solution" to get him back on air.

However, despite one of the biggest meltdowns in the corporation's history, Mr Davie said he would he will not resign. "As a keen sports fan, I know like everyone that to miss programming is a real blow and I am sorry about that. We are working very hard to resolve the situation and make sure that we get output back on air," Mr Davie said.

The BBC's coverage of the Women's Super League match between Chelsea and Manchester United yesterday aired without a pre-match presentation and with world feed commentary used instead of regular BBC presenters.

For a second day, Radio 5 Live also replaced its usual live sports coverage with pre-recorded content. The station did provide match commentary from its two scheduled Premier League games yesterday afternoon but the sports presenter Alistair Bruce-Ball admitted it had been a "very difficult decision" to come on air.

Ahead of the Fulham game against Arsenal, Mr Bruce-Ball said: "It's been a very difficult decision to make personally - I can assure you it's not been taken lightly - but I'm a BBC staff member, I'm a radio commentator for this station and, just like yesterday, we are here to provide our football service to you, our audience."

Former BBC executive Peter Salmon, who was previously controller of BBC One and director of sport, told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg the situation is "complex" and Lineker is a "major figure". He added: "Twenty-five years on 'Match of the Day' - he's more than just a TV presenter, he's a national figure.

"He's got views, he's got passions, he's been involved in looking after ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It may be that Gary's outgrown the job and the role in the BBC. Twenty-five years in, before that Des Lynam, Gary took over, he's been brilliant. Sometimes there's a point at which you cross the line."

Former BBC director-general Mark Thompson said he "absolutely hopes" and "believes" Mr Davie will survive the impartiality row surrounding Lineker. On whether the TV pundit should apologise, he told Sky News Sophy Ridge on Sunday: "I don't agree with his comments and I personally think that he was wrong to say what he said, but I don't think it's for me to decide how that issue is resolved."

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Japan's top envoy to bring back 20 Ukrainians from Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6551-P701-DY4H-K1GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2022 Monday 4:08 PM GMT

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**Length:** 572 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, who is visiting Poland to assess how Japan can help displaced Ukrainians, says he will bring 20 back to Japan with him, as Tokyo seeks to play a greater role in international support for Ukraine

**Body**

[*Japanese*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, who has been visiting [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to assess how Japan can help displaced Ukrainians, said Monday he will bring 20 back to Japan with him, as [*Tokyo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tokyo) seeks to play a greater role in international support for Ukraine.

During three days in Poland, Hayashi visited facilities for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) and held talks with Polish officials, international humanitarian organizations and civil groups to assess how Japan can provide support.

"As I observed the severe situation faced by Ukrainians who were forced to flee their country because of the Russian invasion, I have renewed my resolve that Japan should cooperate with international society and provide the utmost assistance so they can return to ordinary lives as soon as possible," Hayashi told reporters.

Japan has an extremely strict refugee policy and has been reluctant to fully accept migrant workers, making its offer to accept Ukrainians unusual. However, the government has carefully called them evacuees, and it is still unclear if the Ukrainian situation will change its immigration policy.

Tokyo expects the 20 evacuees will stay in Japan for at least six months, and will provide further support if needed, said Deputy Justice Minister Jun Tsushima, who is traveling with Hayashi.

Tokyo has previously accepted about 300 other Ukrainians, all relatives of about 2,000 Ukrainian residents in Japan who arrived on their own since the Russian invasion began.

Hayashi said he was impressed by the high level of care and support being given to refugees in Poland, including food, medical care, counseling for those with trauma and support for children. "What we observed here will certainly help us plan our support for them in Japan," he said.

The 20 people previously contacted Japanese embassies in Ukraine or Poland but had difficulty arranging their own transportation to Japan, Hayashi said, declining to give further details because of privacy reasons.

Hayashi and the refugees are expected to arrive in Tokyo on Tuesday.

He met with them on Monday to assure them of their safety and support in Japan, where several cities, including Tokyo and Osaka, have offered to provide housing, jobs, education for children and other necessities.

Japan, which has a territorial dispute with Russia, took milder steps when Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014.

But this time, due to fears of the impact of the Russian invasion on East Asia, where China's military has become increasingly assertive, Tokyo has taken tougher measures in line with the United States and Europe, while providing support for Ukraine.

Hayashi held talks earlier Monday with his Polish counterpart, Zbigniew Rau, as well as Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and President Andrzej Duda.

At a joint news conference with Rau, Hayashi praised Poland's support for war-displaced Ukrainians and pledged that Japan will accept as many evacuees as possible as a humanitarian measure and to show its "solidarity" with Poland.

"In order to protect the free and open international order, Japan will continue to cooperate with its strategic partner, Poland," Hayashi said.

As part of those efforts, Japan will continue to impose tough sanctions on Russia, Hayashi said.

Japan has pledged $100 million in emergency humanitarian aid to Poland and its neighbors that are accepting war-displaced Ukrainians, in addition to an earlier pledge of $100 million in humanitarian aid.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The government must urgently rectify its failed Ukrainian refugee response*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656B-B631-JBNF-W24C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2022 Sunday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 595 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: The scale of the devastation in Ukraine and the ongoing outrageous murder of civilians only highlights the urgency of the need to provide sanctuary to its people

**Body**

There is no shortage of irony that it is clearly far easier to get a British prime minister into a foreign conflict zone than it is to get a normal Ukrainian citizen out of one.

Boris Johnson has taken [*a surprise visit to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-ukraine-kyiv-train-b2054926.html%22%20title=%22How%20did%20Boris%20Johnson%20get%20to%20Kyiv?%20PM%20took%20secret%20train%20trip%20into%20Ukraine) , to be pictured walking around Kyiv with President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymr-zelensky). Pre-agreed words have been put on social media by various Ukrainian politicians, describing Johnson as "the leader", in international terms, in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's fight against Russian aggression.

There's no doubt that the UK is playing a pivotal role in arguably the most important aspect of the conflict. It has provided vast numbers of weapons; and, importantly, weapons that have achieved cult status among Ukrainian fighters. The firing of handheld anti-tank missiles has been accompanied by shouts of "God Save The Queen!".

But the scale of the devastation in Ukraine and the ongoing outrageous murder of civilians only highlights the urgency of the need to provide sanctuary to the Ukrainian people, and it is here that the UK is anything but "the leader".

A crossbench peer, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, is still trying to get through the refugee visa process so that a mother and two children, people who are known to her, can come and live in her family home.

She has said that there is "a failure of recognition that this uncertainty is adding to the trauma that these people have already experienced. These aren't just pieces of paper, these are people... and these are people who have lost everything".

Baroness Finlay's experience is no different from anybody else's. She is particularly concerned that the three visas have all had to be processed individually, suggesting that mothers and children may be separated from each other for a time.

When the UK opened its Ukrainian refugee scheme, almost half a million people had applied within the first 48 hours. Home Office minister Kit Malthouse said on Sunday morning that 40,000 visas had been approved, and up to 12,000 completed.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

The exact number of people who have fled Ukraine in terror is not known, but is quite possibly 10 million or more. Poland has received millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. For a country of the size and wealth of the UK, 12,000 is a pitiful number. When asked about this failure, Priti Patel, the home secretary, said: "I apologise with frustration."

If Johnson wishes to trumpet his successes with regard to the assistance the UK has provided Ukraine, which he most certainly does, he must address the failure of the UK's refugee policy as a matter of utmost urgency. It is not as if he doesn't understand the mortal danger faced by the people of Ukraine. They need the security provided by a safe place to live, every bit as much as they need the security that comes out of the barrel of a gun.

Johnson, we must presume, is safely back from Kyiv. It is a right of passage that he must make open to hundreds of thousands more, without any further delay.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CHarriet.Williamson%40independent.co.uk%7C44b46804ea604841cd8a08d9fc33883c%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637818120540878043%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=fxFRbHYzF8K9%2F9swnZLj2eNWpWFo2siaK1gVBLG9e24%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Joe Biden can't seem to stop himself speaking from the heart over Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-84V1-JBNF-W0Y5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 10:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** POLITICS EXPLAINED,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 578 words

**Byline:** Chris Stevenson

**Highlight:** POLITICS EXPLAINED: The US president is used to seeing the word 'gaffe' in headlines next to his name - but the White House knows his words are more important now than ever, writes Chris Stevenson

**Body**

It had been a little while since the word "gaffe" and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) appeared so prominently together in the headlines - but during his trip to Europe in recent days we had three examples in swift succession.

As he was hailing the heroism of the Ukrainians, Biden told US troops: "you're going to see when you're there" - with officials later having to qualify that nothing had changed about the White House stance on direct involvement of American soldiers: "The president has been clear we are not sending US troops to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). " Then Biden said [*he would respond "in kind"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-nato-russia-chemical-weapon-b2043704.html%22%20title=%22Joe%20Biden%20says%20Nato%20would%20respond%20'in%20kind'%20to%20Russian%20use%20of%20chemical%20weapons) to any use of chemical weapons by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in Ukraine, which led to the bizarre situation of national security adviser Jake Sullivan having to tell reporters that the US has "no intention of using chemical weapons period, under any circumstance".

Then came Saturday's remark, when Biden said of the Russian president, [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) : "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power". [*The ad-libbed remark*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-biden-speech-denounces-putin-b2044735.html%22%20title=%22'This%20man%20cannot%20remain%20in%20power':%20Biden%20denounces%20Putin%20and%20rallies%20Nato%20allies%20in%20fiery%20speech%20in%20Poland) caused a few officials to grimace, I'm sure, given that whatever the president says will carry extra weight in the middle of an international crisis. So the White House issued another clarifying - ish - statement, aides probably dizzy from having to furiously "step back" so often: "The president's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbours or the region. He was not discussing Putin's power in Russia, or regime change."

US officials had been briefing that the aim was to stay away from the kind of Cold War mentality that gives Putin exactly the type of "imperial" enemy that he seeks - and allows him the space to start using the same language. Although the first response from the Kremlin was relatively temperate: "That's not for Biden to decide," Putin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told Reuters. "The president of Russia is elected by Russians."

Biden's verbal discipline has never been absolute - to put it mildly - with James Clapper, former director of national intelligence of the United States from 2010 to 2017, [*telling CNN*](https://us.cnn.com/videos/world/2022/03/27/james-clapper-president-biden-putin-remarks-nrwknd-vpx.cnn) that such remarks should not be totally unexpected, given what Biden was witnessing. "I think I know him well enough from my exposé with him when he was vice president... he had visited with some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and I think that probably affected him emotionally - and I think that statement came out because he believes it," he said.

During the last week Biden has also called Putin "a butcher" and a "war criminal". In regards to that second one, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Biden was "speaking from his heart" rather than anything else - a statement that Clapper's assessment of the "cannot remain in power" remark seems to back up. During the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, John F Kennedy sought to avoid provoking Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev during the face-off, JFK biographer Fredrik Logevall later said, by trying not to "personalise" the situation. Biden appears not to be able to do that, despite having stayed mostly on message when it comes to the unity of the west against Russian aggression.

Both Biden and the White House will be holding out some hope that Putin will agree to talks and that diplomacy may yet win out, and so there is a point to the hastily published clarifications of the president's words. But Clapper believes there may be one other audience Biden aimed Saturday's remark at, the Russian people. After all, even the Kremlin has said that Putin's fate is theirs to decide.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden's Ukraine 'gaffes' are being spoken from the heart*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653F-VNW1-JCS0-D07J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 28, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 575 words

**Byline:** CHRIS STEVENSON

**Body**

It had been a little while since the word "gaffe" and Joe Biden appeared so prominently together in the headlines - but during his trip to Europe in recent days we had three examples in swift succession.

As he was hailing the heroism of the Ukrainians, Biden told US troops "you're going to see when you're there" - with officials later having to qualify that nothing had changed about the White House stance on direct involvement of American soldiers: "The president has been clear we are not sending US troops to Ukraine." Then Biden said he would respond "in kind" to any use of chemical weapons by Russia in Ukraine, which led to the bizarre situation of national security adviser Jake Sullivan having to tell reporters that the US has "no intention of using chemical weapons period, under any circumstance".

Then came Saturday's remark, when Biden said of the Russian president, Vladimir Putin: "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power." The ad-libbed remark caused a few officials to grimace, I'm sure, given that whatever the president says will carry extra weight in the middle of an international crisis. So the White House issued another clarifying - ish - statement, aides probably dizzy from having to furiously "step back" so often: "The president's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbours or the region. He was not discussing Putin's power in Russia, or regime change."

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**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugees that Shapps is due to host unable to enter UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654Y-MXK1-JCS0-D035-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 4, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 591 words

**Byline:** ROB MERRICK

**Body**

Grant Shapps has revealed he is struggling to get the Ukrainian family he wants to host into the UK, laying bare the long delays dogging the refugee scheme. The transport secretary made the offer three weeks ago - and was "in touch" with the family concerned a week later - but the application has still not been processed.

The three-generation family from Kyiv, a mother, her six-year-old son, her grandmother, 75, and their dog Max, are due to live at Mr Shapps's home in Hertfordshire, after he "found them on Facebook". But, speaking to Times Radio, Mr Shapps revealed his struggles, saying: "I just want to get the family over here, you know, and feel that they're safe and living with us."

The problems emerged after the government admitted that just one in 10 applications to the Homes for Ukraine had been granted - only 2,700 of 28,300 applications, by last Wednesday. The UK, alone in Europe, has refused to waive normal bureaucratic visa rules, arguing it would expose the country to potential terrorism or further chemical attacks by Russian agents. The newly-appointed refugees minister has admitted only "hundreds" of refugees have arrived in Britain under the scheme - after Boris Johnson declined to disclose the number.

Richard Harrington, the refugees minister, is vowing to speed up the processing, setting the ambitious target of dealing with cases within two days and to bring in 15,000 people each week. The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been set up to allow refugees with no family links to come to Britain and be sponsored by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so.

A staggering 150,000-plus people quickly registered their interest in becoming hosts - but many have since lashed out at the red tape of a 51-page application form, while the lives of potential refugees are in grave danger. Mr Shapps has explored enrolling the child at a local primary school and will use one of his own children's bedrooms to house the family while they are at university.

He admitted the delays he is facing are "frustrating" but defended the lengthy form-filling and security checks involved. "It wouldn't be beyond Putin to put Russian saboteurs into groups of people fleeing the country, and I think it is reasonable [that] the UK would want to carry out some checks," he argued. He is the only cabinet minister believed to be hosting refugees, after the prime minister and Levelling Up secretary Michael Gove suggested it would be too difficult for them to do so.

Lord Harrington told The Sunday Times: "I am happy to say publicly that my target is 48 hours from when they download the application form to when they are given permission to travel."

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the government to go further and faster to help Ukrainians fleeing the war, with more than 183,000 people signing our petition asking ministers to provide more supplies of food, clothing and shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to do more to make the UK a safe haven for them.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 4 million refugees have fled Ukraine since invasion, says UN*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653Y-5TS1-DY4H-K38P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 12:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 632 words

**Byline:** Tom Batchelor

**Highlight:** Poland has welcomed about 2.3 million Ukrainians while many others are in Romania, Moldova and Hungary

**Body**

More than 4 million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have now fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its invasion, according to the [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) refugee agency ([*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) ).

With a population of about 44 million, this means that nearly a tenth of the Ukrainian population has left the country in five weeks.

Some 2.3 million have sought sanctuary in neighbouring [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , and more than 600,000 are in Romania, [*data*](http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine) provided by UNHCR showed.

[*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) and [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) have accepted 387,000 and 364,000 people respectively, while [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) has welcomed 281,000.

Around 350,000 people have also crossed into Russia, although authorities there have been [*accused of forcibly relocating*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-civilians-hostage-b2043797.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20Russia%20accused%20of%20abducting%20400,000%20civilian%20'hostages') thousands of civilians from Mariupol over the border.

The movement of people out of Ukraine since [*Vladimir Putin's invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-war-latest-peace-putin-kyiv-b2047126.html) began on 24 February has triggered the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, according to the UN.

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, tweeted confirmation of the bleak milestone and said he would be in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv to discuss ways to help those "displaced by this senseless war".

In a note accompanying the data, UNHCR said: "The escalation of conflict in Ukraine has caused destruction of civilian infrastructure and civilian casualties and has forced people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance.

"In the first week, more than a million refugees from Ukraine crossed borders into neighbouring countries, and many more are on the move both inside and outside the country.

"In light of the emergency and paramount humanitarian needs of refugees from Ukraine, an inter-agency regional refugee response is being carried out, in support of refugee-hosting countries' efforts."

With millions of uprooted Ukrainians now spread across Europe, the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) is under mounting pressure to play its part in the humanitarian effort.

However, there have been just 2,700 visas granted to people wanting to come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, latest figures show.

The scheme opened on 14 March, with the aim of allowing individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring Ukrainians -including those with no family ties to the UK -to safety.

Britain retains a visa requirement on security grounds while other European countries have waived checks in response to the humanitarian crisis created by Russia's war.

The total number of applications from Ukrainians wanting to come to the UK was 59,500 as of 29 March, the Home Office said.

This includes 28,300 under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and 31,200 under the separate Ukraine Family Scheme, which allows Ukrainians to join relatives living in the UK.

There have been 25,500 visas issued altogether, including 2,700 under the sponsorship scheme and 22,800 under the family scheme.

On Tuesday, UNHCR warned that thousands of Ukrainians who were already in the UK at the time of the Russian invasion risk being left in a "precarious state" unless the government moves to quickly grant them leave to remain.

Workers on short-term work visas are among those affected, the agency said, in particular agricultural workers who are no longer needed by their employers or who cannot continue in that line of work.

"While it's encouraging to see the UK take steps to welcome thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to the UK, we mustn't forget the thousands that were already here when the war started in February," said Larry Bottinick, Acting UNHCR Representative to the UK.

"They too can't now return and need legal security in order to become self-sufficient."

UNHCR is also calling on the UK to extend family reunion rights to all Ukrainians in the country. The agency says not all Ukrainians currently in the UK, for example those on short term visas, are able to bring their family out through this scheme.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko tells protesters to 'keep together' with Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6534-F281-DY4H-K2HH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 6:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 565 words

**Byline:** Ted Hennessey

**Highlight:** London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who was at the march, declared the capital 'will always welcome refugees'.

**Body**

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) mayor [*Vitali Klitschko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vitali-klitschko) has told thousands of protesters in central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , including politicians and celebrities, to "keep together" with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

A huge sea of protesters, draped in blue and yellow colours, started near Hyde Park, before snaking through the roads towards Trafalgar Square.

They chanted "stand with Ukraine" and "stop the war", with roads being closed off and traffic stopped.

London Mayor [*Sadiq Khan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadiq-khan) , who was at the march, declared the capital "will always welcome refugees".

Klitschko, a former world heavyweight boxing champion, speaking from a military bunker, told the crowd on a big screen near Nelson's Column: "We defend right now the same principles.

"Please keep together with our country, keep together with Ukraine."

The crowd, many from Ukraine, also marched beneath Yoko Ono's Imagine Peace message on an electronic billboard in Piccadilly.

Cheers rang out at Trafalgar Square as a message from Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky was played.

Speaking ahead of the demonstration, Mr Khan said he was there to condemn Russia's "barbaric aggression".

The London Mayor told the PA news agency: "Londoners over the last few weeks have shown that we're opening our arms to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, whether it's by donating money to those charities doing a brilliant job in Ukraine or by opening our homes to those fleeing Ukraine."

Asked on Sky News if he will be taking in a Ukrainian family, Mr Khan said: "We personally won't be for a variety of reasons not least protections, security reasons and lack of space."

He continued: "It is important throughout the next few days, weeks to make it far, far easier, and much more easier for those who are fleeing Ukraine to come here.

"You compare our Government's actions versus the actions of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, it's embarrassing.

"We've got be doing much more."

Crowds held banners reading "stop (Vladimir) Putin's war", "no fly zone" and "solidarity with Ukraine" and sang as police officers followed.

The London leader also urged those in the capital to continue their "generosity" towards refugees.

He added: "I'm full of admiration for anybody who has the space to provide a room for those who have fled Ukraine.

"It's really important families are not left to their own devices, the Government has to step up and support them."

It comes as Mr Khan announced more than £1.1 million in funding to support migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum in London.

Labour's shadow foreign secretary David Lammy, who was also in attendance, led a chant of "stand with Ukraine".

He said: "We come here to send a message to the beautiful people of Ukraine that we are with you in this fight."

Mr Lammy also called for "dirty Russian money" that has "polluted" the UK economy to "end".

Ukraine's ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko told the crowd: "I urge you to keep up the good work, the military and humanitarian aid.

"The sanctions must continue until the Russian economy has stopped in its tracks."

Poetry was also read out by Oscar-winning actress Dame Emma Thompson, who was draped in a Ukrainian flag, and Skins star Kaya Scodelario.

Protester Zenadin Tkalenko, 43, of Croydon, south-east London - originally from Kyiv, said: "My country is under attack, the UK I hope can help.

"Putin is a monster who needs to be stopped, people are dying and homes are being destroyed.

"This is a big country and it needs to help."

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The government shouldn't be boasting about the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme just yet*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-DC81-JBNF-W13G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 5:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS ANALYSIS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:3

**Length:** 548 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** There is more to be done before Britain can claim a success of its sponsorship scheme, May Bulman writes

**Body**

Within hours of the UK's Homes for [*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) scheme portal going live last Monday, the government boasted that 44,000 members of the British public had already registered their interest in hosting those who have fled the war. Most will be aware that the figure has since climbed to more than 150,000.

Off the back of this, Sajid Javid said he expected to "see hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians arrive here in the UK". The health secretary told LBC this week that this shows how the UK is "supporting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in every single way that we can", echoing levelling up secretary Michael Gove's claim last week that the scheme draws on "our proud history of supporting the vulnerable in their hour of greatest need".

The sponsorship scheme, launched on Friday, allows Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so.

With millions of Ukrainians having fled from their homes, many of them now languishing in crowded humanitarian centres in bordering countries, one would expect that the 150,000 rooms being offered in the UK would be quickly filled up. A warm and secure home is exactly what these traumatised women and children are in desperate need of right now.

But progress on actually getting refugees into UK homes under the scheme appears to be slow - perhaps not yet even happening at all.

The government has [*refused to reveal how many*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-russia-refugees-uk-homes-b2040771.html) ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have applied to the scheme since it opened for applications on Friday - quite a contrast to the speed and willingness with which it gave out the figures on people coming forward to host.

Charities are convinced the number of applications so far will amount to a "trickle". Lawyers say the application process is "convoluted" and "nigh on impossible" to complete, with "very difficult" forms to fill in and all documents submitted required to be in PDF format - a difficult feat when many are applying from crowded spaces from their mobile phones.

Before they even get to this stage, the scheme requires that each Ukrainian refugee applying can name the person in the UK who will host them. Mr Gove made the questionable suggestion last week that this could be done via social media. This led to a [*flood of Facebook pages being set up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-social-media-sponosrship-scheme-uk-b2040480.html) designed to "match" hosts with refugees - prompting concerns it leaves vulnerable people exposed to abuse.

To make matters worse, volunteers working with refugees on the ground in bordering countries say most Ukrainians are not even aware that the scheme exists - or if they do have no help to apply. One charity said there were no UK representatives encouraging refugees to go to the UK, adding that there was "no guidance on the UK visa applications at all".

The government could prove that these are not legitimate problems by agreeing to publish the numbers for the scheme and showing us that in fact large numbers have applied - but it has refused to do so. Everything we know so far points to an application process that is complicated and difficult to access, not least for people who have just fled a war zone.

To actually help Ukrainians, the scheme must be far more accessible and go further than inviting 150,000 Brits to click a button to say they would like to help. There is nothing to boast about yet.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-9P01-DY4H-K28R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 11:37 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 642 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Officials in Mariupol say last week's [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) airstrike on a theatre used as a bomb shelter killed 300 people. President Biden, meanwhile, heads to Poland to meet with U.S. troops and some of millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that fled the war.

Here's a look at the coverage of the war from our journalists in Ukraine, Washington and beyond. All times Eastern. You can find all our text, photos and video by going to our Russia-Ukraine war hub on [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Newsroom.

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SENT/DEVELOPING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR -The government of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol says 300 people died in a Russian airstrike on March 16 on a theatre being used as a bomb shelter. The post Friday on the city government [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) channel cited eyewitnesses for the toll of "about 300." It was not immediately clear whether emergency workers had finished excavating the site or how the eyewitnesses arrived at the horrific death toll. When the theater was struck, an enormous inscription reading "CHILDREN" was posted outside in Russian, intended to be visible from the skies above. By Nebi Qena and Andrea Rosa. SENT:1,400 words, photos, videos, developing. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-US-EUROPE - The United States and the European Union have announced a new partnership to reduce the continent's reliance on Russian energy. The White House is billing it as the start of a years-long effort to further isolate Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. By Chris Megerian and Cathy Bussewitz. SENT: 700 words, photos. WITH RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR-EU-SANCTIONS (sent).

POLAND BIDEN - President Joe Biden's visit to Poland as his final stop in Europe this week offers a chance to reassure a key NATO ally on the frontline of the war in Ukraine and thank Poles for their outpouring of help to refugees fleeing the Russian military. But Poland is also a complicated ally run by populist right-wing leaders accused of eroding democratic norms, who clearly preferred ex-President Donald Trump. Many Poles will hope for a sign that Washington will continue to urge adherence to democratic values, hoping that won't be forgotten among the need for wartime Western unity. By Vanessa Gera. SENT: 900 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR SO FAR - President Vladimir Putin's war is approaching a new, potentially more dangerous phase after a month of fighting left Russian forces surprisingly stalled by an outnumbered foe. He is left with stark choices - how and where to replenish his spent ground forces, whether to attack the flow of Western arms to Ukrainian defenders, and at what cost he might escalate or widen the war beyond Ukraine. By Bob Burns. SENT: 1,200 words, photos.

RUSSIA DEFECTIONS --The resignation of Anatoly Chubais, who was President Vladimir Putin's envoy to international organizations for sustainable development, was not the first resignation of a state official over the war with Ukraine, but it was one of the most striking. A number of prominent Russians in recent weeks, from TV journalists to former officials, have left their posts and condemned the war. SENT: 800 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-GOLD-EXPLAINER - The U.S. and its allies are moving to prohibit financial transactions with Russia's Central Bank that involve Russian gold. A senior administration official says the intention is to blunt Russia's ability to use its international reserves as the United States and its allies tighten sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. By Fatima Hussein. SENT: 450 words, photos.

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PHOTOS

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AP PHOTOS: Day 29: Images of death, survival in Ukraine war

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top consumer-ready VIDEOS:

Kharkiv houses burn amid Russian shelling

Biden vows Ukraine aid, warns Putin on chemical attack

Images of death, survival in Ukraine war

- The AP

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Careful what UK wished for; Simon Calder explores the British government's identity crisis when it comes to labelling stickers on cars abroad*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-JMN1-F072-41YC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 20, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** TRAVELLER; Pg. 56

**Length:** 597 words

**Byline:** SIMON CALDER

**Body**

Do you own a car? Does it have a GB sticker? Are you heading for Continental Europe? If you answered those in the affirmative, it is my duty to inform you that, ahead of your journey, the government says you must "cover or remove" the offending item.

The reason: during the coronavirus pandemic ministers found time to ask the United Nations to change the decades-old "GB" identifier to "UK". A Department for Transport spokesperson told me: "Changing the national identifier from GB to UK symbolises our unity as a nation."

That is not quite what the French make of it, according to Bill Swan, a retired business architect who is currently on holiday in France. He and his wife Deirdre paused at an aire on their way south from the port of Dieppe: specifically Beaune-les-Mines, just north of Limoges. "We were feted," he reports. "A French couple pulled in as we were leaving, excitedly stopping us and pointing to our UK car sticker."

Marvellous that the French have decided to forgive the venom of Brexit and share the joy for our unity as a nation, you might conclude. But hang on... "We were asked which town we were fleeing from," says Mr Swan, who is from lovely Rye in East Sussex. Last time I checked, there was no one escaping from this charming Cinque Port on the edge of Romney Marsh.

A case of mistaken motoring identity, it turned out: "They had taken us for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. My poor French response probably intensified their misapprehension." You can understand the mistake: French motorists are accustomed to the GB identifier for British vehicles, and it would be reasonable to assume that Ukraine's identifier is UK (in fact it is UA).

Mr Swan, a keen supporter of Remain, briefly contemplated seeking the couple's sponsorship of an application for French nationality. And then he "started to wonder why the British government felt the need to switch from GB to UK?".

He describes it as "a pathetic signal that we haven't forgotten about Northern Ireland, even if we have put a border down the Irish Sea", and adds: "Nobody in France seems to have noticed until it provoked the incorrect assumption, and about half of British cars travelling seem to still be on 'GB' stickers."

As Mr Swan and every other Remainer knows, Leave was propelled to victory in the 2016 EU referendum by an alliance of the right wing of the Conservative party, Nigel Farage's Ukip and trade unions such as the RMT. It was brave of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workersto announce it was "campaigning hard" for Leave, given the economic damage that the UK leaving the European Union would cause to its members' interests, especially in the ferry business.

One key reason: to "end attacks on seafarers". The RMT explained: "The EU has promoted undercutting." That is the practice of replacing crew with cheaper overseas labour. Leave the European Union and that threat will disappear, was the implication. But on Thursday, P&O Ferries announced it was doing exactly what the union warned about.

Long-serving crew were told to leave their ships and await "a major announcement" - which turned out to be a short video message telling them with brutal brevity that their careers had just ended. Having spent Thursday and Friday in Dover, the port most affected, my hope is that P&O Ferries will feel the heat of public opinion and make a humiliating U-turn - apologising to, and bringing back, the seafarers.

I wonder if the RMT union, in turn, might say sorry for the failure of Brexit to prevent the mass sackings we were warned about? Meanwhile, drive that UK car with pride.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Kate Forbes: I know challenge of returning to work after maternity leave*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PN-PSN1-JBNF-W0MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2023 Monday 2:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Rebecca McCurdy

**Highlight:** Speaking during a visit to meet female entrepreneurs in Kilmarnock, the SNP leadership hopeful spoke of juggling her campaign with motherhood.

**Body**

[*SNP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/snp) leadership candidate Kate [*Forbes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/forbes) has shared her experience of returning to work after maternity leave in the hope of inspiring other women.

Ms Forbes, who is still on maternity leave from her role as Finance Secretary, gave birth to her daughter Naomi in August 2022.

However, she put herself in the running to replace [*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) as SNP leader and first minister despite the challenges.

Ms Forbes visited the Halo project in [*Kilmarnock*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kilmarnock) , East Ayrshire, to meet female entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Speaking ahead of international women’s day, Ms Forbes said she was keen to encourage women into the workplace – but she said the issue of childcare, which is often a significant barrier in enabling women to return to work – was “particularly acute” as she hits the campaign trail following the birth of her daughter.

She told the PA news agency: “I live outside of the central belt – it’s about four hours one way to get to Glasgow or Edinburgh and I’ve got a very young baby, and I think a lot of mums will be very sympathetic about how difficult it is to go back to work having had a child – never mind including those distances.”

Before the MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch announced her intention to stand for the top job, questions had been asked about whether it would be the right time for Ms Forbes to enter the leadership race.

There were comments when it was first mooted that I might stand that it wouldn’t be possible for me with such a young family

Kate Forbes

She added: “I am firmly of the view that it needs to be possible (for women to return to work).

“There were comments when it was first mooted that I might stand that it wouldn’t be possible for me with such a young family.

“And yet, it needs to be possible. And if I can do it, then I hope that’s pioneering and supports other women who might want to go back into work, into challenging jobs, with a very young family.”

Her SNP colleagues Angus Robertson and John Swinney both ruled themselves out of the leadership race due to family commitments.

Scotland is part of the international family of nations, and we stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine. I met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to assure them that if elected First Minister, Scotland would always welcome refugees, and we stand ready to support Ukraine when it rebuilds. [*pic.twitter.com/SLi3gw6ZVz*](https://t.co/SLi3gw6ZVz) — Kate Forbes MSP (@\_KateForbes) [*March 3, 2023*](https://twitter.com/_KateForbes/status/1631602502750679042?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

She also told PA that finding the right balance was “hugely challenging”, adding: “I’m speaking to you this morning having not slept terribly much at all last night, because of a seven-month-old baby that screamed constantly all night.

“So I’m not saying that it isn’t really difficult. And ultimately, it’s about the support network that you have around you, which is why for families and for mothers who might not have that support network we need to do more as a government to provide support to them.

“I’m certainly here with the lived experience, the scars and bags under my eyes, when it comes to how difficult it is.”

During her visit to Kilmarnock, Ms Forbes met with Dr Marie Macklin, founder and executive chair of the Halo project, where she expressed the importance of protecting women’s rights.

She said: “I want my daughter to grow up in a country free of prejudice, harassment and violence targeted at women and girls and so this is as much a mother’s mission as it is a politician’s pledge.”

Rival candidate [*Humza Yousaf*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/humza-yousaf) also spoke about the demands of family life during a visit to Lanark on Monday.

With an intense period of debates and hustings events scheduled over the next week, Mr Yousaf said he was holding up “not too bad” and felt the campaign had been “respectful” so far.

He toldPA: “It’s not necessarily helped by my three-year-old who came into my bed last night and decided to wake me up at three in the morning.

“But this is not just an issue I’m dealing with, I think other candidates are no doubt dealing with this too.”

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ireland backs further Russia sanctions - Taoiseach*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652P-BS01-JBNF-W0R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 5:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 575 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** European leaders and US president Joe Biden gathered in Brussels on Thursday for discussions on the latest response to the war in Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) is open to more sanctions against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , the Irish premier has said as he attends a key European Council meeting in [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels).

European leaders and US president [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) gathered in Brussels on Thursday for discussions on the latest response to the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Taoiseach Micheal Martin, who tested negative for Covid-19 after several days of isolating in Washington last week, joined other leaders on Thursday afternoon for the summit.

He told reporters he was "feeling very good" and praised the benefits of vaccination.

The EU meeting comes alongside Nato and G7 gatherings, as Western leaders try to remain united in the face of Russian aggression.

Mr Martin said that Ireland would back further measures against Russia, but stressed the importance of "unity of purpose" among EU states.

He accused Vladimir Putin of creating an "appalling humanitarian crisis".

"This is a long haul, we're very clear on this.

"We support the Commission's focus on the longer haul energy implications in terms of reducing dependency on Russian oil and gas.

"Critically, looking at the energy security and energy supply issue for the autumn."

On sanctions, Mr Martin said that Ireland supported "the widest and strongest set of sanctions".

"Obviously, there are implications for other member states in terms of energy"

He said that there had to be a "balance" between hurting Russia and not leaving the EU exposed.

"Ireland is open to more sanctions and also that we enforce the sanctions we have now put in place," he told reporters.

"We are very open to more sanctions, but we want to ensure that the existing sanctions are not circumvented."

Namechecking India in particular, he said that "certain countries need to get off the fence".

"People cannot stand on the sidelines here, in the face of this barbaric war."

Ireland has already taken in over 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the war began.

"This is an appalling displacement of so many people, and migration from a war zone, and therefore we have to do everything we possibly can to facilitate and respond to all those fleeing Ukraine," Mr Martin said.

Mr Martin also raised again the possibility that Ireland might hold a citizens' assembly as part of a nationwide debate on what he called "broader issues of European Union security".

Ireland is a militarily neutral nation and has been sending non-lethal aid to the Ukrainian army.

Irish European Affairs Minister Thomas Byrne said ahead of the meeting that he expected a "broadening" of sanctions.

"Ireland certainly will be working towards that, in supporting that," he said.

"The difficulty of course is that you want to make sure that Russia feels the pinch very, very seriously.

"But that we don't end up feeling a greater pinch than Russia.

"The punishment has to be to Russia, not to anybody else."

However, he said it is important EU leaders remain unanimous over any possible measures.

He said while it is possible the EU could take more drastic action on Russian oil and gas imports, he acknowledged such a proposal has different levels of support in European capitals.

"You'll have heard some other leaders cast some doubt on that," Mr Byrne told RTE radio.

"Anything that happens at the European Council has to happen in a unanimous way.

"Discussion can take a different turn. And that's certainly possible today.

"This is democracy. It's complicated.

"Twenty-seven countries, and indeed parliaments in some cases, have to mandate leaders getting together."

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia will be at 'war with Nato' if it bombs any of the alliance's territory, Sajid Javid warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-4M61-DY4H-K33V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 572 words

**Byline:** Rob Merrick

**Highlight:** Risk of wider war growing after Sunday's missile attack just 15 miles from Ukraine-Poland border

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) will be at "war with [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) " if it bombs any of the military alliance's territory, [*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) has warned - [*after Sunday's missile attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-base-poland-attack-b2034779.html) just 15 miles from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's border with Poland.

The health secretary said the West had made clear its response if any Nato member is attacked, stating: "Then it will be war with Nato and Nato would respond."

The comment came after more than 35 people were killed by more than 30 missiles that targeted a training facility in Yavoriv, close to the Polish border, with more than 130 people injured.

The deadly strike came less than 24 hours after Moscow threatened to target foreign weapons shipments helping Ukrainian fighters defend their country.

Mr Javid said Nato had drawn the red line before the invasion, adding: "That hasn't changed throughout this conflict, there would be a significant response from Nato."

However, he refused to be drawn on what Nato will do if Russia uses chemical or [*biological weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biological-weapons) within Ukraine - which some have said must also trigger a military response.

"I'm not going to get into a hypothetical situation about what may or may not happen," Mr Javid told Sky News.

He argued it would not be "helpful" to do so, adding: "We wouldn't want to tell the enemy what the response might be. It just wouldn't make any sense."

The health secretary also defended [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) 's expected trip to [*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) this week, to push for the kingdom to release more oil to ease the energy crisis following the invasion.

The timing of the visit will be controversial because Saudi Arabia - apparently taking advantage of the world's focus on the plight of Ukraine - [*executed 81 people in a single day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-mass-execution-b2034519.html).

Mr Javid insisted it is possible for the UK to have a "very candid and frank relationship" with the country, while also pressing for human rights improvements there.

"It's a very important country for us. And I think it is right that the prime minister is leading this effort to engage Saudi Arabia even more so in the events that we're seeing unfolding now," he argued.

The health secretary said he is considering whether he could host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in his home - but suggested he would be too busy.

The sponsorship scheme, allowing British households to offer places to someone without family ties to the UK, will finally get underway at the end of this week.

"I'm starting to have a conversation with my wife on that and I think many households -as you say, and I'm pleased you brought this up - are probably thinking about this across the country," Mr Javid said.

"It's important that anyone that becomes a host that they can fulfil the obligations of a host, that they can spend time with these families and help, but there are many ways that we can all help."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian rapper Oxxxymiron pauses concert to make passionate appeal to Russians who support the war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6511-DR51-JBNF-W2V7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 10:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,MUSIC,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 555 words

**Byline:** Annabel Nugent

**Highlight:** Musician cancelled six sold-out shows in Moscow and St Petersburg in protest of the invasion

**Body**

Russian rapper Oxxxymiron has issued a passionate appeal to Russians who support the country's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The musician held a live-streamed concert in Istanbul on Tuesday night (15 March) to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Oxxxymiron - real name Miron Yanovich Fyodorov - paused the concert to deliver an impassioned speech directed at Russian people who support the war in Ukraine.

Journalist Jonny Tickle shared a clip of the speech on Twitter alongside an English-language translation.

"It seems to me - rather, I'm sure - that the people who are for this war are in fact against this war. They just believe that this is really a special operation to bomb military facilities. In fact, this special peacekeeping operation does not exist. It is a war," said Oxxxymiron.

"Unfortunately, this illusion is one that our parents believe in," he continued, adding that "it it very important to talk to them because they're probably not bloodthirsty people but they watch too much television".

The rapper went on to say that he "really wants to appeal to those who don't agree with me", stating: "I want to ask you to consider the possibility of alternative viewpoints in your brain.

"You don't have to immediately agree with me and agree with us, but you can't just go along with everything you're told."

"Unfortunately, this illusion is one that our parents believe in. It is very important to talk to them because they're probably not bloodthirsty people, but they watch too much television."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504195525641482240?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The 37-year-old continued to say that "the videos and the photos that I receive every day are not fakes", adding that "they aren't coming from Ukrainian officials. They're from my friends who are there right now, who send me photos and stories that are totally f\*\*\*ed up".He concluded: "So I beg you very much, I beg you, I do not order you, I beg you, to investigate the alternative to the opinions you have already formed."In February, Oxxxymiron [*cancelled six of his sold-out concerts in Moscow and St Petersburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/oxxxymiron-russia-concert-cancel-ukraine-b2023041.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20rapper%20Oxxxymiron%20cancels%20sold-out%20concert%20in%20protest%20of%20Ukraine%20invasion) in protest of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of Ukraine."Explore alternate points of view. Why do you think all our alternative media was shut down? Why do you think we're blocking Instagram and Facebook? Why is it all blocked? Maybe because they aren't allowing you to get an alternative point of view."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504195874225803270?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I can't perform while Russian missiles fall on Ukraine," he said in a video posted to Instagram. "[I am] postponing six of my major gigs in Moscow and St Petersburg indefinitely."On Wednesday (16 March), Ukrainian officials said a theatre in the port city of Mariupol, where dozens of civilians were sheltering, has been bombed by Russia.Sergei Orlov, Mariupol's deputy mayor, told BBC that people had been taking cover in the city's drama theatre since the war began."So I beg you very much, I beg you, I do not order you, I beg you, to investigate the alternative to the opinions you have already formed."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504196076458364931?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He estimated that between 1,000 and 1,200 people were residing in the theatre when it was bombed. Orlov said, however, that the number of casualties was not yet known.

You can follow live updates on The Independent's live-blog of the Russia-Ukraine crisis [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-vladimir-putin-latest-nuclear-news-b2036868.html?page=2#post-603108).

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians who worked at British embassy in Kyiv told they won't get refuge in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YD-JPY1-JCS0-D12M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 9, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 587 words

**Byline:** KIM SENGUPTA, MAY BULMAN

**Body**

Ukrainians who worked at the British embassy in Kyiv are being told they will not get refuge in the UK as they seek to flee the war unless they can fulfil strict entry qualifications, The Independent has been told.

The staff, many of whom have worked at the mission for years, are believed to have been informed that they will only qualify for a visa if they have close relations in the UK.

A number of British diplomats at the embassy, which has moved to Lviv from Kyiv for safety after the start of the war, are said to be deeply unhappy at the way their Ukrainian colleagues are being treated, and have made their feelings clear to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London.

Some British staff have described what is happening as "Afghanistan part two", and say they are astonished that lessons have not been learned from the failure to evacuate many Afghans entitled to entry to the UK after the Taliban takeover.

They also fear some of their Ukrainian colleagues may be targets for retribution if they are in areas occupied by Russian forces.

It comes as Russia continues to bombard cities across Ukraine, with Kyiv accusing Moscow of breaking a ceasefire agreement on Tuesday by shelling a civilian evacuation route from the besieged city of Mariupol.

UK home secretary Priti Patel announced a migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, under which she said tens of thousands of people would be able to come to Britain - but the scheme excludes those without family in the UK.

Staff at the British embassy in Ukraine have been told that entry into the UK is a matter for the Home Office.

When The Independent approached the department for comment, it said it was a matter for the FCDO, which claimed it was in fact a matter for the Home Office. The Independent was referred between the two departments five times.

It is understood that the Home Office is planning to enable the Ukrainian staff members to come to Britain, but the department has revealed no detail on this.

Some of the Ukrainian staff have left the country following the Russian invasion and tried to get to the UK on the understanding that they meet the conditions for entry.

However, one person who applied for a visa online from Warsaw found that the application form required him to pay around £2,000 and show he had the means to pay for medical treatment in the UK.

A former British diplomat who served in Afghanistan said: "The UK government promised to learn some lessons after the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. They clearly haven't done so, because once again we have a situation where hard-working and dedicated embassy staff are not able to get themselves and their families to the UK.

"These are people who have worked for years for the UK, often on work directly at odds with Russian interests. They may be on a Russian list as Afghan colleagues were on Taliban lists. It would be unforgivable if we let these people down."

It comes after ministers came under fire when it emerged that thousands of Afghans who worked for the British effort in the country and were entitled to come to Britain were left behind during Operation Pitting, the mass evacuation of Kabul following the Taliban's advance on the capital.

A whistleblower later revealed that tens of thousands of pleas for help from those under threat went unanswered in a system incapable of handling the situation, with some of those abandoned subsequently murdered by the Taliban and other Islamist groups.

The government has been approached for comment.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel considering reducing security checks for Ukrainians, minister hints*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-DM61-DY4H-K53T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 9:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 575 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** The Government is coming under vast pressure to increase the number of people it is helping to flee the Russian invasion.

**Body**

[*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) is considering reducing bureaucratic security checks for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, a minister has said, amid criticism over the handling of the crisis.

Defence minister James Heappey hinted on Thursday that the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) could back down to relax visa requirements for those fleeing Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has been coming under pressure, including from Kyiv and his own Tory [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) , to rapidly increase the rate of Ukrainians being welcomed into safety in the UK.

Despite more than 2.1 million people having fled Ukraine according to UN estimates, the latest figures from Downing Street say Britain has granted just 957 visas.

I hope and I beg that the procedures will be dropped and every bureaucratic red tape should be cancelled

Vadym Prystaiko, Ukrainian ambassador to UK

Mr Heappey acknowledged that, with men staying behind to fight, most of those fleeing are women and children, but said Ms Patel must balance the "risk".

"I know the Home Secretary is very aware of that but she needs to make decisions around how to change visa policy and crucially the security checks that are done within visa policy in a way that still gives her the assurance that she needs that at a time of acute competition in Europe between the West and Russia we're not making the mistake of dropping our guard altogether," he told BBC Breakfast.

"The Home Secretary is very much aware of the need to remove as much bureaucracy as she can but she does have to balance that against the risk and I know that she'll make the right decision."

He said the Ministry of Defence will task troops with assisting the asylum process in Ukraine's neighbour Poland, but further decisions to speed things up lie with Ms Patel.

"We'll supply as many people as they need in order to be able to get the highest number of people processed in the quickest time possible and then the Home Secretary has got some choices, which I know she's considering, around how to further change the visa process and what checks might be necessary within it," he told Sky News.

Ukrainian ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko called for an end to the "bureaucratic red tape" restricting refugees from seeking sanctuary in Britain.

He told BBC's Question Time: "I just wanted to tell you that most of our men are staying behind and fighting, so ... most of the people you will see are just women with children, which I totally hope they're not posing any threat, especially a terrorist threat to the UK.

"So that's why I hope and I beg that the procedures will be dropped and every bureaucratic red tape should be cancelled."

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said plans were under way in his department to take "100,000 children ... into our schools".

The Prime Minister has said nearly a thousand visas had been granted under the scheme allowing relatives of people in Britain to flee the war and promised another programme allowing individuals to offer a home to Ukrainians would be set out in "the next few days".

Mr Johnson said the new sponsorship route would mean "everybody in this country can offer a home to people fleeing Ukraine".

But he declined to remove security checks, insisting the UK was right to require paperwork despite the European Union having allowed visa-free travel.

"We know how unscrupulous Putin can be in his methods, it would not be right to expose this country to unnecessary security risk and we will not do it," Mr Johnson said.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Over 43,000 register within hours to sponsorship site*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-PG41-F072-4006-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 567 words

**Byline:** ASHLEY COWBURN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

More than 43,000 people have registered their interest in sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in their homes - just hours after the government website went live.

Offering those who provide sanctuary a monthly payment of £350, the scheme was formally launched yesterday after days of criticism over the government's handling of the humanitarian crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Michael Gove told MPs it will allow Ukrainian's with no family links to come to the UK and benefit from "unrestricted access" to benefits, employment and healthcare.

The levelling-up secretary added there would be "no limit" to the number of Ukrainian's who can benefit from the scheme.

As of 9.30pm - five hours after being launched - more than 43,000 people had registered their interest in the programme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

A spokesperson added that the number was was "continuing to rise".

The website - Homes for Ukraine - states: "This bespoke scheme will offer a route to those who want to come to the UK who have someone here willing to provide them with a home.

The website adds: "Sponsors should provide accommodation for as long as they are able, but we have a minimum expectation of 6 months.

"Someone is eligible for the scheme if they are a Ukrainian national or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national, and were resident in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022."

It adds those members of the public with a person they wish to sponsor should get in contact with them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application, which will go live on 18 March, with all their details.

"If you don't know anyone who you wish to sponsor you may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals," it adds.

However, within minutes of the website going live, the link to the registration page was broken, leading users to a page stating that the site "cannot be reached".

Labour MP Mike Kane pointed out that the website had crashed, noting that the ITV journalist Paul Brand had reported that is was not working and that the site could not be reached.

In response, Mr Gove appeared to deny the claim, saying: "I'm very sorry if Paul Brand's internet connection is wonky.

"It seems as though the connection for my honourable friend the member for Rutland and Melton is superior - she has just signed up."

Earlier the transport secretary Grant Shapps announced he would be signing up to the scheme to sponsor a Ukrainian refugee to live with his family.

"We've spent the past few weeks as a family discussing the devastating situation in Ukraine, and so we intend to apply today to join other UK households in offering our home to provide refuge to Ukrainians until it is safe for them to return to their country," he said in a message at lunchtime on Monday.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Brexit: Boris Johnson tells Irish premier 'significant changes' needed to protocol*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-VJD1-JBNF-W0RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 6:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Taoiseach says there is 'growing view' in Northern Ireland that protocol is working

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has told the Irish premier that "significant changes" are still needed to the protocol - after the Taoiseach said there is a growing view in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) that the [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) deal is working.

Micheal Martin said "everyone he has met" in Northern Ireland wants continued access to the [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) single market as he met Mr Johnson in London for talks.

The Taoiseach's comments come after Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said his party would not resume the power-sharing arrangement until the UK-EU protocol row is resolved.

Mr Martin suggested the hotly contested issue of the Northern Ireland Protocol would not be resolved by the time of the province's May elections - saying London and Brussels would strike a deal "in the fullness of time".

Speaking to reporters ahead of talks with the prime minister in London, Mr Martin said business leaders north of the border thought the Northern Irish economy was benefiting from current arrangements.

"What's very interesting from our perspective, though, is that what's increasing and growing is a view within Northern Ireland, particularly in Northern Ireland business and industry, that the protocol is working in terms of inward investment into Northern Ireland, and in terms of access to the EU single market," he said.

Mr Martin told reporters: "So anybody I've met in Northern Ireland all want to continue access to the EU single market. It's a good basic principle to start off on."

However, Mr Johnson insisted that "significant changes" were still needed to the agreement, as foreign secretary Liz Truss continues to lead talks on easing border checks with her EU counterpart Maros Sefcovic.

A Downing Street spokesperson said: "The prime minister reiterated the need to make significant changes to the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

"He said that while greater ambition and flexibility was needed from the EU in the negotiations, it was his hope that the same spirit of co-operation that had characterised the UK-EU relationship in respect of Ukraine could also be applied to resolving the issues with the protocol."

The Irish leader - who attended the England v Ireland rugby match at Twickenham on Saturday with Mr Johnson - defended his decision not to consult the UK before deciding to waive visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"It was never on that we would be acting outside of the European Union approach to this," he said. "I think the UK would have been well aware of the direction of travel of the European Union in respect of this measure."

Asked if he would encourage Mr Johnson to take in more people fleeing the war in Ukraine, the Taoiseach said: "Well to be fair I'm not here to tell Boris Johnson what to do," before adding: "I have to acknowledge the leadership of the UK government in terms of the sanctions it has imposed on Russia."

The meeting in London follows the latest remarks by the DUPs leader, who was applauded at Crossgar Orange Hall on Friday night for saying his party would not re-enter the Stormont Executive until Mr Johnson's government acts to "protect Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom".

Paul Givan resigned as first minister earlier this year as part of the DUP's action against the protocol in a move which also removed Sinn Fein's deputy first minister Michelle O'Neill from the joint office.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine aid appeal raises £100m in four days*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y0-6RR1-JBNF-W34R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 571 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** The Disasters Emergency Committee urged people to keep donating to help charities meet the growing humanitarian need.

**Body**

More than £100 million has been raised to provide aid for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in what has been described as an "amazing show of support" from the UK public.

That is the equivalent of more than £1 million an hour since the appeal was launched, the [*Disasters Emergency Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/disasters-emergency-committee) (DEC) said.

It said the funds are already being used by DEC charities inside the invaded nation and at its borders to provide people fleeing the war with food, water, medical assistance, protection and trauma care.

We're expecting the numbers crossing the border to keep increasing in the coming days

Jo Kitterick, CAFOD

The DEC said the message from aid workers is that money is needed rather than specific donated items, which are often not what people need and are difficult to transport.

Further donations will help scale up the work of the charities, which include Save the Children, Age International and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

Jo Kitterick, CAFOD's head of supporter engagement, said: "This amazing show of support for people fleeing the conflict has meant that we have been able to start spending money straight away to help more people.

"Through our international partner Caritas, we are working inside Ukraine and on its borders, setting up safe centres with beds, food and washing facilities. We're also providing transport, information, psychological support and child-friendly spaces.

At Ukraine's borders, there are lengthy waits. Lack of food and shelter are real threats, particularly to children, as temperatures can dip below freezing overnight.People need shelter, food and water now.Please donate today: [*https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB*](https://t.co/JRCP8NYvdB) [*pic.twitter.com/7roKTWmsPM*](https://t.co/7roKTWmsPM) - DEC (@decappeal) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/decappeal/status/1500464469742399490?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "The conflict shows no sign of letting up and our local experts are seeing more and more people having to flee their homes to keep themselves safe. We're expecting the numbers crossing the border to keep increasing in the coming days."I want to thank everyone who has donated to help us support them in their moment of greatest need."The DEC, which is made up of 15 leading UK aid charities aiming to raise funds quickly and efficiently at times of crisis overseas, said "generous donations" have been made by the Queen, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge among others.The latest total includes £25 million in match-funding from the UK Government, it said, the largest commitment ever made to a DEC appeal through the UK aid match scheme.Over a million people have fled Ukraine in recent days. They urgently need food, water, medical assistance, protection, trauma care. Please give what you can to [*@decappeal*](https://twitter.com/decappeal?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#UkraineAppeal*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineAppeal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/LHxbDSd41y*](https://t.co/LHxbDSd41y) [*pic.twitter.com/WOXhCcnLnb*](https://t.co/WOXhCcnLnb) - Hugh Bonneville (@hughbon) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/hughbon/status/1499832246064357377?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Celebrities involved in highlighting the appeal include Trigger Point actor [*Adrian Lester*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adrian-lester) , Game Of Thrones star Kit Harington, Hot Fuzz actor [*Simon Pegg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-pegg) , Downton Abbey's [*Hugh Bonneville*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hugh-bonneville) and Doctor Who star David Tennant.

It comes as the number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** continues to rise sharply, and more than 1.5 million people have streamed out of the country in just 10 days, according to the United Nations.

The UN high commissioner for refugees Filippo Grandi said it was the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

The UN estimates up to four million people may be forced to leave the country and seven million may lose their homes inside Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine says 12,000 Russians now dead on 13th day of invasion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y8-G241-JBNF-W0M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 3:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 651 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar

**Highlight:** There has been no immediate reaction from Russia to Ukraine's claims

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) claims more than 12,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in combat since [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) declared [*war on the eastern European country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-zelensky-latest-b2030721.html) on 24 February.

On Tuesday, the 13th day of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion, the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) military command posted an infographic about Russian losses on Twitter that alleges 12,000 Russian personnel have been killed so far.

The infographic also claimed 303 tanks, 48 aircraft, 80 helicopters, 1,036 armoured vehicles, 120 cannons, 56 rocket launchers systems and 27 air defence systems belonging to Russia have been destroyed.

On Sunday, Ukraine's military command had put [*Russian casualties at "over 11,000"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-invasion-russia-troops-killed-b2029556.html).

There has been no immediate response from the Russian defence ministry to Ukraine's claims, which have also not been independently verified. The Ukrainian military has not been releasing equivalent data for casualties on its own side.

The Russian defence ministry, [*in its first and so far only report on its casualties earlier last week*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-soldiers-ukraine-war-death-toll-b2026999.html) , had said 498 Russian troops were killed while 1,597 sustained wounds.

According to the UN, at least 406 civilians, including 27 children, have been killed and 801 others injured in Ukraine since the onset of the invasion, although it maintains the real figures are considerably higher.

Information on Russian invasion Losses of the Russian occupying forces in Ukraine, March 8 [*pic.twitter.com/YnVcviyIRk*](https://t.co/YnVcviyIRk) - MFA of Ukraine (@MFA\_Ukraine) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1501129721500868611?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The war on Ukraine has forced over two million residents to flee the country, the UN refugee agency's chief said in a tweet on Tuesday.Earlier, the agency's chief Filippo Grandi said [*this was the fastest exodus of people Europe has seen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugee-numbers-crisis-latest-b2029605.html) since the Second World War.The agency has warned that the war could displace nearly five million people.Today the outflow of refugees from Ukraine reaches two million people. Two million.- Filippo Grandi (@FilippoGrandi) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/FilippoGrandi/status/1501130493781286913?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Most refugees have been moving to western Europe, towards [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , Slovakia, Romania, Moldova and Hungary. Poland, which has opened its doors to the lion's share of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, has reportedly taken in over 650,000 people.

Meanwhile, president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) denounced the west for failing to protect his country from Russia after [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) denied his request to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

"It has been 13 days we have been hearing promises, 13 days we have been told we'll be helped in the air, that there will be planes, that they will be delivered to us," Mr [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zelensky) said, slamming Nato and its allies over unkept "promises".

"But the responsibility for that rests also on those who were not able to take a decision in the west for 13 days," he said in a video address from an undisclosed location.

He called for [*the expansion of humanitarian corridors for Ukrainian civilians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-russia-kyiv-lviv-kharkiv-b2030747.html) fleeing war, and more support from the Red Cross.

Mr Zelensky has also warned that [*Russia will not stop with the current invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-warning-europe-putin-ukraine-b2030734.html) and will continue to threaten other European countries.

"When the limits of rights and freedoms are being violated and stepped on, then you have to protect us. Because we will come first, you will come second," he said.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*People traffickers preying on child refugees on borders of Ukraine, Theresa May warns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K2B0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 5:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 586 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** 'Making money from distress and vulnerability': Ex-PM calls for action against evil trade

**Body**

People traffickers on Europe's borders are preying on [*child refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/child-refugees) fleeing war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , former prime minister [*Theresa May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/theresa-may) has warned.

Ms May called for the UK's National Crime Agency to take the lead in targeting the gangs responsible for abducting children, and said Border Force officers should be told to watch out for young Ukrainians being smuggled into the UK.

Her warning in the House of Commons followed warnings that[*the government's refugee sponsorship*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-social-media-michael-gove-b2034885.html) scheme may lead to vulnerable Ukrainians falling into the hands of unscrupulous people ready to exploit them for sex or labour unless those offering accommodation are rigorously vetted.

The United Nations estimates around 3m people have now fled Ukraine in the face of[*murderous attacks by Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , the majority of them seeking refuge in Poland but others crossing the border to Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova.

Among them are 1.5m children - the equivalent of almost one every second since the invasion began - according to Unicef figures.

Ms May told MPs that many crossed the border alone, either because they are orphans or because they have been split up from their parents or carers as they fled the violence.

The Conservative former prime minister said: "We have seen the photographs at the border. We know that the numbers are such that this can be chaotic, and it is very difficult.

"There are many unaccompanied children coming over, not necessarily orphans, but children who may not just have their family with them when they come in.

"Some of those children don't have papers. The Polish authorities, I understand, are making valiant efforts to look for papers, to find papers, to photograph children, to find some sort of record of the children, to identify them.

"What we know is that there is no database, there is no real means of that identification and tracking of what is happening to those children."

And she warned that from the moment the invasion began on 24 February, people traffickers began gathering at the borders in the hope of "making money out of this human distress and vulnerability".

"It's a sad reflection on human nature, that the very point where these women and children are fleeing Ukraine for their safety to find refuge elsewhere, the criminal gangs have moved in to make money from the trafficking of what they consider to be yet another commodity -that is human beings," said Ms May.

"This is happening in Poland. It's happening in other countries where ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are fleeing to."

The former PM called on the government to work closely with the UN, EU and tech companies to put in place a system to log and track children and reunite them with their loved ones.

And she called for the National Crime Agency and Border Force to be give roles in fighting unscrupulous people-trafficking gangs.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Online translated lessons for Ukrainian refugee children*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YW-WFM1-DY4H-K06V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 12:41 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 576 words

**Byline:** Catherine Lough

**Highlight:** The lessons will be available translated into Ukrainian or Russian, as some refugee pupils will speak Russian as a first language.

**Body**

Online lessons will be made available to 100,000 refugee pupils as they transition to "life and safety" in the UK, Education Secretary [*Nadhim Zahawi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nadhim-zahawi) has announced.

Speaking at the Association of School and College Leaders' annual conference in [*Birmingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/birmingham) on Friday, he said: "We will continue to support Ukrainians in any way we can.

"I know schools are doing what they can to support their students make sense of what they are seeing."

"And we are working with schools to ensure that the tens of thousands of Ukrainian children we will welcome to our shores will have a place in our education system.

"To support schools' efforts, I'm delighted to announce that Oak National Academy has today rolled out an auto-translate function across all 10,000 of its online lessons.

This will allow Ukrainian children arriving in the UK to access education in their native language as they transition into life and safety in the UK

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi

"This will allow Ukrainian children arriving in the UK to access education in their native language as they transition into life and safety in the UK."

The lessons will be available translated into Ukrainian or Russian, as some refugee pupils will speak Russian as a first language.

On Wednesday, Mr Zahawi said: "What you are seeing now is a surge in our capability to take more Ukrainians.

"I can tell you in my own department in education, I have a team that's already making plans for a capacity of 100,000 children that we will take into our schools.

"The family reunion route will be a couple of hundred thousand people coming through and then the humanitarian route which [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) will outline in the next few days, will be uncapped."

The online classroom has developed new functions guiding pupils through automatically translated versions of its lessons.

Pupils will be able to access quizzes, video lessons with translated subtitles and worksheets.

The translation function will build on earlier work translating the online lessons into common languages other than [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) spoken in UK schools, such as [*Urdu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/urdu) and Polish.

Oak National said: "The prototype was brought forward following the invasion of Ukraine which has led to widespread school closures and displacement of hundreds of thousands of children internally and to neighbouring countries."

The UK will shortly welcome up to 200,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with a large number of them expected to be school-aged children, Oak National said.

Matt Hood, principal of Oak National Academy, said: "It is tragic that the lives of so many children have been blighted by this horrific invasion.

"The work we have done to make Oak's lessons available in Ukrainian is only a tiny contribution to this crisis, and pales in comparison to the international effort needed to ensure the safety of families fleeing violence.

"We hope that for Ukrainian children who will be arriving shortly in the UK , it's a tool that may help them re-establish some sort of routine once they reach safety."

He added that the automated translation meant the lessons would not "be perfect" and were not an attempt to align with the Ukrainian curriculum or to replace Ukraine's own work providing remote education.

"Oak has been exploring whether our lessons can be translated into the common languages spoken by pupils in English schools for whom English is not their first language but, with the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, we have pushed this work forward as rapidly as possible."

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson U-turn to speed up sanctions on Russian elite*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-DX81-JBNF-W4F4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 8:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 584 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** Proposed 18-month grace period for registering property to be slashed to six months

**Body**

Boris Johnson has backed down on plans to allow Russian [*oligarchs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oligarchs) 18 months to register ownership of luxury properties in the UK, slashing the proposed "grace period" to six months.

And he announced plans to streamline the process of sanctioning individuals with links to [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , by removing the legal requirement for government lawyers to show that measures are "appropriate" before implementing them.

But the changes fall well short of demands from Labour, who had [*called for a maximum 28-day delay*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-oligarchs-sanctions-starmer-b2027147.html) before registers must be updated to identify the true owner of a property rather than a shell company.

Shadow foreign secretary [*David Lammy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-lammy) said the government's tardiness in dealing with Russian "dirty money" in London has left the UK trailing behind the US and EU in imposing [*sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sanctions) on Putin's cronies in response to the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr Johnson's decision to amend the Economic Crimes Bill before it comes before the Commons on Monday amounts to an admission that Britain's sanctions regime has been less able to respond swiftly than its American and European allies, who have already sanctioned hundreds of individuals.

Legislation passed in the wake of Brexit to allow the UK to operate its own regime independent from the EU included measures requiring a watertight legal case to be established for each individual targeted - something which officials admit could take months.

Removing the "appropriateness" test will allow the designation of groups, permitting the UK to align its sanctions lists with those imposed by Washington and Brussels.

Those named could have travel bans imposed as well as asset freezes which prevent them from selling, renting, visiting or even repairing UK properties with a total estimated value of well over £1bn. Deputy prime minister Dominic Raab has [*even suggested the homes could be seized to house* ***Ukrainian******refugees****.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-sanctions-russia-uk-refugees-b2028447.html)

London has so far sanctioned only 15 oligarchs, including [*Alisher Usmanov, who has had financial links with Arsenal and Everton football clubs.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-usmanov-shuvalov-sanctions-b2028076.html)

Critics have warned that delays will allow billionaires who fear being put on the UK blacklist time to sell off assets and move their money abroad. Putin associate Roman Abramovich has announced plans to sell Chelsea FC, though there has been no official indication that he is being considered for sanctions.

Meanwhile, ministers said that keeping a six-month grace period for property registration would help crack down on money while giving people with legitimate reasons to hold property in overseas entities time to comply.

Mr Johnson said: "The UK has led the way with the toughest package of sanctions against Putin's regime and we're bolstering this with new powers in our arsenal to go further and faster.

"We will ramp up the pressure on those criminal elites trying to launder money on UK soil and close the net on corruption. They will have nowhere to hide."

But Mr Lammy responded: "It is totally unacceptable that Putin-linked oligarchs who should have already faced sanctions are being allowed to move their money around because of government incompetence.

"Ministers should have introduced the laws needed to work in lock-step with our allies and partners months ago, not be left sanctioning hundreds fewer individuals and entities than the EU and the US.

"We welcome the government's U-turn under pressure from Labour to tighten the law so we can move on more oligarchs tied to Putin's regime, but we must also move faster, acting against these individuals in âdays not months."

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson tells Irish premier that 'significant changes' are still needed to protocol*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-FG51-JCS0-D4P7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 13, 2022 Sunday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 574 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

Boris Johnson has told the Irish premier that "significant changes" are still needed to the protocol - after the taoiseach said there is a growing view in Northern Ireland that the Brexit deal is working.

Micheal Martin said "everyone he has met" in Northern Ireland wants continued access to theEU single market as he met Mr Johnson in London for talks.

The taoiseach's comments come after Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said his party would not resume the power-sharing arrangement until the UK-EU protocol row is resolved.

Mr Martin suggested the hotly contested issue of the Northern Ireland protocol would not be resolved by the time of the province's May elections - saying London and Brussels would strike a deal "in the fullness of time".

Speaking to reporters ahead of talks with the prime minister in London, Mr Martin said business leaders north of the border thought the Northern Irish economy was benefiting from current arrangements.

"What's very interesting from our perspective, though, is that what's increasing and growing is a view within Northern Ireland, particularly in Northern Ireland business and industry, that the protocol is working in terms of inward investment into Northern Ireland, and in terms of access to the EU single market," he said.

Mr Martin told reporters: "So anybody I've met in Northern Ireland all want to continue access to the EU single market. It's a good basic principle to start off on."

However, Mr Johnson insisted that "significant changes" were still needed to the agreement, as foreign secretary Liz Truss continues to lead talks on easing border checks with her EU counterpart Maros Sefcovic.

A Downing Street spokesperson said: "The prime minister reiterated the need to make significant changes to the Northern Ireland protocol in order to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions.

"He said that while greater ambition and flexibility was needed from the EU in the negotiations, it was his hope that the same spirit of co-operation that had characterised the UK-EU relationship in respect of Ukraine could also be applied to resolving the issues with the protocol."

The Irish leader - who attended the England v Ireland rugby match at Twickenham yesterday with Mr Johnson - defended his decision not to consult the UK before deciding to waive visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"It was never on that we would be acting outside of the European Union approach to this," he said. "I think the UK would have been well aware of the direction of travel of the European Union in respect of this measure."

Asked if he would encourage Mr Johnson to take in more people fleeing the war in Ukraine, the taoiseach said: "Well to be fair I'm not here to tell Boris Johnson what to do," before adding: "I have to acknowledge the leadership of the UK government in terms of the sanctions it has imposed on Russia."

The meeting in London follows the latest remarks by the DUPs leader, who was applauded at Crossgar Orange Hall on Friday night for saying his party would not re-enter the Stormont Executive until Mr Johnson's government acts to "protect Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom".

Paul Givan resigned as first minister earlier this year as part of the DUP's action against the protocol in a move which also removed Sinn Fein's deputy first minister Michelle O'Neill from the joint office.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office should be stripped of responsibility for Ukraine refugees, Welsh government says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-DM11-DY4H-K130-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 3:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 611 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** First minister Mark Drakeford says the department has a long history of running hostile regimes

**Body**

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) should be stripped of its responsibility for helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** come to the UK, the Welsh first minister has said.

[*Mark Drakeford*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-drakeford) said the department's "long history" of running hostile migration and refugees regimes meant putting it in charge was "the wrong thing to do".

Labour's most senior elected politician said Priti Patel's department has long "demonstrated its incapacity" to do a good job on the issue and that a "dedicated group" should be set up at a UK level should be established.

"Frankly, putting this in the hands of the Home Office is quite the wrong thing to do, the Home Office with its long history of 'hostile regimes' to people coming from elsewhere in the world," he told the Commons Welsh affairs select committee on Wednesday.

"The responsibility should be taken away from a department that has demonstrated its incapacity to mobilise to meet the response and put in the hands of a dedicated group of people at the UK level, who will do what is necessary to allow those people driven from their own homes and who temporarily in many cases wish to have sanctuary in the United Kingdom, to make sure that the actions of our government match the wishes of our people."

The Home Office has long been criticised for scandals involving the treatment or refugees and migrants, including the Windrush scandal.

A spokesperson said the support it gives to refugees would be kept under constant review, and highlighted new measures announced by Priti Patel on Thursday expected to speed up the process.

Mr Drakeford's comments come as the UK is under pressure over its relatively closed door to Ukrainians fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion compared to other countries.

EU countries have introduced an open-door policy and given all Ukrainian nationals access to housing and assistance - but Britain is requiring Ukrainians to apply for visas, with just some conditions relaxed.

Just 300 visas were granted by the UK as of Monday, at a time when neighbouring Ireland had already admitted 1,800 people despite being remote from the warzone. The French government has accused the UK immigration regime of lacking humanity.

A Government spokesperson said: "We are standing shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians which is why we've made it easier for those with Ukrainian passports to come here. This is alongside changes to visas to ensure Ukrainians in the UK can stay here.

"We have expanded our Visa Application Capacity to 13,000 a week, deployed additional staff across the EU, with a 24/7 helpline in place to ensure those who need appointments can get them to come here. This allows us to balance security risks while welcoming those in need.

"A new sponsorship route, which will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here is also being brought forward and all the measures we've put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners. We will keep our support under constant review."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 61,000 nights booked in Ukrainian Airbnbs in 'help locals' initiative, raising $1.9m*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-VHY1-JBNF-W28F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 5:34 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:1

**Length:** 574 words

**Byline:** Lucy Thackray

**Highlight:** Airbnb is waiving fees so Ukrainian hosts will receive maximum amount

**Body**

Following a trend for booking Airbnb apartments in Ukraine in order to send money directly to locals, the platform has reported that more than 61,000 nights have been booked by its users.

The idea for booking [*rental apartments in Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.airbnb.co.uk%2Fs%2Fukraine%2Fhomes&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/airbnb-booking-ukraine-donate-b2030325.html) -in order to send money straight to the owner -circulated online last week, with Airbnb quickly announcing that it would waive all its fees for bookings in the country.

More than a million Ukrainians have already been displaced following [*Russia's invasion of the country,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine-invasion-latest-news-b2020162.html) with many overseas looking for ways to help.

A spokesperson for Airbnb confirmed that more than 61,000 nights had been booked in Ukraine on Wednesday and Thursday (2 and 3 March) alone, including 8,000 nights booked by UK users.

During the booking spree, UK customers were the second-biggest bookers after Americans, with Airbnb estimating that $1.9 million (£1.4m) had been transferred to Ukrainian hosts.

Early last week, the UK sales manager for Beachcomber tours, Sarah Archer, wrote on Twitter: "Booked a weekend in Kyiv on [Airbnb].

"Pick closest date, random apartment run by an individual not a company, book, pay and send a message of support while telling them you're a no show."

Another Twitter user, Mario DiMaggio, also called for users to book Ukrainian properties, writing: "HOW TO HELP -just booked a Kyiv AirBnb for one week, simply as a means of getting money directly into the hands of residents.

"It's really cheap and can make a small difference right now. Please share this idea."

Users of the popular apartment rental platform can leave a message of support as they book a room anywhere in Ukraine -often at very cheap per-night rates -with the idea being that their cash can help the local that owns the property.

"I will book my imaginary week tomorrow morning, l am amazed by the discovery of these new ways of solidarity, and support, thanks to everyone for the idea!" commented follower Susanna Antico.

"I just booked five and a tour. Feels so good to connect with Ukrainians directly," wrote @DominicaDailey.

Just made a booking, I got this message[*#Ukriane*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukriane?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#refugees*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/refugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0QusYockkC*](https://t.co/0QusYockkC) - Capricorn (@UnrealRated) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UnrealRated/status/1499637462179536903?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "We appreciate the generosity of our community during this moment of crisis," said an Airbnb spokesperson."Airbnb is also waiving all guest and host fees on all bookings in Ukraine at this time."Airbnb's fees usually account for 3 to 15 per cent of a payment, but with these waived for Ukraine bookings, the owner will receive the full amount.The platform has more than 300 listings across Ukraine. On Monday, it set up a [*dedicated hub*](https://www.airbnb.org/help-ukraine) to help people abroad host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their spare rooms.Just made a booking -great idea. Just got this message back from the host.. [*pic.twitter.com/bL6W3KS1an*](https://t.co/bL6W3KS1an) - John Mitchell (@seagullsmitch) [*March 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/seagullsmitch/status/1499456836348616717?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It's worth noting that not all listings on Airbnb are owned by local residents -privately owned apartments and even big-brand hotel rooms can be listed on the platform.

Others on social media flagged concerns about verifying that listings are owned by Ukrainian locals, not by Russians or landlords abroad.

DiMaggio suggests finding a local's name as the contact and messaging them before booking. Many users have received heartfelt replies from apartment owners in the country.

"When this hell ends, we, with bread and salt and open arms, are waiting for you to visit peaceful Odessa!" wrote one Airbnb host.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US Secretary of State Blinken tells China the 'world is watching' its response to Russia's assault on Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XN-J4G1-JBNF-W53N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 9:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 584 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** US's top diplomat spoke with China's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Saturday after visiting Poland's border with Ukraine

**Body**

US Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) has told [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) that the "world is watching" how it responds to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , as Beijing continues to refuse to condemn the Kremlin for its attack.

The US' top diplomat spoke with the PRC's State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a phone call about Moscow's "premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified war against Ukraine" on Saturday, state department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

"The Secretary noted the world is watching to see which nations stand up for the basic principles of freedom, self-determination and sovereignty," he said.

"He underscored that the world is acting in unison to repudiate and respond to the Russian aggression, ensuring that Moscow will pay a high price."

In the 10 days since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, China has refused to speak out against Moscow and has hit out at the West for issuing sanctions on Russian entities and oligarchs.

The country - like Russia - also appears to be trying to control the information that reaches its citizens about the war.

Newspaper Beijing News revealed that the country's media outlets were sent instructions last week, ordering them to only report pro-Russian content and to censor anti-Russian views.

The outlet posted a copy of the instructions on social media before later deleting it.

This came after senior US and EU officials told the New York Times that China had asked Russia to delay its invasion until after Beijing's Winter Olympics.

The Olympics closing ceremony took place on 20 February and the following day Russian President Vladimir Putin sent more Russian troops into eastern Ukraine.

Mr Blinken's message to China came the same day he traveled to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to meet with both Ukrainian and Polish officials about Western efforts to support Ukraine in its defence against the Russian attack.

The top US diplomat met with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba along the Ukraine-Poland border with the two seen walking together across a painted line that appeared to mark the border between the two nations.

During the talks, Mr Blinken told Mr Kuleba that "the entire world stands with Ukraine, just as I am standing here in Ukraine with my friend, my colleague".

Meanwhile, Mr Kuleba echoed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's calls for Nato allies to set up a no-fly zone over Ukraine and to send more fighter jets to help Ukrainian troops. Doing so would be a major escalation in the conflict, and would bring the West into direct military conflict with Russia.

The foreign minister said if the West keeps sending weapons and planes, he is confident Ukraine can prevent bloodshed and win the war.

"If they continue to provide us with necessary weapons, the price will be lower. This will save many lives," he said.

As the officials held talks, Ukrainians fleeing from heavy shelling and Russian missile attacks on their homes crossed the border close by into Poland.

Earlier Saturday, the US secretary of state also visited a center for refugees where he heard from evacuees how they had fled their homes after Russian forces attacked.

He also held talks with Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau about increasing Russian sanctions and around how the US can support countries like Poland which are taking in hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

More than 700,000 refugees have already been welcomed into Poland from Ukraine with thousands more expected in the coming weeks, said Mr Rau.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taiwan president promises one month's salary to aid humanitarian relief efforts for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-B7T1-DY4H-K0V7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 1:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** EAST ASIA ,ASIA; Version:1

**Length:** 624 words

**Byline:** Shweta Sharma

**Highlight:** 'Taiwan stands with Ukraine, and Taiwan stands with democracy and freedom'

**Body**

[*Taiwan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taiwan) 's top government officials, including president [*Tsai Ing-wen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tsai-ing-wen) , vice president William Lai and premier Su Tseng-chang, will each donate a month's salary to assist humanitarian relief efforts in war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Ms Tsai announced her plans during a meeting of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party on Wednesday, in which she said Taiwan and the rest of the world was [*moved by the determination of Ukrainians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-soldier-woman-confrontation-b2022993.html) battling the invasion from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Ms Tsai said the forces of global democracy [*supporting Ukraine are growing stronger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/taiwan-strait-tsai-ingwen-ukraine-mike-pompeo-russia-b2026429.html%22%20title=%22Peace%20in%20Taiwan%20Strait%20a%20global%20concern,%20says%20Mullen) and reiterated Taipei's support to Ukraine.

"As a member of the global partners of democracy, Taiwan is not absent, and we fully support Ukraine," she said.

The salaries of the three top most Taiwanese leaders would be in addition to the first batch of aid sent by Taiwan, in the form of 27 tonnes of medical supplies.

The Taiwanese government has expressed growing "empathy" for the Ukrainians, who have been under attack from Russian forces for the past six days, because it faces a similar [*military threat from Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/ukraine-russia-invasion-taiwan-china-b2022399.html%22%20title=%22Taiwan%20fears%20China%20could%20take%20leaf%20out%20of%20Russia's%20playbook%20after%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine).

Taipei has stepped up its military surveillance and alertness, remaining cautious of [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) 's movements amid the Ukraine crisis as Beijing claims sovereignty over Taiwan and has vowed to take control one day - using force if necessary.

The salaries of Ms Tsai, Mr Lai and Mr Su will be transferred into the bank account of a disaster relief fund it has initiated for Ukraine.

Reuters cited a source that said Ms Tsai's monthly salary was around T$400,000 (£10,712).

Taiwan's foreign ministry said it has asked its embassy in Warsaw and the Polish government to help distribute the funds and conduct humanitarian work for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

On Wednesday, former Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen led a delegation to Taiwan to meet Ms Tsai and said it reflected "support for the United States' strong partnership with Taiwan".

At my meeting with the [*#US*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/US?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) delegation led by Adm. Mullen, I reiterated [*#Taiwan*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Taiwan?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 's commitment to democracy & support for [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Russia's invasion reminds us that Taiwan must work with the US & other partners to defend our shared values & uphold peace. [*pic.twitter.com/tAeF8zd8mK*](https://t.co/tAeF8zd8mK) - 蔡 Tsai Ing-wen (@iingwen) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/iingwen/status/1498936734838853635?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

This comes as Taiwan has joined western allies in [*condemning Russia's invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-invasion-ukraine-putin-sanctions-b2026497.html) and also announced it would join other countries in blocking Russian banks from [*the Swift international payments system*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/swift-payment-system-russia-ukraine-war-b2024244.html).

The action was largely symbolic as Taiwan's own trade with the country is minimal.

"I hope that our compatriots, as well as all our party partners in public office, can fully respond to this action and firmly express to the world that Taiwan stands with Ukraine, and Taiwan stands with democracy and freedom," Ms Tsai said.

Taiwan has, however, also pointed out that its situation with China is "fundamentally different" from Ukraine and said comparisons should not be drawn as they could cause panic among its people.

Meanwhile, China, which had earlier [*fallen short of condemning ally Russia's actions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-russia-ukraine-harvard-university-xi-jinping-b2024672.html%22%20title=%22Analysis:%20Ukraine%20war%20tests%20growing%20China-Russia%20partnership) , has said it is "extremely concerned" for the Ukrainian people.

The Asian giant said it "deplores the outbreak of conflict between Ukraine and Russia", in the first such statement made by the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on its website on Wednesday.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi also acknowledged the conflict as a "war" for the first time, days after a government spokesperson[*refused to call it an "invasion"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/ukraine-crisis-china-russia-war-us-b2022237.html%22%20title=%22China%20refuses%20to%20accept%20Russia%20has%20'invaded'%20Ukraine%20and%20blames%20US%20for%20'fanning%20the%20flames'%20of%20war) , dubbing the term a "western reference" instead.

Beijing is, however, yet to announce aid for Ukraine.

The UN has estimated more than 18 million people will need [*humanitarian assistance*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-antonio-guterres-people-russia-international-rescue-committee-b2022964.html) as the war continues as more than half a million Ukrainians were forced to flee the country.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian fears becoming ‘refugee in her own country’ if she returns*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M9-HW11-DY4H-K4J3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 23, 2023 Thursday 11:04 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 650 words

**Byline:** Christopher McKeon

**Highlight:** Sabina Artemieva, herself a refugee, is helping other Ukrainians settle in the UK.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are still arriving in the UK a year on from the Russian invasion of their homeland.

More than 30,000 Ukrainians have arrived since September, many under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme that pairs refugees with host families.

But some are now able to receive help settling in from earlier arrivals such as Sabina Artemieva, who fled her home in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) with her teenage son on March 4 and arrived in the UK three weeks later.

She said: “My rabbi called the night before and he said there’s a bus, you have to be there.

A few months ago, I realised that my life here now is the same as I had in Ukraine. My apartment is the same, I have a job, my son is in school, I have friends, I have my community

Sabina Artemieva

“The next day was Shabbat, and I thought if my rabbi is telling me to leave Ukraine on Shabbat, he must know something.”

She went first to Moldova and then to Romania before applying to come to the UK, where she thought her knowledge of [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) would make it easier to get a job.

The former translator, 39, quickly found work with World Jewish Relief, a refugee charity established in 1933 to help Jews escape Nazi Germany, and now helps Ukrainians find homes and deal with the bureaucracy of applying for universal credit and finding school places for their children.

She said: “Demand is still high but unfortunately, all over the United Kingdom, we don’t have enough sponsors.

“Around 180,000 Ukrainians have come here since the beginning of the war and most [people] who wanted to help already have somebody. They prefer to continue with these people, or some of them maybe think that it’s enough, you can’t live with someone who’s a stranger for a long time.”

Most applicants have already left Ukraine, with many based in neighbouring countries such as Poland and some applying from Western Europe, while around 40% apply from within Ukraine.

The UK is helping Ukrainians forced to flee their homes because of Russia’s unprovoked invasion. Over the last year, we provided £220m in humanitarian support to the region – saving lives and protecting the vulnerable.We [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/d2q9k2YEGf*](https://t.co/d2q9k2YEGf) — Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (@FCDOGovUK) [*February 21, 2023*](https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1628090362085490688?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ms Artemieva said: “Some of them, after one year, they can’t handle it anymore, it’s difficult. For some time, you have hope that it will finish, but when you are under shelling for 11, 12 months, at some point you realise that’s enough and they can’t stay there.”

For some, including Ms Artemieva, it may prove difficult to go back as well.

She said: “A few months ago, I realised that my life here now is the same as I had in Ukraine. My apartment is the same, I have a job, my son is in school, I have friends, I have my community.

“I’m so settled in here that I don’t know if I want to change it immediately when the war ends. Because going back to Ukraine, to an almost completely ruined country, with no job, I don’t have my own property there – if I go, I will be a refugee in my own country.”

[*One*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/one) of her main concerns is her 18-year-old son, who struggled initially with the language barrier but now speaks English, is doing well at school and hopes to go to university in the UK.

Ms Artemieva said: “Doing this [moving country] for the second time when you’re at such an age when things are very important to you, I don’t want to break him.”

Whether they will be able to stay or not depends on the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government). The current Homes for Ukraine visa scheme allows Ukrainians to remain in the UK for up to three years, but what happens after that remains unclear.

Ms Artemieva said: “I wouldn’t want to change things to worse. If I’m comfortable here, why should I go immediately back just because it’s my country?

“It’s not only about being patriotic and living in your country, it’s also about your life. I don’t want to ruin it every one or two years and start from scratch.”

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Takumi Minamino double steers Liverpool into FA Cup quarter-finals*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-2251-JBNF-W47P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 11:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** SPORT,FOOTBALL; Version:4

**Length:** 572 words

**Byline:** Carl Markham

**Highlight:** Liverpool 2-1 Norwich: Jurgen Klopp's side kept their quest for an unprecedented quadruple on track

**Body**

Cup specialist [*Takumi Minamino*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/takumi-minamino) kept Liverpool's quest for an unprecedented quadruple on track with both goals in a 2-1 win over Norwich as Jurgen Klopp reached his first [*FA Cup*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fa-cup) quarter-final.

The Japan international has made the majority of his starts in knockout competitions and in a team registering 10 changes from the one which won the Carabao Cup at Wembley on Sunday his was an influential one.

Minamino now has seven goals and one assist in eight cup games this season and since the start of 2020 the 27-year-old has scored more than twice as many goals in domestic cup competitions (nine) than any other Liverpool player.

Lukas Rupp's goal 14 minutes from time gave the visitors a lifeline but even a second-string Liverpool team were too experienced to succumb to late pressure as they booked their place in the sixth round for the first time since 2015.

Despite playing a significant role in his side reaching the League Cup final, Minamino did not even get on at Wembley but he used that disappointment to his advantage by seizing his opportunity against the Canaries.

He was a threat all night cutting in off the right and he instigated the moves which ultimately led to both his goals extending Liverpool's winning run to 11 matches, their best since August 2007.

After Curtis Jones was only inches away from reproducing a carbon copy of his FA Cup winner here against Everton in January 2020 and Teemu Pukki fired a shot wide of the far post, Minamino stepped up.

He started the 27th-minute attack on the right wing and when the ball was transferred to the left Kostas Tsimikas crossed to Divock Origi, another cup specialist, whose close control allowed him to tee up Minamino who had continued his run to the far post.

It was the 750th goal scored in Klopp's 360th game.

He doubled his tally 11 minutes later when his drive in-field led to Liverpool, whose players signed and donated their match-worn shirts in support of the British Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal, winning a corner.

Tsimikas's delivery was flicked on by Norwich defender Ben Gibson and Minamino lashed home an angled shot off the inside of the post.

Half-time substitute Josh Sargent missed two good chances, shooting wide of the far post and then heading hopelessly off target, either side of Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain hitting the outside of Tim Krul's right-hand upright.

The Premier League's bottom side had made seven changes to their starting line-up and head coach Dean Smith made one final throw of the dice with the 61st-minute triple substitution of Billy Gilmour, Kieran Dowell and Jonathan Rowe.

Norwich, who have greater concerns over their league position than a cup exit, looked like spending the final 20 minutes chasing the ball as Liverpool kept possession until Rupp whipped home a low shot past an unsighted Alisson Becker.

Klopp's response was to send on Sadio Mane and Luis Diaz to increase their threat level and although Rowe forced Alisson into a good one-handed save late on, the hosts had enough know-how to see out the game.

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Lisa Keightley: Ashes drubbing has not dented England's World Cup belief*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/lisa-keightley-australia-england-hamilton-south-africa-b2027423.html)

[*Jurgen Klopp hails 'complete performance' from Takumi Minamino after final snub*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/jurgen-klopp-wembley-takumi-minamino-japan-carabao-cup-b2027311.html)

[*Ralph Hasenhuttl not worried about doubters as squad rotation pays off*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/ralph-hasenhuttl-david-moyes-tomas-soucek-west-ham-premier-league-b2027301.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war: 'Dozens killed and hundreds wounded' in 'massive' Russian rocket attacks on Kharkiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-CGC1-DY4H-K385-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 1:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:5

**Length:** 619 words

**Byline:** Sam Hancock

**Highlight:** Residents tweet footage, describing the attack as 'indiscriminate'

**Body**

Dozens of people have been killed in rocket strikes by Russian forces in [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , a city in the northeast of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

"Kharkiv has just been massively fired upon by grads (rockets). Dozens of dead and hundreds of wounded," Anton Herashchenko, Ukraine's interior ministry adviser, said in a post on Facebook this morning.

Footage posted to social media claimed to show suspected cluster munitions, with multiple explosions striking a building in quick succession. Sky News reported it had pinpointed the clips to northeastern Kharkiv.

Cluster munitions are a form of air-dropped or ground-launched explosive weapon that releases or ejects smaller submunitions - with the explosive bomblets designed to kill personnel and destroy vehicles.

It comes as [*the Russian military was accused of using such bombs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/ukraine-putin-cluster-bombs-child-civilians-preschool-b2025044.html) in a separate attack that killed a child and two adults hiding in a pre-school in northeastern Ukraine.

A second child was wounded in the shelling on the Sonechko nursery and kindergarten in the city of Okhtyrka. Amnesty International said the strike may constitute a war crime.

Earlier, peace talks began between Ukraine and [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) at the Belarusian border.

The Ukrainian president's office said that the goal of the talks was an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine.

Earlier, the UK's Ministry of Defence tweeted an intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine, saying: "The bulk of Putin's ground forces remain more than 30km to the north of Kyiv their advance having been slowed by Ukrainian forces defending Hostomel airfield, a key Russian objective for day one of the conflict.

"Heavy fighting continues around Chernihiv and Kharkiv however both cities remain under Ukrainian control.

"Logistical failures and staunch Ukrainian resistance continue to frustrate the Russian advance.

"Despite continued attempts to suppress details of the conflict from the Russian population, the Russian Armed Forces has for the first time been forced to acknowledge suffering casualties."

Just last night, Ukrainian forces reported they had successfully repelled an attack on Kharkiv, considered the country's second city, after fierce clashes with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

However, with the war developing everyday, the situation has now changed.

On Twitter, residents of Kharkiv began sharing footage of the "indiscriminate" shelling unleashed by Vladimir Putin's army.

"Under the distraction of 'peace' talks in [Belarus], massive atrocities are being committed with indiscriminate rocket attacks in the civilian districts of Kharkiv," one woman, Gerz, said.

Elsewhere, Russian troops surrounded the port city of Mariupol overnight.

The settlement, on the Sea of Azov, came under heavy attack, according to Pavlo Kyrylenko, head of the Donetsk regional administration.

It is considered a vulnerable area because it is in close proximity to the front line with pro-Moscow separatists, the Russian border, and the Sea of Azov, where Russian warships have been deployed. It is also strategically important for the economy, responsible for much of Ukraine's exports.

As the crisis worsens, the EU has said it is preparing to grant Ukrainians who flee the war the right to stay and work in the 27-nation bloc for up to three years.

At least 400,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have entered the EU so far, EU home affairs commissioner Ylva Johansson said earlier. EU members Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary have land borders with Ukraine.

"We have to prepare for millions [to arrive in the EU]," Ms Johansson told a news conference after a visit to a border crossing between Romania and Ukraine.

She added she was hoping EU interior ministers would agree as early as Thursday on a protection scheme for those fleeing Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia claims it has seized Kherson as mayor agrees to conditions to keep city running*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-C831-JBNF-W492-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 1:21 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:4

**Length:** 575 words

**Byline:** Liam James

**Highlight:** Mayor announces restrictions after meeting with Russian troops

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has claimed to have taken its first Ukrainian city one week after first launching the invasion.

Igor Konashenkov, a Russian Defence Ministry spokesperson, said troops had taken "complete control" of the strategically significant port city of [*Kherson,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) near the Black Sea coast.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) 's office said late on Wednesday[*fighting was still ongoing around the port city of Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-latest-news-mariupol-kyiv-b2026996.html). It told the Associated Press it could not comment on the situation there while the battle was still in play.

The mayor of Kherson, Igor Kolykhayev, said Russian troops were on the street on Wednesday and had forced their way into the city council building.

After meeting with the armed troops, Mr Kolykhayev announced several conditions that would allow the city to remain, at least ostensibly, under [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) control.

In a Facebook post, the mayor said residents will only be allowed outside in the day and could not be in the company of more than one other person. He warned residents not to provoke the Russian troops and to stop at their command.

Cars will only be allowed to enter the city to bring food and medicine and other essentials. They must drive at minimum speed and be prepared to stop to be searched by Russian troops, he said.

Mr Kolykhayev added: "Ukrainian flag above us. And to keep it the same, these requirements must be met. I have nothing else to offer yet."

The mayor said there were no Ukrainian forces in Kherson.

Kherson, a city of 300,000, is strategically located on the banks of the Dnieper River near where it flows into the Black Sea. In Russian control, the city could unblock a water canal and restore water supplies to the Crimean Peninsula.

Ukraine earlier played down reports that the city had fallen into Russian hands after Major General Konashenkov said Vladimir Putin's soldiers were in "complete control".

Maj Gen Konashenkov said talks between the Russian commanders, city administrations and regional authorities on how to maintain order in the city were under way. He said the city's civilian infrastructure, essential facilities and transport are operating as usual and that there are no shortages of food or essential goods.

A senior US defence official said on Wednesday they had seen claims that Russia had taken Kherson as well as Ukrainian claims on the contrary.

"Our view is that Kherson is very much a contested city at this point," said the official on Wednesday evening.

Elsewhere in Ukraine the war raged on as Russian offensives continued against several cities. [*Kharkiv, the country's second-biggest city, suffered heavy bombardment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv).

A blast in Kyiv caused minor damage to the central train station [*where thousands were being evacuated*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kyiv-train-station-explosion-b2027252.html). Russian forces continued an assault on the southeastern port city of Mariupol that the mayor there said was relentless.

In the northern city of Chernihiv, two cruise missiles hit a hospital, according to the Ukrainian UNIAN news agency.

An investigation into alleged war crimes in Ukraine [*was opened by an International Criminal Court prosecutor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-crimes-russia-invasion-b2027259.html) after referrals from 39 allied countries.

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

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[*Russia-Ukraine War: What to know on Day 8 of Russian assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-russia-belarus-roman-abramovich-airbus-b2027453.html)

[*Live updates: Fitch downgrades Russia's credit rating*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-international-paralympic-committee-russian-direct-investment-fund-fitch-b2027451.html)

[*Neutral Finland, Sweden warm to idea of NATO membership*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/finland-sweden-nato-russia-russian-foreign-ministry-b2027450.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Meta disables Russian propaganda network targeting Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66GJ-6PX1-DY4H-K3YK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 27, 2022 Tuesday 1:16 PM GMT

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**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Facebook says it has identified and stopped a sprawling network of fake accounts that spread Russian propaganda about the invasion of Ukraine throughout Western Europe

**Body**

A sprawling disinformation network originating in Russia sought to use hundreds of fake social media accounts and dozens of sham news websites to spread [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) talking points about the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Meta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meta) revealed Tuesday.

The company, which owns Facebook and [*Instagram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/instagram) , said it identified and disabled the operation before it was able to gain a large audience. Nonetheless, Facebook said it was the largest and most complex Russian propaganda effort that it has found since the invasion began.

The operation involved more than 60 websites created to mimic legitimate news sites including The Guardian newspaper in the United Kingdom and Germany's Der Spiegel. Instead of the actual news reported by those outlets, however, the fake sites contained links to Russian propaganda and disinformation about Ukraine. More than 1,600 fake Facebook accounts were used to spread the propaganda to audiences in Germany, Italy, France, the U.K. and Ukraine.

The findings highlighted both the promise of social media companies to police their sites and the peril that disinformation continues to pose.

“Video: False Staging in Bucha Revealed!” claimed one of the fake news stories, which blamed Ukraine for the slaughter of hundreds of Ukrainians in a town occupied by the Russians.

The fake social media accounts were then used to spread links to the fake news stories and other pro-Russian posts and videos on Facebook and Instagram, as well as platforms including Telegram and Twitter. The network was active throughout the summer.

“On a few occasions, the operation’s content was amplified by the official Facebook pages of Russian embassies in Europe and Asia,” said David Agranovich, Meta's director of threat disruption. “I think this is probably the largest and most complex Russian-origin operation that we’ve disrupted since the beginning of the war in Ukraine earlier this year."

The network's activities were first noticed by investigative reporters in Germany. When Meta began its investigation it found that many of the fake accounts had already been removed by Facebook's automated systems. Thousands of people were following the network's Facebook pages when they were deactivated earlier this year.

Researchers said they couldn't directly attribute the network to the Russian government. But Agranovich noted the role played by Russian diplomats and said the operation relied on some sophisticated tactics, including the use of multiple languages and carefully constructed imposter websites.

Since the war began in February, the Kremlin has used online disinformation and conspiracy theories in an effort to weaken international support for Ukraine. Groups linked to the Russian government have accused Ukraine of staging attacks, blamed the war on baseless allegations of U.S. bioweapon development and portrayed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as criminals and rapists.

Social media platforms and European governments have tried to stifle the Kremlin's propaganda and disinformation, only to see Russia shift tactics.

A message sent to the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C., asking for a response to Meta's recent actions was not immediately returned.

Researchers at Meta Platforms Inc., which is based in Menlo Park, California, also exposed a much smaller network that originated in China and attempted to spread divisive political content in the U.S.

The operation reached only a tiny U.S. audience, with some posts receiving just a single engagement. The posts also made some amateurish moves that showed they weren't American, including some clumsy English language mistakes and a habit of posting during Chinese working hours.

Despite its ineffectiveness, the network is notable because it's the first identified by Meta that targeted Americans with political messages ahead of this year's midterm elections. The Chinese posts didn't support one party or the other but seemed intent on stirring up polarization.

“While it failed, it’s important because it’s a new direction” for Chinese disinformation operations, said Ben Nimmo, who directs global threat intelligence for Meta.

\_\_\_

Follow the AP’s coverage of misinformation at [*https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation*](https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation).

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Calls for support for Ukraine as it 'fights for Europe'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WK-6T01-DY4H-K3RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 6:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 559 words

**Byline:** Lucinda Cameron

**Highlight:** There are also calls to make it easy for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

**Body**

A Ukrainian student in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) has said [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is "fighting for Europe" as he called on the rest of the world to support his homeland.

Ivan Babuscsak, who is studying at Napier University in [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) , praised Ukrainian soldiers and said that Ukraine is a "barrier between [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and beasts".

Russian and Ukrainian delegations met for talks on Monday, the day after Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) put Russia's strategic nuclear weapons forces on high alert.

Mr Babuscsak, a member of the Edinburgh branch of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, said the nuclear threat is "going on already, it's not just about bombs" as nuclear power stations are under threat amid the Russian invasion.

He called for support from other nations, and told the PA news agency: "Finally, after all this help that Europe and America and Canada and other countries, now Japan today, are sending us, it's all thanks to our soldiers, they showed for the first few days, they showed that we will fight for our country and unfortunately the western world does not realise that we, a European nation, we are going to fight for our country.

"All we need is the whole world just to support us. We don't want any land forces from other countries, we just need the support, because what we are doing now, we are fighting for Europe now, not just for our own country.

"You would understand this if you would know Russians."

Mr Babuscsak has been keeping in touch with his parents and relatives in Ukraine and said that people are doing all they can to help each other.

He said: "My family are in Ukraine but I've been lucky, my region is the only region that has not been bombed, but at the same time we've got a lot of refugees so all my friends are involved in any kind of volunteering, some helping with the Red Cross, some making food, doing anything they can do for people."

All the Ukrainian people want to do is live in peace and live their lives with their families in a free society

Hannah Beaton Hawryluk

Hannah Beaton Hawryluk, treasurer of the Edinburgh branch, has also been in touch with relatives in the Ukraine.

She said: "They are safe which is the main thing, they are in the far west but they say it's very very scary because they can hear in the background the noise but they are not actually directly affected at the moment with the bombs.

"All the Ukrainian people want to do is live in peace and live their lives with their families in a free society."

Ms Beaton Hawryluk, whose father moved to the UK from Ukraine after the Second World War, said it should be made easy for refugees to come here from Ukraine.

She said: "We have to make it as easy as possible because these people are not leaving their homes because they want to leave their homes, they are not leaving their homes because they want anything from us, they are leaving their homes because they are terrified and they want to protect their children, and families are being split up at the border because the men are not allowed to come out of Ukraine.

"We as the west, we have to make it a lot lot easier for these people to come over until there is a resolution and they can return to their homes."

She also praised the generosity of people who have donated to the Ukraine fundraising appeal which can be found at [*https://www.gofundme.com/f/helpukraine*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/helpukraine) and has raised more than £860,000 so far.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Counter-terror police concerned about violent misogyny and Andrew Tate rhetoric*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67JV-JW21-DY4H-K1W9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 16, 2023 Thursday 3:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 716 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** ‘I’m concerned about the effect of that kind of rhetoric in the minds of young boys,’ says head of UK counter-terror policing

**Body**

People must be “vigilant” to violent [*misogyny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/misogyny) and other forms of extremist content online perpetuated by the likes of influencer Andrew Tate, counter-terror police have said.

Senior officers said the hatred of women was prevalent across terrorist ideologies, from jihadism to the far right, and was becoming “mixed in” with other belief systems.

Assistant commissioner Matt Jukes, the head of UK counter-[*terrorism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/terrorism) policing, told a press conference that officers were seeing rising numbers of cases involving [*incel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/incel) culture.

“Non-violent extremism creates an environment from which terrorists are spawned,” he said on Thursday.

“We need vigilance in the digital world, we need people to be alive to extremist content online.”

Asked about [*Andrew Tate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-tate) , a prominent misogynistic influencer who is currently under criminal investigation in Romania, Mr Jukes said: “I’m concerned about anyone who advocates violent misogyny.

“I’m concerned about the effect of that kind of rhetoric in the minds of young boys. Men are dominant in our terrorist casework and young men and boys are increasingly present.

“Anything that introduces that kind of toxicity has to be a concern, whether or not that’s a direct concern for counter-terrorist police.”

It comes after official figures showed a [*rising number of suspected incels being referred to the Prevent counter-extremism scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/incels-terror-shootings-prevent-plymouth-b2269736.html%22%20title=%22‘Emerging%20threat’:%20Rising%20number%20of%20suspected%20incels%20referred%20to%20UK%20counter-terror%20police) , albeit in much smaller quantities than far-right extremists and jihadists.

Concerns about the online subculture peaked after the [*2021 Plymouth shooting,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/jake-davison-lee-plymouth-devon-devon-and-cornwall-police-b2282917.html%22%20title=%22Senior%20officer%20apologises%20over%20decision%20to%20grant%20gun%20licence%20to%20Keyham%20shooter) where self-described incel Jake Davison murdered five people in Britain’s worst mass shooting in over a decade.

Short for “involuntary celibate”, incels believe they are unable to have romantic or sexual relationships with women, and men identifying with the movement have carried out several mass shootings in the US and Canada.

Mr Jukes said there needed to be a “wider societal response” to the issue, and that police would learn any lessons from the ongoing inquests into the Plymouth shooting.

Police did not declare the mass killing a terror attack because they believed that Davison was primarily driven by mental health issues and personal grievances, rather than a “political, religious, racial or ideological cause” that would meet the UK’s legal definition of terrorism.

MI5’s position is that incel ideology should not be treated automatically as terrorism, but recognised as a “potential terrorist motivation” and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

“Self-initiated terrorists”, who are not directly affiliated with any group and may be partly motivated by personal grievances and vulnerabilities, are currently deemed the dominant attack threat in Britain.

“It is making the threat harder to spot, its individuals harder to stop,” Mr Jukes said. “The hateful acts we see bring together complex drivers, sometimes including mental ill health, and often the influence of online material.”

Islamists still make up the majority of more than 800 live counter-terror investigations in the UK, but the senior officer said the extreme right wing was continuing to grow and officers were also responding to “new threats”.

But around a fifth of the work of British counter-terror police now relates to hostile state threats, including Russian, Iranian and Chinese activities against dissenters, as well as espionage and war crimes investigations.

Mr Jukes said his officers were handling an “unprecedented” amount of work in the area, with hostile state-related cases quadrupling in the past two years.

They include plots to assassinate, kidnap or forcibly repatriate political opponents, with at least 15 such attempts linked to Iran since January 2022, as well as alleged Chinese “overseas police stations” and a range of malicious activity by Russia.

“The oppression, intimidation and violence directed at people because of their perceived opposition to a state will not be allowed on our watch,” Mr Jukes said.

“Although the number [of hostile state investigations] is in the dozens, the intensity of the investigations and the capabilities we need are a step-change.”

British police are also supporting the International Criminal Court investigation into war crimes in Ukraine, and are assessing more than 100 reports received by ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and other people currently in the UK.

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Teenager charged after riot at hotel for asylum seekers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67J4-MCC1-JCS0-D085-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 13, 2023 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 751 words

**Byline:** MARTHA MCHARDY

**Body**

A teenager has been charged with violent disorder and assault after a protest outside a hotel housing asylum seekers.

Jarad Skeete, 19, of Irwell Close, Aigburth, Liverpool, was among 15 people arrested after violence broke out outside the Suites Hotel in Knowsley on Friday evening, Merseyside Police said.

A police officer and two members of the public were hurt as missiles including lit fireworks were thrown and a police van was set alight when clashes between pro- and anti-migrant groups turned violent.

Skeete has been remanded in custody and will appear at Wirral Adult Remand Court today. The 14 others arrested - 12 men and two women - have been released on conditional bail pending the outcome of police inquiries.

Knowsley Council said that the hotel has been used to accommodate asylum seekers since January when the Home Office gave less than 48 hours' notice of its intention to do so.

Knowsley MP Sir George Howarth said the demonstration was triggered by "an alleged incident posted on social media" - where a man was said to have made inappropriate advances towards a teenage girl. Police investigated and, on the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, no further action was taken.

Sir George said: "The people of Knowsley are not bigots and are welcoming to people escaping from some of the most dangerous places in the world in search of a place of safety. Those demonstrating against refugees at this protest tonight do not represent this community," he said.

Clare Moseley, founder of refugee charity Care4Calais, said she was among 100 to 120 people from pro-migrant groups who went to the scene in reaction to the protest to show support for the asylum seekers, adding it was "like a war zone".

The violence was also condemned by politicians. Shadow levelling up secretary and Wigan MP Lisa Nandy described the disorder as "absolutely horrendous", and criticised the government for creating a "toxic mix" of anti-migrant rhetoric and poor service provision.

She told the BBC: "The story of the last decade has been the story of people across this country throwing open their homes to refugees from Ukraine, stepping up to support the Syrian appeal, when we had impending disaster. Even in the last few weeks, we've had people across the north of England stepping forward to put forward record donations to help with the appalling situation in Turkey and Syria.

"There are a small number of far-right activists who whip up hate and hostility in this country, we all need to speak with one voice when we say that we utterly condemn them."

Ms Nandy described the government's decisions to contract out asylum services, forgo consultation with communities and place refugees in unsuitable accommodation as a "recipe for disaster". Referring to home secretary Suella Braverman, she said: "When you lay onto that a government that talks about things like an 'invasion' in relation to immigration, you have a perfect storm, a really toxic mix that is being created."

On Saturday, Ms Braverman condemned the disorder, adding that the "alleged behaviour of some asylum seekers is never an excuse for violence".

Foreign Office minister Andrew Mitchell also criticised the violence and said the government was seeking to limit the "excessive use" of asylum hotels. He told the BBC's Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg programme: "We live in a country where peaceful protest is part of our way of life and I strongly support that. But violence in the way that we saw on Friday night is completely unacceptable, and the government condemns it absolutely."

He rejected suggestions that the government had helped stir up anti-migrant sentiment, adding that it has housed "thousands and thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***" along with people from Hong Kong and Afghanistan. "We have a duty to welcome these people - often they are caught in desperate jeopardy, but equally we have a duty to house them appropriately and to work with local people," he said. "The Home Office is trying very hard now to stop the excessive use of hotels and find different ways of placing them in appropriate places in the community. And that is something that the Home Office will achieve."

Assistant Chief Constable Paul White said the force respected the right to protest but the abuse of officers and damage to police vehicles was "disgraceful". He added: "We have arrested some of those suspects and will continue without hesitation to review all and any evidence which comes in, through CCTV, images or other information you may have."

**Load-Date:** February 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Europe could not handle a Ukrainian refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64TT-2H81-F072-413B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 20, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 607 words

**Body**

With any military flare-up - aside from death and destruction - millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** will flock to Europe, placing unbearable strain on its political, economic and environmental infrastructures, social cohesion, schools, transportation and health services. This will further entrench poverty and widen inequalities. Both belligerent parties need to de-escalate tensions to avert catastrophe.

Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob London

<strong>Saving face</strong>

President Biden has said he is convinced a Russian attack on Ukraine is imminent. He may be right. But if war is to be averted (and that, surely, is the priority), Vladimir Putin must be allowed to avoid losing face. Would it not have been wiser for Biden and others to suggest that, although the Russians are clearly prepared for such an event, Putin would be commended for his statesmanship if he refrained?

Susan Alexander South Gloucestershire

<strong>Crying shame</strong>

I tend to agree with Anita Slater that it is pathetic to ban children under five from cafes (My local cafe has banned children - how pathetic, Voice, yesterday). This does indeed seem a step too far and, of course by default, they are banning parents and carers. This is discrimination of a rather hostile kind and not a user-friendly environment I would want to be part of.

As she states, we are all aware of fractious children who won't be placated by a sticky bun, but surely that has always been the case and most people are charitable and patient about such strops.

Conversely, they also bring life and animation to their surroundings and can amuse and distract in equal measure.

But it is true that to place this embargo says more about the owners of such an intolerant establishment than the customers who frequent its hallowed environs. Parents and children should be made welcome, they are in libraries and churches so a high street cafe shouldn't be so precious, and should see the bigger picture to make their establishment child friendly and inclusive, whatever the age of its participants.

Judith A Daniels Norfolk

<strong>Question marks over the PM</strong>

We are told that the prime minister has submitted his questionnaire about the gatherings he attended in Downing Street and believes he has not broken the law. That is not the point. He told parliament there were no such gatherings during lockdown. He then said there were gatherings but they followed the rules. He then said there were leaving parties but they were work events; subsequently there have been photos showing him with people who were engaged in social activities that were denied to the rest of the population.

The evidence is clear that he has continually twisted the truth to serve his own ends. One wonders how economical he has been with the truth when completing his questionnaire. This is an appalling breach of trust that sullies the government and its reputation internationally. If he cannot be trusted over relatively minor matters, how can we trust his honesty and judgement over national and international matters on which the safety of our citizens and those in other countries depends? Any Tory MP with a shred of decency must recognise that, regardless of the outcomes from the Met inquiry, Boris Johnson has to go for the good of us all.

Graham Powell Cirencester

<strong>Storm Eunice</strong>

I would like to say what a magnificent job our front line workers did during the recent storms. Nobody would wish anybody harm in such treacherous weather conditions but these people stand out - those who went the extra mile yet again. What brilliant work behind the scenes. Well done everybody.

Geoffrey Brooking Hampshire

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia news -live: One million Ukrainian refugees flee as Kherson falls to Russian troops*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-T8R1-JBNF-W04J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 4:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:7

**Length:** 186 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Rory Sullivan

**Highlight:** Reported explosion in Kyiv may leave parts of the city without heating, says Ukrainian official

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's troops have taken "complete control" of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's port city of Kherson, a spokesperson for Moscow's defence ministry has claimed.

Major General Igor Konashenko said the city is still running as normal and that there are no food or essential goods shortages.

He claimed on Wednesday that talks are underway between Russian personnel and city administrators on maintaining order in the city.

Kherson mayor, Igor Kolykhayev, has since urged Putin's soldiers not to shoot at civilians and publicly called on civilians to walk through the streets only in daylight and in ones and twos.

It comes after a senior US defence official said on Wednesday that Kherson "is very much a contested city at this point."

Meanwhile, Britain and dozens of allies are pressing for an investigation to be launched rapidly into [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's bombardment of Ukrainian cities after Boris Johnson accused the Russian president of war crimes.

The prime minister said Mr Putin "cannot commit these horrific acts with impunity" after 37 countries joined the UK on Wednesday in referring Moscow to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Europe could not handle a Ukrainian refugee crisis right now*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64TN-G3J1-DY4H-K003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 19, 2022 Saturday 6:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 680 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

In case of any military flare-up - aside from death and destruction - millions of [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees*** *will flock to Europe,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-tensions-eastern-europe-b2014811.html) placing unbearable strains on its political, economic and environmental infrastructures, social cohesion, schools, transportation and health services. This will further entrench poverty and widen inequalities. Both belligerent parties need to de-escalate tensions to avert catastrophe.

Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob

London

Saving face

[*President Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-war-putin-biden-boris-b2017901.html) has said that he is convinced that a Russian attack on Ukraine is imminent. He may be right. But if war is to be averted (and that, surely, is the priority), Vladimir Putin must be allowed to avoid losing face. Would it not have been wiser for Biden and others to suggest that, although the Russians are clearly prepared for such an event, Putin would be commended for his statesmanship if he refrained?

Susan Alexander

South Gloucestershire

Toddler ban

I tend to agree with Anita Slater that it is pathetic to ban[*children under five from cafes.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/child-free-cafe-ban-parents-b2017603.html) This does indeed seem a step too far and, of course by default, they are banning parents and carers. This is discrimination of a rather hostile kind and not a user-friendly environment I would want to be part of.

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Judith A. Daniels

Norfolk

Police questionnaire

We are told that the prime minister has [*submitted his questionnaire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-questionnaire-met-police-b2018663.html) about the gatherings he attended in Downing Street and believes that he has not broken the law. That is not the point. He told Parliament that there were no such gatherings during lockdown. He then said that there were gatherings but they followed the rules. He then said that there were leaving parties but they were work events, subsequently, there have been photos showing him with people who were engaged in social activities that were denied to the rest of the population.

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Well done everybody.

Geoffrey Brooking

Hampshire

**Load-Date:** February 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'We couldn't let go': War tears young Ukrainian family apart*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67HH-K781-DY4H-K4CR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 10, 2023 Friday 9:34 AM GMT

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**Length:** 676 words

**Byline:** Stephen McGrath

**Highlight:** University student Vlada Yushchenko was still in her teens and nearly three months pregnant when she hugged her husband at the border, turned away and walked into Moldova

**Body**

[*University*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/university) student Vlada Yushchenko was still in her teens and nearly three months pregnant when she hugged her husband at the border, turned away and walked into [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Now she's in Romania, one of the millions of Ukrainians forced to flee Russia's invasion. Her baby, Daniel, was born there eight months ago and still hasn't met his father Yaroslav, who is 21 and, like most men of fighting age, prohibited from leaving Ukraine.

The young family's forced separation is an all-too-common story among the estimated 110,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Romania — nearly all of them women and children.

“Nobody expected the war was coming and that we weren’t going to be together,” said Yushchenko, who has settled for now in the central Romanian city of Brasov where she gave birth and shares a two-room apartment with Daniel, her mother, and her terminally ill grandmother.

“For a long time we couldn’t let each other go,” said Yushchenko, 19, recalling the couple's separation at the border. “We really didn’t want this, but at the same time we understood that we have to do this for mine and the baby’s health and to be safe.”

As the war drags into its second year, the lack of physical contact between the baby and his father, a computer programming student in Kyiv, rankles. Still, their smartphones allow the family a sense of connection.

“Sometimes we burst out in tears (but) we are very happy when we see each other on video,” Yushchenko said. “I called (Yaroslav) and sent a photo as soon as I was able to" the day Daniel was born, she added. "It was very emotional, he was very happy, it was unforgettable.”

But even that virtual link isn't always there.

In recent months, Russian strikes have targeted critical energy infrastructure across large swathes of Ukraine, which has at times made communication difficult. Yaroslav tries to ease her concerns, Yushchenko said, by warning her of potential outages and telling her not to panic during moments of silence.

Still, seeing footage of the war play out in Ukraine, and knowing her husband is there, only adds to her worries.

“It’s very hard to watch the news and see all the misery, the missile strikes, the deaths,” said Yushchenko, who between taking care of the baby continues her mathematics and physics studies remotely at the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. “I pray every day that everything will be alright … in the city where (Yaroslav) lives and in general.”

Her faith, among other things, is helping her through the ordeal.

When Daniel was six months old she decided to get him baptized at a local Orthodox church, by a priest who lives in their apartment block and waived the customary fee for the ceremony. They attend Sunday service whenever they can, Yushchenko said.

In her day-to-day life, she often takes “very long walks, sometimes all day" with Daniel around Brasov, a picturesque heritage city nestled in the arching Carpathian mountains. She also sees other Ukrainian mothers living locally who she says she can talk to about babies and motherhood.

Since the war started, more than eight million Ukrainians have fled to other European countries, in the greatest exodus of refugees the continent has seen since World [*War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) II.

More than 4,000 have registered with Brasov's Migrant Integration Center, according to Astrid Hamberger, founder of the nongovernmental organization that has helped many of them, including Yushchenko's family, find homes, medical care and social assistance.

“I feel safe here ... we receive a lot of help, which I’m very grateful for,” said Yushchenko, who hopes Ukraine wins the war so they can go home and finally be together as a family — and Daniel can meet his father.

“It will be an unforgettable meeting, our child is our happiness,” she said.

When asked what she prays for at the church in Brasov, Yushchenko doesn't hesitate to answer.

“I pray for the health of my family and friends and for a peaceful sky in our country," she said, “and ask for the strength to bear all this.”

\_\_\_

Follow AP’s coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Foreign students will not be able to bring families to UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689F-J9N1-JCS0-D2YR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 24, 2023 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 837 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Suella Braverman has announced a crackdown on overseas students bringing family members to the UK as part of a push to reduce net migration. The home secretary said all foreign students - apart from those on postgraduate research programmes - will be banned from bringing their dependants from January 2024.

Ms Braverman said there had been an "unexpected" spike in the number of dependants - saying the economic benefits brought by students could "not be at the expense" of the Tory promise to cut immigration. Rishi Sunak's government is also stopping international students switching from the student visa route to work routes before their studies have been completed.

Maintenance requirements for students and their dependants will also be pulled, and Ms Braverman has vowed to clamp down on "unscrupulous education agents who may be supporting inappropriate applications to sell immigration not education".

Around 136,000 visas were granted to dependants of sponsored students in the year ending December 2022, the government said - an eight-fold increase from 16,000 in 2019. Despite the crackdown, Ms Braverman insisted that the government would work with universities to deliver an "alternative approach" to make sure "the best and the brightest students can bring dependants".

Mr Sunak and Ms Braverman are under huge pressure from Tory MPs for plans to cut net migration, with official annual figures to be published this week expected to show it has reached at least 700,000.

The PM told the cabinet yesterday that the latest moves "would make a significant difference to the numbers". Ms Braverman said it struck "the right balance between acting decisively on tackling net migration and protecting the economic benefits that students can bring".

Britain's universities warned the Tory government against a crackdown on foreign students - urging the government to take students out of the overall net migration figure to depoliticise the issue.

The Russell Group, representing 24 elite universities, said foreign students brought in "vital export income". New immigration rules are likely to have a "negative impact" given the "fierce" global competition for international students, said the Russell Group's chief executive Tim Bradshaw.

But the group said it was pleased the graduate route - where overseas students can work in the UK for up to three years after completing their studies - will remain open. Universities UK said the Braverman announcement "leaves some questions unanswered" on exactly which students could still bring family members to Britain.

"Anything that threatens to affect the UK's global success as a top destination for international talent needs to be considered very carefully," said Universities UK's Jamie Arrowsmith - pointing to a report that found overseas students boosted the economy by £42bn during 2021-22.

Jo Grady, general secretary of the University and College Union, called the tightening of immigration rules "vindictive" and "shameful". The union leader warned that the new curbs may be "damaging" to thepipelineof "international talent" into the country.

With the huge net migration figure set to come tomorrow causing Tory anguish, Ms Braverman had reportedly pushed five proposals - including raising the salary threshold for skilled workers and reducing the time foreign students can stay in the country.

But chancellor Jeremy Hunt and education secretary Gillian Keegan were said to have pushed back against wider restrictions on foreign students. Right-wing allies of Ms Braverman have warned of the "unbearable strain" of record net migration numbers - arguing the party will be punished at the ballot box if it fails to tackle the "biggest single issue".

Even some Tory moderates toldThe Independentthey welcomed a crackdown on some students bringing family members - urging Mr Sunak to consider changes to salary requirements and an overall annual cap on visa numbers.

Ms Braverman said the government expected net migration to fall to "pre-pandemic levels in the medium term". Explaining last year's net migration figure of 504,000, she cited "temporary factors" such as the influx ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and Hong Kong citizenship scheme.

But Marley Morris, migration expert at theIPPRthink tank, said targeting students and their dependants was "a mistake" because most of them don't stay in the UK. "Most international students are temporary migrants and are not a major contributor to net migration in long run."

Settlement schemes aside, ex-Tory leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith has insisted that the UK remains "addicted to cheap labour" and needs to invest in technology to perform low-paid tasks such as picking and cleaning fruit.

However, the latest IMF report, which upgrade Britain's growth forecast, endorsed the Sunak government's approach in plugging skills shortages with immigrants. The international body said the UK should look again at "fine-tuning the immigration system to alleviate sectoral and skilled labour shortages and enhance labour market flexibility".

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Braverman announces crackdown on foreign students bringing family to UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6899-FPR1-DY4H-K19C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 23, 2023 Tuesday 12:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 839 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Economic benefits of overseas students cannot be ‘at the expense’ of pledge to cut immigration, says home secretary

**Body**

[*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) has announced a crackdown on overseas [*students*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/students) bringing family members to the UK as part of a push to reduce net migration.

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[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) ’s government is also stopping international students switching from the student visa route to work routes before their studies have been completed.

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**Load-Date:** May 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Brexit is risking the values Britain claims to hold dear*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6689-BYH1-F072-44B6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 661 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

In the run-up to the EU referendum, and in the weeks after it, one of the more absurd promises made was that Brexit was the breakthrough that would allow the UK to reassert its values in a troubled world. The first international trade secretary, Liam Fox, became very excited at the thought of the country rejoining the World Trade Organisation as an independent member rather than through the European Union. Britain, apparently, was back.

It will come as a shock to no one, not merely that such an outcome has failed to come to pass, but that the opposite is true. Much was made, and is still being made, about the opportunities to sign new trade deals as an independent country. On countless occasions, we have been told that Brexit means the UK can insist on higher standards; that it enables Britain to make demands, in its negotiations with potential trading partners, on issues that the EU might have overlooked.

More recently, the current international trade secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, has given assurances to the House of Commons that "human rights" would play a role in any future trade deals, especially in those undertaken with Middle Eastern countries and with Gulf states that have a poor record on such matters.

A leaked document seen by The Independent has revealed that this promise is being quietly abandoned. Again, this is no surprise. The UK already sells huge volumes of weapons to Saudi Arabia, with scant concern for the fact that they are used by the Saudi government in the civil war in Yemen, which has been described by the UN as the world's most severe humanitarian disaster. Why any government would use trade negotiations to make demands on human rights of a country to which it is already selling billions of pounds' worth of weapons could hardly be less clear.

But it further illuminates Brexit's central deception. The EU is a huge market, and the UK was once an enormously influential country within it (and could have been far more influential, had it chosen to be). The UK's power to influence human rights abroad was far greater while it was a member than it is from the outside.

The trade department is still on a desperate mission to sign deals all around the world, in an ultimately impossible mission to make up for the damage caused by Brexit, and so it continues to accept whatever terms it might be offered, for scant economic benefit.

No doubt the Tories will continue to argue the case for human rights around the world, only to be undone by their actions. The next prime minister also looks set to continue extracting the cost of the resettlement of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the international development budget, depriving some of the world's least fortunate people of funds that really were being used to improve human rights.

We will also have to see if the next prime minister bows to rising pressure to scale back the UK's commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights - an action that large numbers of Tories, along with the elements of the media that exert pressure on them (including Nigel Farage), have convinced themselves will enable a solution to the growing small-boats crisis. It will not.

Most of Brexit's biggest promises have been broken, but they were never made to be kept. Michael Gove promised to cut VAT on energy bills once Britain had left the EU. It hasn't happened, in the middle of an energy crisis. He also promised "even higher" environmental standards. Instead, water companies have been liberated to flood the country's prime swimming beaches with raw sewage, to the extent that small children on holiday in Devon and Cornwall and on the Sussex coast are not able to swim in the sea.

What remains to be seen is whether there will be an electoral cost for all of this. Brexit, by any fair assessment, is not proving to be all it was cracked up to be. If the people who voted for it start losing patience, then an already impossible job for the next prime minister will become even harder.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Seized Russian superyacht to be sold at first auction of Ukraine war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:666G-07F1-JBNF-W4H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 20, 2022 Saturday 5:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Potential buyers eye ‘opportunity for a real bargain’ over vessel seized from ‘major oligarch’

**Body**

A Russian [*superyacht*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/superyacht) seized in [*Gibraltar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gibraltar) after its owner was sanctioned is to be sold off in the first such auction since [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) launched his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The Axioma, reported to be worth £63m, was detained upon docking in Gibraltar in March after its billionaire owner Dmitrievich Pumpyansky was sanctioned by the UK, EU and US in response to the war.

However, despite calls from governments for the proceeds of seized assets to be used to help Ukrainians, a bulk of the money raised from the sale at next week’s auction is expected to go to [*JP Morgan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jp-morgan) , which claims Mr Pumpyansky owes the US investment bank some £17m.

Mr Pumpyansky is the owner and chair of steel pipe manufacturer OAO TMK, a supplier to Russian state-owned energy company Gazprom. In March, the 58-year-old was described by the UK’s foreign secretary Liz Truss as among the “major oligarchs” who are “closest to Putin”.

Dozens of people from “across the world” have so far flown to Gibraltar to inspect the yacht, with many “convinced they’re going to get a bargain”, [*according to*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/20/gibraltar-prepares-for-first-auction-of-a-russian-oligarchs-detained-superyacht) the broker leading the auction on Tuesday.

The 236-foot vessel, originally named Red Square and boasting a 3D cinema, infinity pool, spa, and space for 12 guests and a 20-strong crew, was formerly [*chartered*](https://www.yachtcharterfleet.com/luxury-charter-yacht-22231/axioma.htm) out to the world’s super-wealthy at a cost of up to £465,000 per week.

The Turkey-built yacht is owned by a British Virgin Islands holding company called Pyrene Investments, of which Mr Pumpyansky is a beneficiary, according to the [*Panama Papers leak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/panama-papers-live-investigations-start-into-offshore-financial-arrangements-revealed-in-biggest-ever-leak-putin-iceland-a6967211.html).

Refinitiv shipping data showed the Axioma leaving the Caribbean island of Antigua on 27 February and spending three weeks crossing the Atlantic before reaching Gibraltar, where [*it was detained by the government following a legal claim*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oligarch-yacht-axioma-dmitry-pumpyansky-b2041942.html) by JP Morgan, which alleges it is owed £17m by Pyrene Investments.

The bank has argued that the fact that Mr Pumpyansky has been sanctioned means the terms of the loan have been breached, because JP Morgan legally cannot accept loan repayments from the firm, [*The Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/20/gibraltar-prepares-for-first-auction-of-a-russian-oligarchs-detained-superyacht) reported.

Nigel Hollyer, who is leading the auction on behalf of the Supreme Court of Gibraltar’s Admiralty marshal, told The Independent that, by the time of the auction, his firm Howe Robinson Partners will have arranged 28 inspections of the yacht from prospective buyers.

“I am fairly confident that the number of potential buyers who have not inspected the yacht but will submit an offer could easily be at similar numbers,” he said, adding: “No doubt the majority of bids eventually received will be well below the reserve. In other words, unrealistic buyers who believe this is an opportunity for a real bargain.”

After repayment of the debt to JP Morgan and the cost of detaining the yacht, any surplus funds from [*its sale*](http://www.hrpauctions.com/details.asp?id=50) will be frozen in an account with the Supreme Court in Gibraltar, Mr Hollyer said.

A JP Morgan spokesperson said the firm “will politely decline to comment on the Axioma” when approached by The Independent and asked whether any proceeds from the yachts sale could be put towards helping Ukrainians.

The company is understood to have donated $10m (£8.45m) to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, while its Warsaw office is in the process of hiring 50 refugees to a training programme while they are displaced.

The firm’s chief executive Jamie Dimon called in April for Washington to take a stronger stance over the war, writing that it was democratic nations must take a stand “against all forms of evil”, and warned the bank’s exposure to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) could cost it up to $1bn (£763m).

Earlier this month, the bank helped Kyiv secure agreements for a two-year freeze on Ukraine’s payment of almost $20bn of international bonds in order to help the country maintain financial stability and fund its defence effort.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*EU voters close to Russia crave one thing above all; Mary Dejevsky travels to Finland, the Baltic states and Poland, where the issue of security is on everyone's mind*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6P-F6T1-JCS0-D002-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

June 8, 2024 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1224 words

**Byline:** MARY DEJEVSKY

**Body**

Between now and tomorrow evening, several hundred million people will vote in elections for the next EU parliament, in what is billed as the second-largest exercise in representative democracy in the world after elections in India.

But the numbers actually voting have habitually been far fewer than in national elections, with turnout overall barely registering above 50 per cent, and a lot less in some countries, especially those further east.

There are hopes that this year could see that pattern change. The reason is that these are the first EU-wide elections to be held since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. And while the election agenda as seen from the western and southern parts of Europe has been dominated by hostility to migration and cost of living issues, with forecasts of gains for the far right, electoral concerns as seen from the northeast of the EU are different.

How different is what I have been trying to find out, travelling from Finland, through the Baltic states, to northeastern Poland. And here, while you will find a flicker of the same preoccupations that have dominated the campaigning further south and west, the big topic on what is essentially the European Union's northeastern frontier is summed up in one word: security.

Five years ago, when EU parliament elections were last held, there was certainly far less urgency over the issue. Although there was a security aspect to the EU, it was seen as the responsibility of Nato, and attitudes to Nato diverged. Finland and Sweden were neutral; the Baltic states and Poland were impassioned Atlanticists, while Hungary stood out as a weak link. EU elections anyway largely reflected domestic issues.

The war in Ukraine has changed that. With Finland and Sweden joining Nato, the borders of the EU match those of Nato to a far greater extent than before, even though Austria has retained its neutrality. What is more, by mounting prompt (and mostly united) support for Ukraine, the EU has become associated with the defence of Europe in a way it was not in the past.

This shift has been evident in every country I have visited, where the preponderance of candidates' campaign pitches focuses on defence and security as never before. There is some evidence, too, that this is translating into a higher level of public engagement.

In Finland, projections suggest that turnout could exceed 50 per cent (compared with the 40 or so per cent in recent EU elections). People were actually stopping to look at the many prominent election posters - not a given at EU elections! I was told that the calibre of candidates had risen markedly, with more seen as having a political future rather than seeking a sinecure in Brussels.

It has to be said that the level of public interest seems to diminish on the route south. Estonians, like Finns, have been exposed to copious advertising, TV and social media coverage, but the EU is less apparent in southern Lithuania and northeastern Poland.

While the war in Ukraine has brought practical changes for all the countries on the EU's northeastern flank - starting with the arrival of tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** (generally still welcomed) and cheap Ukrainian farm produce (rather less welcomed by local farmers) - the emphasis on security is less of a change for the Baltic states and Poland than it is for Finland. In the latter, military preparedness was a fact of life, but it went along with the country's neutrality and its pragmatic relations with Russia.

The Finnish border with Russia is now closed, and legislation is being tabled to combat irregular Russian migration. Some diplomatic channels, it appears, are being kept open, but discreetly. The age-old pragmatism has not been completely lost.

The Baltic states exude a sense of vindication. The rest of Europe, they say, has finally caught up with the reality of Russia's malign intentions (although still not quite as much as they would like).

The rhetoric often maintains that if Russia were to defeat Ukraine, it would be emboldened to advance into the Baltic and beyond. Which is not out of the question. But there is a lot less certainty on this score on the ground. Partly that might reflect a desire not to tempt fate, but it is perhaps more of a positive surprise at the way EU solidarity has been maintained, generating confidence that it can provide a security umbrella into the future.

This is cited as a reason why support for the EU has held up well - even in countries, such as Poland, with a definite Eurosceptic strand in their politics. Whether this translates into more voter support for its institutions, such as the European parliament, however, is another matter.

The one place where defence infrastructure efforts seemed to be in full swing - and it could just have been elaborate road-building - was in what is known as the Suwalki Gap, a 60km-wide tract of land joining Lithuania to Poland, which has (Russian) Kaliningrad to the west and (Russian satellite) Belarus to the east. The gap has long been seen as a prime point of Western vulnerability that Russia could block and so sever the Baltic states from the rest of European Nato. With Sweden and particularly Finland now in the alliance, that is less of a risk, and it could be Russia worrying about its ships being locked into St Petersburg.

I visited one city: Narva, in eastern Estonia, a place that has long been regarded as most vulnerable for the West and potentially even a fifth column for the Kremlin, given it is largely Russian-speaking. I was there just a few days after accusations (supported by video) that Russia had removed buoys that demarcate the official border running down the Narva River. This in turn was only days after Russia had broached redrawing some maritime borders in the Baltic - a proposition that was subsequently withdrawn.

And first impressions are forbidding. Twin forts face off across the river, the Estonian one painted with huge Estonian, Ukrainian and EU flags. There is a road bridge hung with Cold War-style barbed wire, whose only traffic seemed to be border guards reporting for their shifts, and a station where the train that once took two hours to go on to St Petersburg now stops and returns to the capital, Tallinn.

On the one hand, Narva is a strange and potentially tense place, where there have been flare-ups in the past and could be again. At the same time, it is becoming ever more of a backwater. Its economy is in trouble, having lost trade and Russian daytrippers, and so long as the EU freeze with Russia continues, it is hard to see any sort of prosperous future for the city. The population, now officially 57,000, is in decline, and although Russian speakers account for more than 90 per cent, the mood is muted. Not surprising, given the war and the arrival of refugees from Ukraine.

There will be voting in the EU parliamentary elections in Narva, as in the rest of Estonia, as in the rest of the EU - and there are posters and TV appeals to prove it. But there can be few places that seem further from Brussels just now than this eastern tip of the EU sticking out into Russia, and the abstention rate among the EU's Russian minority is always high.

There will probably be many more people in Finland, Poland and other now-frontline states that can be expected to turn out and vote with security at the front of their minds.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Russian disinformation spreading in new ways despite bans*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6642-9RW1-JBNF-W41N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 9, 2022 Tuesday 6:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 644 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, big tech firms and the European Union moved to ban the country's main propaganda and disinformation channels

**Body**

After Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last February, the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) moved to block RT and Sputnik, two of the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) 's top channels for spreading propaganda and misinformation about the war.

Nearly six months later, the number of sites pushing that same content has exploded as Russia found ways to evade the ban. They've rebranded their work to disguise it. They've shifted some propaganda duties to diplomats. And they've cut and pasted much of the content on new websites — ones that until now had no obvious ties to Russia.

NewsGuard, a New York-based firm that studies and tracks online misinformation, has now identified 250 websites actively spreading Russian disinformation about the war, with dozens of new ones added in recent months.

Claims on these sites include allegations that Ukraine's army has staged some deadly Russian attacks to curry global support, that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is faking public appearances, or that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are committing crimes in Germany and Poland.

Some of the sites pose as independent think tanks or news outlets. About half are English-language, while others are in French, German or Italian. Many were set up long before the war and were not obviously tied to the Russian government until they suddenly began parroting Kremlin talking points.

“They may be establishing sleeper sites,” said NewsGuard co-CEO Gordon Crovitz. Sleeper sites are websites created for a disinformation campaign that lay largely dormant, slowly building an audience through innocuous or unrelated posts, and then switching to propaganda or disinformation at an appointed time.

While NewsGuard's analysis found that much of the disinformation about the war in Ukraine is coming from Russia, it did find instances of false claims with a pro-Ukrainian bent. They included claims about a hotshot fighter ace known as the Ghost of Kyiv that officials later admitted was a myth.

[*YouTube*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/youtube) , TikTok and Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, all pledged to remove RT and Sputnik from their platforms within the European Union. But researchers have found that in some cases all Russia had to do to evade the ban was to post it from a different account.

The Disinformation Situation Center, a Europe-based coalition of disinformation researchers, found that some RT video content was showing up on social media under a new brand name and logo. In the case of some video footage, the RT brand was simply removed from the video and reposted on a new YouTube channel not covered by the EU's ban.

More aggressive content moderation of social media could make it harder for Russia to circumvent the ban, according to Felix Kartte, a senior adviser at Reset, a U.K.-based nonprofit that has funded the Disinformation Situation Center's work and is critical of social media’s role in democratic discourse.

"Rather than putting effective content moderation systems in place, they are playing whack-a-mole with the Kremlin’s disinformation apparatus,” Kartte said.

YouTube's parent company did not immediately respond to questions seeking comment about the ban.

In the EU, officials are trying to shore up their defenses. This spring the EU approved legislation that would require tech companies to do more to root out disinformation. Companies that fail could face big fines.

European Commission Vice President Vera Jourova last month called disinformation “a growing problem in the EU, and we really have to take stronger measures.”

The proliferation of sites spreading disinformation about the war in Ukraine shows that Russia had a plan in case governments or tech companies tried to restrict RT and Sputnik. That means Western leaders and tech companies will have to do more than shutter one or two websites if they hope to stop the flow of Kremlin disinformation.

“The Russians are a lot smarter,” said NewsGuard's other co-CEO, Steven Brill.

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*My grandson was stopped from voting, but I wasn't*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-2TG1-F072-43H3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 6, 2023 Saturday

Second Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 824 words

**Body**

My grandson called me around lunchtime on 4 May, this is unusual, he calls Christmas and birthdays. He told me he was turned away from the polling station, he had his photo ID But it was on his student card and this is apparently not an acceptable form of identity.

The introduction of photo ID feels to me to be an obvious ploy to stop people voting, mainly the poor and the younger generation who are the ones most likely to not have the required ID I would also say they are probably the most likely to vote against the current government.

Tony B Axminster

<strong>Foreign aid budget blunders</strong>

I am writing to express my deep concern about the decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, otherwise known as the foreign aid budget.

ODA is crucial in addressing global poverty, which affects millions of people around the world. It provides resources to support sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries, helping to improve access to basic services, strengthen governance, promote economic growth, and support humanitarian efforts.

However, the recent decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK's ODA budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) is deeply concerning. This cut will have a devastating impact on the world's poorest people and undermine the progress made in reducing global poverty. It is also in direct contradiction to the UK's commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to cutting the foreign aid budget, Rishi Sunak has been criticised for letting the Home Office and other domestic departments use the money, and stretching the rules on what can be counted as aid. In 2022, the Centre for Global Development predicted that over half of the UK's foreign aid budget would be spent domestically, much of which has gone towards housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Therefore, the notion that 0.5 per cent of GNI is spent on foreign aid is quickly becoming meaningless.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to help those in need, regardless of their location. Organisations such as The Borgen Project, which are dedicated to minimising global poverty, are fighting to prevent this from happening further. I therefore urge you to contact your leaders in support of the ODA and increasing funding to those living in extreme poverty. The problem of global poverty is huge, but every call, email and letter can make a difference.

Emily Moudiotis London

<strong>Monarchy matters</strong>

Judith Daniels (letters, 5 May) is right to conclude that a hereditary head of state with limited powers is the best available mechanism for providing the stability and continuity that is so essential in a parliamentary democracy.

Those opposing the monarchy have yet to propose a better alternative. An election for the position is an appalling prospect. What would be the electorate? What would be the interval between elections? How would candidates be selected?

Similarly, an appointment by a committee of the Great and the Good begs the question of how the committee members themselves would be appointed. We should hang on to a system which has worked for centuries and does no harm.

John Wilkin Bury St Edmunds

<strong>Choose a life partner wisely </strong>

Simon Kelner's article on divorce is quite accurate, and painful reading. My husband and I quietly celebrated our fiftieth anniversary this April; I am one of the few women from my university year who is still married to the same man. I can certainly claim no special merit.

Meanwhile, we are coming to terms with our daughter's divorce, which she did not want or deserve. My advice to men thinking of getting married is to make your choice with care, and stick to it.

(Dr) Merryn Williams Oxford

<strong>Holyrood held to account at last</strong>

A committee of former ministers, senior civil servants and special advisers has, remarkably frankly, described Scottish government decision-making as "rushed, unclear and unstructured".

I think many of us could have inferred that from what we have seen of poorly drafted legislation which has been rushed through Holyrood. The verdict is that the perceived need for speed has been paramount, and not for the better, while "even clear financial rules??? were not always implemented fully??? because sometimes it was seen as bureaucratic or as optional".

Government by ministerial announcement has overridden careful policy development, and the opinions of the first minister and her deputy predominated. The committee's report is a lengthy and sorry commentary on the deficiencies of government in Scotland under the SNP.

The lack of business and commercial expertise, and the fact that "civil servants didn't always know to seek specific expertise" is a damning comment on the system at Holyrood, which very clearly is not fit for purpose and requires to be overhauled.

Jill Stephenson Edinburgh

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[*While many in the EU worry about far-right gains at the ballot box – those close to Russia crave security*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6J-NTF1-JBNF-W4F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 7, 2024 Friday 3:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:5

**Length:** 1225 words

**Byline:** Mary Dejevsky

**Highlight:** IN FOCUS: Mary Dejevsky travels to Finland, the Baltic states and Poland, where one issue stands above all others

**Body**

Between now and Sunday evening, several hundred million people will vote in elections for the next [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) parliament, in what is [*billed as the second-largest exercise*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/european-elections-2024-voting-eu-far-right-b2557270.html) in representative democracy in the world after elections in India.

But the numbers actually voting have habitually been far fewer than in national elections, with turnout overall barely registering above 50 per cent, and a lot less in some countries, especially those further east.

There are hopes that [*this year could see that pattern change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-latest-russia-vladimir-putin-weapons-b2558425.html). The reason is that these are the first EU-wide elections to be held since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s 2022 invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). And while the election agenda as seen from the western and southern parts of Europe has been dominated by hostility to migration and cost of living issues, with forecasts of gains for the far right, electoral concerns as seen from the northeast of the EU are different.

How different is what I have been trying to find out, travelling from [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) , through the Baltic states, to northeastern Poland. And here, while you will find a flicker of the same preoccupations that have dominated the campaigning further south and west, the big topic on what is essentially the European Union’s northeastern frontier is summed up in one word: security.

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And first impressions are forbidding. Twin forts face off across the river, the Estonian one painted with huge Estonian, Ukrainian and EU flags. There is a road bridge hung with Cold War-style barbed wire, whose only traffic seemed to be border guards reporting for their shifts, and a station where the train that once took two hours to go on to St Petersburg now stops and returns to the capital, Tallinn.

On the one hand, Narva is a strange and potentially tense place, where there have been flare-ups in the past and could be again. At the same time, it is becoming ever more of a backwater. Its economy is in trouble, having lost trade and Russian daytrippers, and so long as the EU freeze with Russia continues, it is hard to see any sort of prosperous future for the city. The population, now officially 57,000, is in decline, and although Russian speakers account for more than 90 per cent, the mood is muted. Not surprising, given the war and the arrival of refugees from Ukraine.

There will be voting in the EU parliamentary elections in Narva, as in the rest of Estonia, as in the rest of the EU – and there are posters and TV appeals to prove it. But there can be few places that seem further from Brussels just now than this eastern tip of the EU sticking out into Russia, and the abstention rate among the EU’s Russian minority is always high.

There will probably be many more people in Finland, Poland and other now-frontline states that can be expected to turn out and vote with security at the front of their minds.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Prisoners take part in Men’s Shed initiative to help prepare for life outside*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:678Y-07V1-JBNF-W175-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 10, 2023 Tuesday 12:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 703 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** The scheme was set up in the Training Unit located on the grounds of the Mountjoy prison campus in north Dublin.

**Body**

Twice a day, around a dozen older prisoners gather in a workshop to repair old bicycles for refugees, restore broken furniture and build benches to raise money for a cancer charity.

The group of men, who range in age from 55 and into their 80s, are nearing the end of their prison sentences and are preparing for life outside the prison walls in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin).

The group of prisoners are part of a Men’s Sheds initiative set up in the Training Unit located on the grounds of the Mountjoy prison campus in north Dublin.

The shed, established with the help of the [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Men’s Sheds Association, aims to help prisoners improve mental health and prepare them for their older years outside prison through communal work.

Brian Cahill, chief officer at the Training Unit, said the motivation behind the prison Shed is similar to the hundreds that have been set up across [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland).

Mr Cahill, who oversees the workshops alongside assistant governor David Mulligan, said it includes prisoners preparing to leave prison and those who have a record of good behaviour.

“We were organising workshops and things for the boys to do to keep them busy. One of our priorities was giving them things to occupy the mind,” Mr Cahill said.

“We saw what they were doing at Men’s Sheds and saw that the age profiles were similar.

“We are not training these men the way we would other prisoners for job interviews, but instead getting them ready to take care of themselves and ease into retirement.

Really nice film from [*@Fingalcoco*](https://twitter.com/Fingalcoco?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and the men in the Ballbriggan Men's Shed, well done to all involved [*https://t.co/EJXK36RYKJ*](https://t.co/EJXK36RYKJ) — Irish Men's Sheds Association (@IrishSheds) [*January 5, 2023*](https://twitter.com/IrishSheds/status/1611000960230346758?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “We felt Men’s Sheds was inclusive and non-judgmental and gets them active and making them interested in things.“The men can relax, learn things and improve their mental health.“So the governor and myself put together a programme and spoke to the men about what they would be interested in.“There were around seven areas they were interested in, and they suggested things from modelmaking to making frames for their artwork.“They started off slowly and we then built it up. We now have 12 men operating twice a day, a morning session and an afternoon session.”The prisoners make items including art frames, benches and pallet art, and also help restore furniture.They take on small targets and have a realistic goals and feel great when they finish a product.Brian Cahill“They have a very busy programme and it’s working really well, there is great camaraderie.“They take on small targets and have realistic goals and feel great when they finish a product.”The Irish Men’s Sheds Association also introduced the Unit to the Irish Cancer Society, and prisoners are now making benches for the charity, which will be placed around parts of Dublin.“These are community-based projects and it’s a way for the men to interact,” Mr Cahill added.“We also organised a local bike shop to send some bikes that need minor repairs and cleaning. The men fix them up and we pass them on the [*Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/red-cross) who will distribute them to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and others around the country.The IMSA welcomes this publication. From the earliest Sheds in Ireland over ten years ago; to today’s flourishing network of nearly 400 Sheds nationally, Sheds have consistently championed and advanced SDGs within communities across the land. [*https://t.co/4toq9mERYj*](https://t.co/4toq9mERYj) — Irish Men's Sheds Association (@IrishSheds) [*January 5, 2023*](https://twitter.com/IrishSheds/status/1610998287397445632?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“The Men’s Shed has been really successful and the whole ethos is to help them socially, regardless of their abilities or training.

“Some of these men come from labour and professional backgrounds but they come together to work at this.

“It’s very relaxed and they sit down together and have produced some great things.

“A lot of the other workshops in the prisons are extremely busy places, have a high turnover and focus on getting prisoners getting workings skills, whereas this is a bit more relaxed and more social.

“These men may never have spoken to each other before and are now getting involved and sharing and are learning new skills and getting involved in community projects.

“It will help them with communication and social skills when they leave.”

**Load-Date:** January 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Voter ID a ploy to stop poor and elderly from voting*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-2TG1-F072-43G0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 6, 2023 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 20

**Length:** 824 words

**Body**

My grandson called me around lunchtime on 4 May, this is unusual, he calls Christmas and birthdays. He told me he was turned away from the polling station, he had his photo ID But it was on his student card and this is apparently not an acceptable form of identity.

The introduction of photo ID feels to me to be an obvious ploy to stop people voting, mainly the poor and the younger generation who are the ones most likely to not have the required ID I would also say they are probably the most likely to vote against the current government.

Tony B Axminster

<strong>Foreign aid budget blunders</strong>

I am writing to express my deep concern about the decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, otherwise known as the foreign aid budget.

ODA is crucial in addressing global poverty, which affects millions of people around the world. It provides resources to support sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries, helping to improve access to basic services, strengthen governance, promote economic growth, and support humanitarian efforts.

However, the recent decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK's ODA budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) is deeply concerning. This cut will have a devastating impact on the world's poorest people and undermine the progress made in reducing global poverty. It is also in direct contradiction to the UK's commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to cutting the foreign aid budget, Rishi Sunak has been criticised for letting the Home Office and other domestic departments use the money, and stretching the rules on what can be counted as aid. In 2022, the Centre for Global Development predicted that over half of the UK's foreign aid budget would be spent domestically, much of which has gone towards housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Therefore, the notion that 0.5 per cent of GNI is spent on foreign aid is quickly becoming meaningless.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to help those in need, regardless of their location. Organisations such as The Borgen Project, which are dedicated to minimising global poverty, are fighting to prevent this from happening further. I therefore urge you to contact your leaders in support of the ODA and increasing funding to those living in extreme poverty. The problem of global poverty is huge, but every call, email and letter can make a difference.

Emily Moudiotis London

<strong>Monarchy matters</strong>

Judith Daniels (letters, 5 May) is right to conclude that a hereditary head of state with limited powers is the best available mechanism for providing the stability and continuity that is so essential in a parliamentary democracy.

Those opposing the monarchy have yet to propose a better alternative. An election for the position is an appalling prospect. What would be the electorate? What would be the interval between elections? How would candidates be selected?

Similarly, an appointment by a committee of the Great and the Good begs the question of how the committee members themselves would be appointed. We should hang on to a system which has worked for centuries and does no harm.

John Wilkin Bury St Edmunds

<strong>Choose a life partner wisely </strong>

Simon Kelner's article on divorce is quite accurate, and painful reading. My husband and I quietly celebrated our fiftieth anniversary this April; I am one of the few women from my university year who is still married to the same man. I can certainly claim no special merit.

Meanwhile, we are coming to terms with our daughter's divorce, which she did not want or deserve. My advice to men thinking of getting married is to make your choice with care, and stick to it.

(Dr) Merryn Williams Oxford

<strong>Holyrood held to account at last</strong>

A committee of former ministers, senior civil servants and special advisers has, remarkably frankly, described Scottish government decision-making as "rushed, unclear and unstructured".

I think many of us could have inferred that from what we have seen of poorly drafted legislation which has been rushed through Holyrood. The verdict is that the perceived need for speed has been paramount, and not for the better, while "even clear financial rules??? were not always implemented fully??? because sometimes it was seen as bureaucratic or as optional".

Government by ministerial announcement has overridden careful policy development, and the opinions of the first minister and her deputy predominated. The committee's report is a lengthy and sorry commentary on the deficiencies of government in Scotland under the SNP.

The lack of business and commercial expertise, and the fact that "civil servants didn't always know to seek specific expertise" is a damning comment on the system at Holyrood, which very clearly is not fit for purpose and requires to be overhauled.

Jill Stephenson Edinburgh

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Scottish ministers among those barred from Russia in new wave of sanctions*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:662D-CTC1-JBNF-W4FH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 1, 2022 Monday 4:28 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 621 words

**Byline:** Craig Paton

**Highlight:** The Russian foreign ministry released a list of people no longer allowed into the country.

**Body**

The [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) government has barred a number of [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) politicians from the country in response to aid given to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) following the invasion.

In a statement on Monday, the Russian foreign ministry said the additions to the country’s “stop list” were due to “continued application by the UK Government of the mechanism of sanctions” against Russians.

Holyrood Finance Secretary Kate Forbes, Constitution Secretary [*Angus Robertson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/angus-robertson) and Ukraine minister Neil Gray were all placed on the list.

SNP MSP Fiona Hyslop was also sanctioned but was mistakenly described as “Scottish cabinet secretary for economic, labour and cultural affairs” – Ms Hyslop was economy, fair work and culture secretary until last year.

On Twitter, Mr Robertson said: “The Russian foreign ministry clearly doesn’t like criticism of Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine and dislikes those who support Ukrainian freedom.”

SNP Westminster leader Ian Blackford, Scottish Green co-leader – and [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) minister – Lorna Slater and her fellow Green MSP Ross Greer have also been placed on the list, as has Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton.

Mr Blackford said: “The Russian regime’s brutal invasion of Ukraine must be challenged and the war crimes it is committing in the country must be held to account.

“The SNP will continue to stand up and oppose Russia’s illegal actions in Ukraine and we welcome the sanctions that have been imposed so far.

“However, it must not stop there and we will continue to urge the UK Government to take the steps it can to go further against individuals and institutions of key economic and strategic interest to the Russian government.

“The SNP Scottish Government is proud to play its part in supporting our Ukrainian friends, including through aid and the resettlement of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“We must be united in the face of President Putin’s aggression and the co-ordinated solidarity shown for Ukraine must and cannot waiver.”

Responding to the news, Ms Slater said: “Vladimir Putin’s outrageous and illegal invasion of Ukraine has resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions more people.

If the cost of speaking up for the rights of Ukraine, and condemning Putin’s war, is a ban from visiting Russia then I think I’ll be able to cope

Green MSP Ross Greer

“If the cost of speaking out against Putin’s war crimes is a ban on visiting Russia then I will live with these consequences, but I will not stop supporting Ukraine.”

While Mr Greer said: “Watching the bravery of the Ukrainian people in recent months has been absolutely inspiring.

“If the cost of speaking up for the rights of Ukraine, and condemning Putin’s war, is a ban from visiting Russia then I think I’ll be able to cope.”

Mr Cole-Hamilton said he would wear the ban as a “badge of honour”.

“One day, after Putin’s army has been defeated and his government swept away by the tides of history, I hope that I will have the chance to visit and meet with those who have bravely stood up against the Russian regime,” he said.

“Until that happens, I will wear this ban as a badge of honour.

“The UK must redouble its efforts to help Ukraine achieve victory on the battlefield, while here in Scotland, our Government must get serious about patching the holes in the refugee scheme and helping those who have fled to our shores.”

Nicola Sturgeon was similarly sanctioned earlier this year.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, shadow foreign secretary David Lammy, shadow levelling up secretary Lisa Nandy and former Nato secretary general George Robertson were also among those banned from entering Russia.

A number of journalists were included in Monday’s sanctions, including Piers Morgan, BBC newsreader Huw Edwards and ITV journalist Robert Peston.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian girl ‘excited’ to start sixth form after months of anguish*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:662B-R3S1-DY4H-K4MC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 1, 2022 Monday 7:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 623 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Sixteen-year-old Anastasia Shpot and her family had to flee Ukraine when Russia invaded.

**Body**

A 16-year-old Ukrainian girl has said she is “excited” to start sixth form in September and develop her piano skills following months of anguish because of Russia’s invasion of her home country.

Anastasia Shpot arrived in the UK on May 26 with her mother Natalia, 42, and two sisters – Yulia, 17, and nine-year-old [*Victoria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/victoria) – after escaping fighting and shootings in Ukraine, which began as early as 4am on February 24.

“We were woken at 4am. War had started. It was so confusing. [*Dad*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dad) (Victor, 56) said they were very close. There was fighting outside. When the shooting happened, we had to find cover and hide,” she told the PA news agency.

I call my dad regularly and speak to him like it could be the last time we speak. I call my grandparents and speak to them like it could be the last time

Anastasia Shpot

After two days, the family fled their home in Pershptravensk, which is close to Kiev, and Anastasia recalled one moment when they were in fear for their lives as a cafe in which they had sought refuge, in Melnitsa, western Ukraine, was shot at and eventually destroyed, but they were able to escape.

Anastasia’s father had to leave the family at the Polish border to stay behind and fight, and she said she speaks to him every day like it “could be the last time we speak”.

“I call my dad regularly and speak to him like it could be the last time we speak. I call my grandparents and speak to them like it could be the last time,” she told PA.

The teenager said her and her family are grateful for the support from those in the UK who welcomed them with “open doors” and “open hearts”, in particular Gary and Sandra Silver, who helped the family find a home in Heyford Park, [*Oxfordshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxfordshire) , and with their visas after the couple met them in a hostel in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) in March.

The husband and wife have helped around 250 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** secure accommodation across Europe and the US through their property business, Dorchester Regeneration.

“They give us a home and welcomed us with open doors and for me, it was wonderful because people really helped us – they opened their hearts,” Anastasia said.

“When we arrive here, they give us food. They told us if you need something, just tell us. We did not expect this so it was amazing for me and my family.”

Anastasia and her sisters have all been enrolled in Heyford Park School – an academy school that the Dorchester Regeneration team helped create – and the budding pianist hopes to continue working on her craft.

“In September, I will go into sixth form. I’m nervous, but excited,” she said.

“I enjoy playing the piano because I played piano in Ukraine, and my school in Heyford Park is great because they give us our own piano, so I have the opportunity to play the piano as much as I want to.”

We’re delighted that the family are settling in well in Heyford Park and that everyone in the community has been so welcoming, but we’re also aware that they’ve left so much behind ... If and when the time comes for the family to return to Ukraine, we will do whatever we can to help facilitate and support them

Gary Silver

Mr Silver said: “We brought several families to the UK, one of which we found a home for in our new Heyford Park development in Oxfordshire. That was Anastasia, her mother and two sisters. My wife and I quite literally stumbled across Anastasia in Warsaw train station. She was sleeping rough on the floor with her family.

“We’re delighted that the family are settling in well in Heyford Park and that everyone in the community has been so welcoming, but we’re also aware that they’ve left so much behind, including Anastasia’s dad and grandparents.

“If and when the time comes for the family to return to Ukraine, we will do whatever we can to help facilitate and support them.”

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*King and Queen ‘deeply touched’ at celebration of ‘glorious’ Coronation Day*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-MCW1-DY4H-K4KS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2023 Sunday 12:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 773 words

**Byline:** Laura Elston

**Highlight:** The festivities are continuing on Sunday with Big Lunches and a star-studded concert at Windsor Castle.

**Body**

The King and Queen were “deeply touched” by the nation’s celebration of their historic coronation, Buckingham Palace has said.

As the festivities continued on Sunday with Big Lunches attended by royals, and a star-studded concert at [*Windsor Castle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor-castle) , the Palace said newly-crowned Charles and [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) are “profoundly grateful” to those who helped make it such a “glorious occasion”.

The King and Queen will join around 20,000 members of the public at the musical extravaganza where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, [*Katy Perry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/katy-perry) and Lionel Richie.

Tens of thousands turned out in central London to see the pomp and pageantry, with Charles and Camilla processing through the streets in the Gold State Coach and taking to the Palace balcony in their glittering crowns.

More than 18 million people in the UK tuned in to watch the ceremony on TV, compared with 26.5 million for the late Queen’s funeral in September.

A Palace spokesman said: “Their Majesties were deeply touched by the events of yesterday and profoundly grateful both to all those who helped to make it such a glorious occasion – and to the very many who turned out to show their support in such numbers in London and further afield.”

Camilla meanwhile asked for her coronation bouquet of English spring flowers to be placed on the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in the coronation church, Westminster Abbey.

The simple posy, including auriculas, the late Queen’s favourite lily of the valley, and one of Charles’s favourites hellebores, by the King and Queen’s go-to florist, Shane Connolly, was laid at the memorial.

Royal brides traditionally send their bouquets to be placed there the day after their weddings in a tradition started by the Queen Mother.

Camilla did not carry the flowers on Saturday as it was a wedding not a coronation, the Palace said.

In Windsor, royal fans – some draped in Union flags or wearing Union flag dresses – started arriving hours before the concert was due to begin at 8pm.

The show, hosted by Downton Abbey and Paddington actor Hugh Bonneville, will see Hollywood star Tom Cruise, Dynasty actress Dame [*Joan Collins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joan-collins) , adventurer Bear Grylls and singer Sir Tom Jones appear via video message.

The series of pre-recorded sketches will reveal little-known facts about the monarch and will also include moments from beloved literary character Winnie the Pooh – seemingly echoing the famous moment Paddington Bear drank tea with the Queen during her Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

There will also be performances by Paloma Faith, Olly Murs, veteran rock guitarist Steve Winwood, and Nicole Scherzinger of The Pussycat Dolls.

Classical acts including Andrea Bocelli, Welsh bass-baritone Sir [*Bryn Terfel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bryn-terfel) and Chinese pianist Lang Lang will perform too.

The Royal Ballet, the Royal Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal College of Music and the Royal College of Art will come together for the first time to create a one-off performance featuring Sex Education and Doctor Who star Ncuti Gatwa and Olivier Award nominee Mei Mac.

Thousands of street parties were also being held across the country with people encouraged to come together for the Coronation Big Lunch.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife, Akshata Murty, hosted a lunch in Downing Street, inviting volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and youth group members.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh will attend a Big Lunch in Cranleigh, Surrey, the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence will be guests at a community street party in Swindon, Wiltshire, and Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie will visit a Big Lunch in Windsor.

Meanwhile, as part of the Coronation Concert, choreographed lasers, projections and drone displays will radiate over historic bridges and buildings.

Seven of the 10 locations involved in the event, Lighting Up The Nation, have been disclosed so far, including Blackpool seafront in Lancashire, where people can join a viewing party from Blackpool Tower.

Sheffield Town Hall will showcase a display in the Peace Gardens, while Newcastle’s Tyne Bridge and Gateshead’s Millennium Bridge lights will cast riverside reflections for an audience stretching between the quays.

A drone show will light up the sky above the Eden Project in Cornwall, and its biomes will become multicoloured for spectators invited from the local volunteer community.

Light shows will also brighten up Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff at various locations.

The remaining three locations will be revealed during the concert.

– The Coronation Concert will be broadcast on BBC One, BBC iPlayer, BBC Radio 2 and BBC Sounds from 8pm.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Thousands of Ukrainian families living in hotels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:678F-NS21-F072-43PW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

January 8, 2023 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 771 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being housed in hotels as councils struggle to deal with a rising number becoming homeless.

Nearly 3,000 Ukrainian households have presented themselves as homeless to English councils since the end of February 2022.

And with renting privately becoming "all but impossible" and limited social housing available, many councils have had no choice but to place them in temporary accommodation when their Homes for Ukraine or family sponsorships break down.

Councils have said that the "growing number" of Ukrainians presenting as homeless is placing pressure on local services.

Freedom of information figures obtained by The Independent from 134 of 181 district councils in England show at least 668 households - 1,618 people - have been accommodated in hotels since March 2022. A further 406 households have been placed in temporary accommodation, such as a local authority flat or other social housing.

At least another 4,107 are being housed in hotels in Wales and Scotland, many for months on end. In Scotland and Wales, Ukrainians who arrive on the Super Sponsor scheme are put in hotels or on cruise liners until they are matched with a host family. This is different to the system in England, where Ukrainians must present themselves as homeless to councils before they are found alternative accommodation.

Opora, a charity that helps Ukrainians in the UK, warned the numbers could be much higher.

According to a recent survey of more than 3,000 Ukrainians in the UK, around 4 per cent said they were still awaiting allocation to sponsor housing. With 110,000 arrivals on the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) visas as of mid-December, that could mean more than 4,400 people, director Stan Benes said.

A further 3 per cent of respondents said that they were already living in some form of social housing with council support - the equivalent of 3,300 people.

Charities warned that the government was repeating the mistakes it made with Afghan refugees by letting thousands of Ukrainians move into unsuitable hotel accommodation.

Lauren Scott, executive director of charity Refugees at Home, said: "People opened their doors under Homes for Ukraine in 2022 as an alternative to housing refugees in hotels. But with no proper move-on strategy in place that's exactly where many Ukrainians may end up in 2023."

She added: "The government needs to learn from the experiences of Afghans housed in hotel accommodation and not make the same mistakes. We know of people living in hotels for over a year, with families of five or six people sharing one room.

"There are no cooking facilities, no privacy, little autonomy. There are alternatives to hotel accommodation and some councils are developing schemes to help Ukrainians move into private rented accommodation."

Adis Sehic, at the migrant charity Work Rights Centre, said that the growing number of Ukrainians being put in hotels would become increasingly costly.

Although councils receive more than £10,000 per Ukrainian on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, they do not get specific funding to help house Ukrainians who have come to the UK on the Family Scheme - causing them to dip into their already overstretched homelessness budgets.

He said: "Our frontline team have seen many Ukrainians turning to local authorities for assistance with securing alternative forms of accommodation, given that their hosting arrangements have now broken down."

Mr Sehic's team works predominantly with London councils and he said that there was an acute shortage of appropriate social housing in the capital. He added: "We have and expect to see more families placed into costly, temporary accommodation."

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association, which represents more than 350 councils across England and Wales, said: "We have been raising concerns with government on the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to councils.

"There is a real crisis in the refugee and asylum system which is compounded by a housing crisis. We are pleased that the government has been working with the LGA and councils on funding."

A government spokesperson said: "Homes for Ukraine has seen 109,000 Ukrainians welcomed to the UK, thanks to the generosity of sponsors, with most settling in well.

"We know the vast majority of sponsors want to provide support beyond six months, but in the minority of cases where family or sponsor relationships break down, temporary accommodation is a crucial safety net."

They continued: "We are providing councils with extensive funding to support arrivals and they have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their heads."

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683B-3DN1-DY4H-K1X8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 25, 2023 Tuesday 12:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** TENNIS,SPORT; Version:2

**Length:** 801 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Crooks

**Highlight:** Ukrainian players will also receive free hospitality and training facilities at this summer’s championships.

**Body**

[*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) will offer substantial financial support to Ukrainian players and causes this summer after reversing the ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes.

At the spring press conference to announce plans for this summer’s tournament, organisers revealed that £1 for every ticket holder – expected to be more than £500,000 in total – will be donated to Ukrainian relief.

Meanwhile, the All England Club and the Lawn Tennis Association will provide two hotel rooms per Ukrainian player free of charge and training facilities for the duration of the summer grass-court season as well as funding a day at the tournament for 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Tournament schedule updates Environmental enhancements Plans for the future Read the latest [*#Wimbledon*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Wimbledon?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) announcements in full, regarding The Championships 2023 and beyond ️— Wimbledon (@Wimbledon) [*April 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Wimbledon/status/1650827694186151936?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Wimbledon and the LTA announced at the end of last month that the controversial ban on Russian and Belarusian players would not continue after they were left out in the cold by the rest of the sport and punished by the WTA and ATP, with hefty fines and the removal of ranking points.Chairman Ian Hewitt said: “This was an incredibly difficult decision. I personally say that I found this probably the most difficult decision during my chairmanship.”In order to compete this summer, players from the two countries must sign declarations that they will not demonstrate any backing for the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) or either regime, or receive financial support from the Russian or Belarusian state or companies linked to them.Several players have already signed the declarations and it remains to be seen whether the stipulations will deter any Russian or Belarusian competitors from entering.We are pleased to partner with the AELTC to donate one pound for each ticketholder at [*@Wimbledon*](https://twitter.com/Wimbledon?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to Ukrainian relief Read more about this and our support of Ukrainian players this summer — LTA (@the\_LTA) [*April 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/the_LTA/status/1650828022616842245?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Chief executive Sally Bolton said: “We listened very much to the feedback from last year. And that feedback from the (Russian and Belarusian) athletes was that they wanted the choice to be able to sign the declaration.

“We’ve spent a significant amount of time engaging with those players to ensure that they fully understand what they’re signing up to. And, at this point, we have a number of players who are in the process of signing them or have signed.”

Bolton was also asked about the prospect of environmental protestors seeking to disrupt the tournament, as happened last week at the World Snooker Championship.

“There have been some incidents recently that will inform the planning that we will undertake,” she said. “The picture is still emerging and our plans are evolving as time goes on.

“What I would urge anybody attending the Championships to do is to be considerate of those that are also attending the Championships.”

While developments at Wimbledon for players, fans and media have been progressing, there is still no forward movement on the club’s plans to expand into neighbouring Wimbledon Park.

Plans were submitted in July 2021 but have not yet gone before Merton and Wandsworth councils for approval amid considerable local opposition.

Wimbledon had initially hoped to bring the qualifying competition on site – one of the major aims of the expansion – as early as 2025 but organisers now admit that will not happen before the end of the decade at best and could be the early 2030s, providing approval is eventually secured.

Hewitt said: “We really look forward to our application being heard as soon as possible but we do recognise this is an important, complex and long-term project. We are patient and we fully understand that it will be approached carefully and thoroughly from all angles.”

On opposition from neighbours, he added: “I recognise there will be objections but we are proud of the public benefits that our proposals offer and I’m really disappointed that objectors are advocating a course that would deny residents and future generations these substantial benefits.”

Organisers are planning to celebrate the career of Roger Federer, although it is not yet clear whether he will attend the tournament, as well as the 50th anniversary of the WTA, with Billie Jean King a special guest.

Coaching from the stands will be allowed for the first time as part of a year-long trial across the sport while players will be able to fill up water bottles on court in a bid to cut plastic waste.

It was confirmed, meanwhile, that Denise Parnell will take over from the retiring Gerry Armstrong as tournament referee for next summer’s event.

With Debbie Jevans succeeding Hewitt as chair following the championships this summer, it means three of the most senior positions will all be held by women for the first time.

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Sport news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683G-C121-JCS0-D12C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 26, 2023 Wednesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** SPORT; Pg. 43

**Length:** 760 words

**Body**

Ireland reach highest-ever test score in Sri Lanka

Taking full advantage of ideal batting conditions and a tired Sri Lankan bowling attack, Ireland piled up 492 all out before the hosts responded by reaching 81-0 at stumps on day two of the second test yesterday. Nishan Madushka was unbeaten on 41 in only his third test match, and Sri Lanka skipper Dimuth Kurunaratne remained not out on 39 when play was suspended 30 minutes before the scheduled close due to bad light and rain.

Earlier, Ireland reached its highest test score by a distance, surpassing their previous best of 339 against Pakistan in 1998 in Dublin. The Sri Lankan bowling looked uninspired for the best part of the day and was sent on a leather hunt by Paul Stirling (103) and Curtis Campher (111) who scored their maiden centuries. They joined Kevin O'Brien and Lorcan Tucker as Irish test centurions in the country's short test cricket history. AP

Villa up to fifth as Emery keeps fans dreaming

Aston Villa continued their push for Europe as they moved up to fifth place in the Premier League with a 1-0 home victory over Fulham. Tyrone Mings' 21st-minute header proved enough for Unai Emery's side in a game that saw them rarely troubled by their opponents. Having extended their unbeaten run to 10 matches, eight of which have been wins, Villa leapfrog Tottenham into fifth, a point better off than them, ahead of Spurs hosting fourth-placed Manchester United tomorrow.

Emery has overseen some turnaround for the Midlands outfit, who were 17th, outside the relegation zone on goals scored, when they lost 3-0 at Fulham in October, their final game under the Spaniard's predecessor Steven Gerrard. Marco Silva's Fulham remain ninth in the table.

Meanwhile, Joachim Andersen's comical own goal helped put Wolverhampton Wanderers on the brink of Premier League survival. The Crystal Palace defender's unfortunate effort and Ruben Neves' late penalty gave the hosts a 2-0 win and moved them nine points above the relegation zone. They sit 13th, level on points with Palace, after a third straight home win without conceding.

It is a run that has given Julen Lopetegui's side a platform to safety and, barring a late collapse, should see them earn a sixth straight season in the top flight. Palace, with their own status almost assured, were no great shakes but Jose Sa still had to deny Albert Sambi Lokonga and Eberechi Eze. The Eagles paid for presenting Wolves with goals to slip to their first defeat since Roy Hodgson's return last month. PA

Bairstow hits 97 on his return from injury

Jonny Bairstow fell three short of a dashing century on his first outing in almost eight months, picking up where he left off last summer in a low-key comeback for Yorkshire's second XI. Coming in at number four, Bairstow cracked 97 in just 88 deliveries, with 13 boundaries and two sixes, before hammering fellow England international Olly Stone to cover with a hundred in sight.

The arrival of Harrison's leg-spin allowed him to shift up a gear, with one slog sweep landing in the seats of the East Stand and another disappearing over wide long-on. By then a century seemed almost inevitable, but the return of Stone brought instant rewards as Bairstow looked to get on top of a shorter ball outside off stump only to find Harrison's hands at cover.

The 33-year-old has not played since a freak golfing accident last September left him with three separate fractures in his left leg as well as a dislocated ankle and ligament damage but took the biggest step yet on what has been a long and arduous recovery. PA

Wimbledon set to make £500k Ukraine donation

Substantial financial support to Ukrainian players and causes will be offered by Wimbledon this summer after the tournament's board reversed the ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes. At the spring press conference to announce plans for this summer's tournament, organisers revealed that £1 for every ticket holder - expected to be more than £500,000 in total - will be donated to Ukrainian relief.

Meanwhile, the All England Club and the Lawn Tennis Association will provide two hotel rooms per Ukrainian player free of charge and training facilities for the duration of the summer grass-court season as well as funding a day at the tournament for 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Wimbledon and the LTA announced at the end of last month that the controversial ban on Russian and Belarusian players would not continue after they were left out in the cold by the rest of the sport and punished by the WTA and ATP, with hefty fines and the removal of ranking points. PA

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Uplifting stories of 2022: Hollywood star in supermarket and origami masterpiece*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:675F-N1Y1-JBNF-W326-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 25, 2022 Sunday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 731 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Here is a look at some of the most uplifting stories of the year.

**Body**

There were several uplifting moments in 2022, ranging from a [*Hollywood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hollywood) star seen “mooching around” the biscuit aisle of a [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) supermarket to an origami masterpiece made with one sheet of paper.

Here is a look at some of the PA news agency’s top picks from across the year.

– Finnish origami artist creates masterpiece using one sheet of paper

Juho Konkkola, from Jyvaskyla, completed a two-year project in January after 109 hours of folding to create a piece depicting two sword-wielding knights engaged in battle.

The masterpiece was folded from September 2021 to January 2022 and required 5,377 individual creases.

The finished work had no cuts or tears. If it were unfolded, it would revert to a square piece of paper.

Mr Konkkola described the process as “very therapeutic” and added that it was a “delight to see people show their interest or appreciation”.

“It motivates me to keep on going,” he said.

– [*John Travolta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-travolta) stuns shoppers in Morrisons

Grease star John Travolta surprised shoppers in a Norfolk supermarket in April when he was spotted casually “mooching around the digestive biscuits”.

Sam Frary and her husband [*Kevin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin) were “just going about (their) normal shop” at the Morrisons in Fakenham when she turned to see Travolta, who was thought to be filming a short movie in West Raynham.

“I looked and said, ‘That’s … John Travolta!’, but (Kevin) didn’t believe me,” Ms Frary, a customer service adviser from Sculthorpe, Norfolk, told PA.

“He was just mooching around the digestive biscuits and most shoppers didn’t have a clue who they were standing next to.”

She added that he was “so approachable and friendly”.

– Man who has attended every Glastonbury since 1978 recalls his fondest memories

Some people have locations that will always hold a special place in their hearts, which seems to be the case for HGV driver Ben Rogers, who has attended every Glastonbury Festival since 1978.

Mr Rogers still lives just seven miles from the site, in Wells, Somerset, and attended the event in June this year with his son Harry and daughter [*Grace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grace) , both of whom have gone annually since they were born.

“I think it’s a tradition that will stay in my family forever,” he told PA.

One of Mr Rogers’s earliest memories includes lasers emitting from the Pyramid Stage, and he said the best performance was David Bowie in 2000.

“It was just stunning, (it’s) hard to put into words,” he said.

– ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** get a taste of their previous lives thanks to bike charity

The Bike Project takes second-hand or abandoned cycles, mends them and gives them to refugees and asylum seekers living in London and Birmingham. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many Ukrainians who fled to the UK benefited from the charity’s work.

Kateryna Herych, who fled Kyiv on April 26 with her daughter Daniella Googe, told PA that the Bike Project had given them the chance to “have a taste of our previous life”.

“We cycled every weekend just for fun (in Ukraine) and I usually used a bike to commute to my job, so when we came here we missed that time and the Bike Project gave us the opportunity to have a taste of our previous life,” she said.

– Man hopes to become professional footballer through UK migrants team

The Euros and World Cup have dominated much of the news this year, with many speaking about how much football means to them – including Ussri Badawi, who fled the war in Sudan and came to the UK in 2018.

In August, he spoke to PA about his hopes of becoming a professional footballer, spurred on by his involvement in a migrant football team.

Mr Badawi said he “faced dangerous situations” getting to the UK, including sitting between the wheels of a travelling lorry, before seeking support from Changing Lives FC – a football team comprised of refugees and migrants.

“I just came across to train because I didn’t know of any football teams that I could train with, and I have been here for three years now,” he said.

“The team really means a lot because it has multicultural players from different countries.

“We all know ourselves we don’t have perfect English, so we can communicate well and that might not happen with other teams, and it makes you think you could become a professional footballer.”

**Load-Date:** December 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach views devastation inflicted by Russian forces on visit to Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65VV-5J31-JBNF-W1N3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 6, 2022 Wednesday 11:11 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 674 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin toured the war-torn suburbs of Borodyanka, Bucha and Irpin.

**Body**

Ireland’s premier witnessed the devastation inflicted by invading Russian forces as he visited areas of [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) that have borne the brunt of the offensive on the city.

[*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) Micheal Martin began a trip to the Ukrainian capital by viewing the conflict-scarred suburbs of Borodyanka, Bucha and Irpin.

The tour included a sombre visit to the site of a mass grave in the grounds of a church in Bucha.

Mr Martin is using the visit to Kyiv to reiterate Irish solidarity with the Ukrainian authorities in the face of the Russian invasion.

His day-long itinerary in the war-torn city began with a trip to Borodyanka – a town on the outskirts of Kyiv that has suffered widespread damage under Russian shelling.

On the 30-minute drive from the railway station, the Taoiseach passed Hostomel airport, where his convoy stopped to observe a demolished bridge.

The delegation also drove past bombed-out warehouses, shopping centres and petrol stations.

The scale of Ukrainian efforts to defend their capital was evident, with numerous bunkers and fortifications visible on the journey.

In Borodyanka, Mr Martin met the town’s mayor and viewed apartment blocks gutted by fire during the Russian bombardment.

From there, Mr Martin visited the site of a mass grave in Bucha.

The grave was discovered in the grounds of the church of St Andrew.

A local cleric showed Mr Martin the site and an associated exhibition of graphic photographs of exhumed bodies and pictures of civilians left dead on the streets of the suburb when Russian forces retreated.

The Irish delegation then travelled to nearby Irpin where the Taoiseach was shown badly-damaged apartment blocks that had been hit by Russian shells.

Afterwards, Mr Martin said: “It is difficult to comprehend the devastation and inhumanity of Russia’s attacks on Irpin, Borodyanka and Bucha.

“Clear how important it is for women and children to get to Ireland to escape trauma and brutality. We stand with Ukraine.”

In meetings later on Wednesday, Mr Martin will discuss how Ireland and the EU can support Ukraine.

Mr Martin will restate Ireland’s full backing for continuing sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s regime, for Ukraine’s path to full EU membership, as well as Ireland’s commitment to work with the EU on the reconstruction of Ukraine.

“The people of Ireland stand with Ukraine and its people in the face of Russia’s immoral and unprovoked war of terror,” he said.

“The bombardment and attacks on civilians are nothing short of war crimes, and I will use my visit to express Ireland’s support for moves to hold those behind these attacks fully accountable.

“The spirit and resolve of the Ukrainian people has inspired us all, and Ireland will provide every support for Ukraine’s path to full EU membership, and continue to welcome and support civilians fleeing this war.”

Mr Martin’s trip comes two weeks after President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) invited him to visit Ukraine.

It is the first visit by a Taoiseach to the eastern European country.

It also comes after Mr Putin on Monday declared victory in seizing the eastern Ukrainian province of [*Luhansk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luhansk) , with his troops escalating their offensive in neighbouring Donetsk.

Mr Martin has warned previously that the Russian president appeared to be leveraging its natural gas supplies to exert maximum pressure on Europe ahead of the winter period.

The Taoiseach has also been a vocal advocate for Ukraine’s fast-tracked membership of the EU.

Mr Zelensky has previously thanked Ireland for its “active support of Ukraine’s European aspirations”.

Ireland has also taken in more than 36,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine at the end of February.

The Irish State has given 20 million euro in humanitarian support and assistance to the country, as well as health equipment and medical donations worth more than 4.5 million euro.

In April, fellow cabinet minister [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) became the first foreign minister of the UN Security Council to visit Kyiv, and met Ukraine’s foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba and defence minister Oleksii Reznikov.

**Load-Date:** July 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rwanda making preparations to take children removed from UK under asylum plan*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65SB-B7C1-DY4H-K346-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 24, 2022 Friday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 638 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** Downing Street has previously said no unaccompanied children would be sent to the Rwandan capital.

**Body**

[*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) is making preparations to house child asylum seekers removed from the UK on a one-way ticket under Boris Johnson’s widely-criticised policy.

The Hope Hostel in the capital of [*Kigali*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kigali) is constructing a five-a-side football pitch, a basketball court and is considering purchasing outside toys for minors, it emerged on Friday.

Downing Street said no unaccompanied children would be sent to the Rwandan capital 4,000 miles away and insisted it was right to “prepare for all eventualities”.

Hostel manager Elisee Kalyango confirmed they were taking steps to prepare for children coming under the policy, adding: “We are ready to handle people from any age.”

Being built were a “mini football and basketball court which can be shifted to volleyball”, he said, and for children they were considering getting “toys” to be placed on the nearby lawn.

The manager was speaking to journalists who travelled with the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) to Rwanda, where he is attending a Commonwealth summit, as he showed them around the accommodation in a visit arranged by No 10.

The Hope was empty. Mr Kalyango said the individuals who were living there, understood to have included orphans of the Rwandan genocide and students, were housed elsewhere shortly after the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) signed the £120 million economic and migration deal in April.

Lord Dubs, who was welcomed to the UK when he fled the Nazis in Czechoslovakia under the Kindertransport scheme, said the revelation about children was “utterly unacceptable”.

The [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) peer told the PA news agency: “I think it’s utterly unacceptable. The policy of sending people to Rwanda is awful enough without adding that they are going to send children.

“I don’t know how they think they can get away with it – I think it’s deeply, deeply shocking.

“It makes it clear they don’t care who they send to Rwanda – as long as they get rid of people.”

But the Prime Minister’s official spokesman said the Government needs to prepare “facilities for all eventualities” and insisted 90% of those travelling across the English Channel in small boats are men.

“It’s right we prepare for all eventualities and you can see we have prepared properly,” he said.

“Our view is we have taken significant steps, as have the Rwandan government, and those running this site, to make sure people have everything they need here and opportunities to resettle and live their lives.”

Pressed if the Government will deport children who arrive in unauthorised trips with their parents would be deported, he said: “It will depend on those who make the journey.”

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: “For them now to include vulnerable children in their plans is sinking to a real new low. (Home Secretary) Priti Patel should be ashamed.

“The Home Office should stop this damaging plan, start targeting the criminal gangs and sort out their own asylum decision-making instead.”

Earlier, Mr Johnson admitted that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could be subject to the policy that has been stalled by legal challenges.

But the Prime Minister insisted to reporters it is “very unlikely” that asylum seekers fleeing the Russian invasion will be caught up in his widely criticised policy.

Labour said it was “disgraceful” that Mr Johnson believes it is fine to send those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s bombs to Rwanda.

Rwanda’s human rights record is high among the concerns about the £120 million economic deal, but no one-way flights for migrants have taken off yet.

The first was due to depart last week, but was grounded by legal challenges.

Despite the scheme being stalled, it also emerged that Britain has already made payments to Kigali, which has begun spending the money in preparation for receiving asylum seekers.

The Rwandan government said it had begun spending the cash to be ready in time for last week’s flight, which was cancelled at the last minute.

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*British grandad delivers aid to Ukraine and urges the public to keep donating*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65VM-6211-DY4H-K3D9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 5, 2022 Tuesday 10:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 588 words

**Byline:** Tom Wilkinson

**Highlight:** Kevin Roddam, 65, is being supported by his family and friends as he tries to help Ukrainians displaced by the war.

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) grandad delivering aid to areas of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) devastated by fighting has urged the public to keep helping those whose lives have been wrecked by the war.

Kevin Roddam, a 65-year-old retired engineer from Weardale, [*County Durham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/county-durham) , was initially moved to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , delivering van-loads of clothes and food bought with donations.

Now on his third trip to the area, he is in Ukraine, driving desperately needed aid to civilians across the huge country to people made homeless by Russia’s invasion.

The married grandfather is concerned that coverage of the war has dropped off and people in the UK are under the impression life is getting back to normal for Ukrainians.

He told the PA news agency: “This is not over by any means, it’s going to get worse and aid is drying up.

“Please, please keep on donating.

“Let’s keep doing what we have always done as a nation, as the group of caring people that we have always been, and do what needs to be done.”

Mr Roddam, who has two sons, keeps in daily contact with his wife [*Christine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christine) back in the UK, and she tracks his movements using mobile technology.

Speaking from near Lviv, he said: “I do not hide anything from her. She knows I will always attempt to keep safe.

“I will try to make sensible decisions, but when you’re dealing with a mad man in Russia like (President Vladimir) Putin, it’s difficult.

“I’m a husband, father of two sons and grandfather to three children, I do intend to come back to see them, I’m not emigrating here.”

Mr Roddam was struck down by Covid-19 last year, even planning his funeral, and now believes his recovery was for a reason.

After watching TV news reports at the start of the war, he felt moved to organise an aid delivery to refugees in Poland, packing a load of food, clothes, sleeping bags and blankets in March.

Now on his third trip, he has crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border eight times in three weeks, delivering aid to where it is needed.

He felt it was necessary to deliver what he can in person, as he had promised to people making donations that he would always ensure it arrived with the people who needed it.

Thanks to kind donors in the UK, Mr Roddam has delivered bikes and computers to a refugees’ orphanage near Gdansk, Poland.

He has also taken aid to a centre for blind refugees in Ukraine, and delivered aid to an area near the Dnipro river which is now being shelled.

On that trip, he met a local woman who works from 6am to 2am making meals for soldiers on the frontline.

Mr Roddam said: “Her team makes up to 600 meals a day.

“She makes Ukrainian angels, made with yellow and blue bands, and slips them in the pockets of the ballistic vests for the front line to keep the soldiers safe.

“All the food is made as if they are making it for their own sons – it is made with love.”

Mr Roddam sleeps in his van most nights, occasionally staying with friends or in cheap hotels, which he pays for himself, to have a shower and wash his clothes.

Eastern Europe is enduring a heat wave, making conditions even tougher.

He said: “If people at home think this is all over, they need to look at the live maps which show the fighting.

“The number of missiles coming into Ukraine is unbelievable and it is displacing more and more people, who are moving towards Poland.

“There’s a fear that there is going to be a real humanitarian outcry and there will not be the food to assist these people who have nowhere else to go.”

To find out more about his trips, and how to help, Mr Roddam can be found at [*www.facebook.com/kevin.roddam*](http://www.facebook.com/kevin.roddam)

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More immigration could be key to making Brexit work*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673S-B0W1-JCS0-D46T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

December 17, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** SUNDER KATWALA

**Body**

Immigration was a central feature in the choice for Brexit. Without the loss of public confidence in how successive governments, both Labour and Conservative, had handled the scale and pace of migration from the EU after 2004, it is unlikely that there would have been a narrow 52-48 vote to leave.

Many different arguments were made to sell Brexit to the slim majority who voted for it. Many hoped to see immigration fall significantly; while Priti Patel argued there would be more non-EU visas to "save the curry houses". The claim that Turkey was about to join the EU was pitched aggressively at those who feared rising migration.

The legacy of that decision has been a surprising one. Immigration to Britain has increased, rather than reduced. Attitudes towards immigration have become more positive, though the heated and polarised political and media debate lags behind.

Brexit led to significant changes in immigration policy, with the end of EU free movement and a new points-based system. Boris Johnson placed much less emphasis on cutting numbers, ditching Theresa May's target to reduce net migration. So non-EU migration rose, due to government policy choices, to make it easier for international students to stay after graduating, to attract doctors and nurses to the NHS and to offer a new visa route to Hong Kongers.

Immigration has remained high because of those policy choices. It was exceptionally high this year, with net migration hitting half a million, partly due to the large inflow of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Nobody could claim this was a case of a government foisting high immigration on an unwilling public. Rather, tens of thousands of individual Britons who wanted to host Ukrainians in their homes had to battle the bureaucracy to secure a visa.

The high numbers are a political headache for the government with its own voters. Six out of 10 Conservatives would like overall numbers to come down - but do not favour reduced migration for the NHS, for students or for care workers. They would also let more fruit pickers come here to work.

Two-thirds of Labour voters would not reduce overall levels of immigration. The Labour Party does not believe in an overall net migration target. Rather than entering an auction to reduce the numbers, it should focus on how to manage migration fairly, balancing domestic training and migration to fill skills gaps; ensuring fair funding for public services when population changes; and taking a positive approach to promoting citizenship and integration.

There is a much more heated immigration debate about asylum. Dangerous journeys across the Channel are nobody's idea of a safe or well-managed asylum system. Yet the public and political debate is polarised between advocates of tough measures, hoping to deter anybody claiming asylum in Britain, and those who want to see a compassionate asylum system. Most of the public don't want such a binary choice - believing that a competent government could deliver an asylum system that is orderly, fair and humane.

Doing so presents challenges to all sides of the political arguments. Yet those who see border control as the litmus test of post-Brexit sovereignty cannot deliver this in reality without negotiating with other sovereign states, such as France and Belgium. Governments that want migration via legal routes will struggle to make trafficking unviable if those routes do not exist.

Overall attitudes towards Brexit have shifted. Changes of mind have been less important than generational shifts in the electorate. Four-fifths of adults who were too young to vote in 2016 think Brexit was a mistake.Labour in opposition remains deeply cautious about the idea of softening Brexit. That reflects electoral geography, with liberal voters more clustered in urban and university seats than the red wall marginals.

Most Labour voters would like a softer Brexit, but the leadership has ruled out reopening the issue of the single market and free movement, keeping the new post-Brexit points system. So Brexit has not produced the fall in immigration that some hoped for and others feared. This presents a dilemma for liberal pro-migration opponents of Brexit. Some may see a tactical advantage in highlighting Nigel Farage's sense of "betrayal" that the numbers did not come down.

But there may be a more strategic case for welcoming the broadening of consensus on the positive contribution that migration can make to Britain - lowering one of the barriers to the UK rebuilding closer relationships with its European neighbours from outside the single market and, perhaps one day, within it again.

Sunder Katwala is the director of British Future

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK has lost its status as ‘development superpower’, Andrew Mitchell says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:671G-NP01-JBNF-W284-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 6, 2022 Tuesday 4:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 758 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** The new development minister said structural changes in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are needed to restore the UK’s reputation.

**Body**

The UK has lost its reputation as a “development superpower,” [*Andrew Mitchell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-mitchell) has said as he lamented “fierce and draconian” cuts to the overseas aid budget and a “lacuna” of development skills at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The new development minister said Britain losing this status was “bemoaned around the world” and that the FCDO was considering overhauling departmental structures to address this.

Mr Mitchell was highly critical of the merger of the [*Department for International Development*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-for-international-development) with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2020 and later led a parliamentary revolt against the reduction in the foreign aid budget.

When Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were in government, we spent 0.51% (of national income) on international development and we were without question a development superpower

Andrew Mitchell

The former international development secretary, who was recently brought back into government by Rishi Sunak, told MPs on the International Development Committee on Tuesday that aspects of the merger were “sub-optimal” and that one of his priorities was to “repair those structural difficulties”.

He said: “When Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were in government, we spent 0.51% (of national income) on international development and we were without question a development superpower.

“I would argue that in 2012 when [*David Cameron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-cameron) was our prime minister, we were also spending 0.51% and, in my view, we were without question a development superpower.

“Today we are actually spending 0.55 and, you know, let’s not beat about the bush, we are not a development superpower at the moment and that is something that is bemoaned around the world.”

Somalia is facing a devastating humanitarian crisis.Many are suffering from the challenges of food insecurity, including almost 2 million children at risk of malnutrition.The UK is committed to supporting Somalia.Read more [*https://t.co/8nOmeg31Rr*](https://t.co/8nOmeg31Rr) [*pic.twitter.com/d860spBWFt*](https://t.co/d860spBWFt) — Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (@FCDOGovUK) [*December 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1598732903235686405?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The slashing of the target to spend 0.7% of national income on official development assistance to 0.5% had contributed to the decline of Britain’s position as a development leader, Mr Mitchell argued.

“If the budget gets changed and you’re unable to fulfil the commitments that you’ve made, that is clearly very bad for the country’s reputation,” he said.

“My job now as a minister is to live with the decision of the Government and the House of Commons and try and make sure that we cut the cake in the best and most professional possible way given the constraints that we face.”

He said officials working in poor countries who are implementing the spending reductions are now on their “third lot of cuts” to the bilateral aid programme.

“Quite apart from the very severe effects this has on the people we’re trying to help, it’s also a pretty severe effect on those officials and diplomats who have to effect and move government policy and deliver these cuts and they are very, very harsh indeed.”

Chancellor [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) announced in last month’s autumn statement that aid spending will not be returned to its goal of 0.7% of national income “until the fiscal system allows”, despite Mr Mitchell’s best efforts to persuade him to reinstate the higher target.

The UK is spending more of its international development budget domestically than in poor developing countries, as billions of pounds are being used by the Home Office to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Mr Mitchell conceded he did not know the full extent of the refugee expenditure and that it was “open-ended”, but said he was “hopeful those costs will diminish” amid concerns the money is being diverted from helping the most vulnerable around the world.

The MP for Sutton Coldfield said he was setting up a new cabinet committee, or “star chamber”, to “up the quality” of foreign aid spending.

Foreign Secretary [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) had commissioned work within the FCDO on possible structural changes, Mr Mitchell said.

“There are at the moment 200 vacancies in what were DFID jobs, and there is no question that there are morale issues amongst the development staff,” the FCDO minister told MPs.

“There’s a lacuna in the skill there.”

Mr Mitchell also said he was “rather surprised” to see Britain still spends foreign aid in China.

He said bilateral aid to the world’s second-largest economy has stopped but admitted continuing spending on Chevening scholarships and the British Council “does great damage to the reputation of the development budget”.

**Load-Date:** December 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK spending more aid on refugees at home than on assistance to poor countries*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66XR-J0N1-JBNF-W1XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 23, 2022 Wednesday 7:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 733 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** Statistics on last year’s spending show much of slashed UK aid went on domestic costs as help for Africa plummeted.

**Body**

The UK is spending more aid on hosting refugees at home than on health and humanitarian assistance for poor countries, statistics on last year’s finances show.

Spending was down £3 billion from a year earlier to £11.4 billion in 2021, when the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) slashed the aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of national income.

Bilateral aid, which is delivered to countries by the UK directly, took the biggest hit, according to figures released by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on Wednesday.

People already facing poverty, climate change and famine are paying the price for the increase in the Home Office’s UK-based refugee costs

Simon Starling, Bond network

It fell by £2.4 billion in a year, compared to a £0.7 billion drop in aid going to multilateral institutions including the World Bank.

UK spend on bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) decreased across all sectors except “refugees in donor countries,” the largest beneficiary, which saw an increase of nearly 68% to reach £1 billion.

“The increase was primarily driven by an increase in [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) ODA spend, partly due to increased accommodation costs for the rising number of asylum seekers coming to the UK,” the FCDO said.

The next largest amount of bilateral ODA went to health and economic infrastructure and services, with humanitarian aid dropping out of the top three sectors.

Rishi Sunak was criticised for the cut in the foreign aid budget when he was chancellor, as well as setting a precedent for letting the Home Office and other departments use the pot, and stretching the rules on what can be counted as aid.

1. As we know, spend was £11.4bn, down £3bn in a single year. Bilateral aid took most of the hit -falling ~£2.4bn vs under £0.7bn fall in multilateral.— Ian Mitchell (@EconMitch) [*November 23, 2022*](https://twitter.com/EconMitch/status/1595369900830347266?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt announced in last week’s autumn statement that overseas aid budget will not be returned to its goal of 0.7% of national income “until the fiscal system allows”.

The FCDO statistics show that Home Office ODA spending jumped by 74% between 2020 and 2021 to £1.04 billion.

, Labour’s shadow Cabinet minister for international development, said: “Rather than solving the spiralling costs at the Home Office, the Foreign Secretary has simply bailed out the Home Secretary with a blank cheque from Britain’s aid budget.”

Bilateral ODA to [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) – the region receiving the largest proportion of the direct aid – fell by £883 million in a year, according to the figures.

Ian Mitchell, a senior policy fellow at the Centre for Global Development, tweeted: “Bilateral spend in Africa fell to its lowest level in over a decade, at £1.7bn (even less in real terms)

“This puts the UK behind the US, EU, Germany, France and likely Japan in its support to the continent.”

The economist added: “Overall, it’s hard to find much to like about how these cuts were implemented.”

The publication of 2021’s spending came a day after Foreign Secretary [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) signalled a further £800 million cut in the UK’s overseas aid spending for this financial year.

In a written ministerial statement, Mr Cleverly said the FCDO’s estimate of its planned ODA spending for 2022-23 is £7.5 billion – down from last year’s £8.2 billion.

Oxfam called the decision “short-sighted and immoral”.

“Food crises, conflict and climate change are forcing millions of people to flee their homes,” said Katy Chakrabortty, head of policy and advocacy at the organisation.

“UK aid is already barely a third of the amount given just three years ago. Instead of cutting vital lifelines the Government should be raising additional resources to strengthen them.”

Labour MP [*Sarah Champion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-champion) , chairwoman of the international committee, said: “The Government has spent money on Afghan and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK and committed more in the Autumn Statement, which is welcome.

“This money is vital but should not be drawn from the aid budget and the Government should be absolutely clear about that.”

Simon Starling, director of policy, advocacy and research, at the UK network for international development organisations Bond, said: “People already facing poverty, climate change and famine are paying the price for the increase in the Home Office’s UK-based refugee costs…

It is shocking that we are now spending more UK aid on this rather than on health, humanitarian assistance, education or water and sanitation.”

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Peace, shelter and hope: How a Polish-run convent in Ukraine is providing refuge to war victims*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP3-4GN1-JBNF-W01Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2024 Sunday 6:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1120 words

**Byline:** Askold Krushelnycky

**Highlight:** Faith in the future can be found in the village of Yazlovets on Easter Sunday as those displaced by Putin’s war gather to find comfort. Askold Krushelnycky is there to hear their stories

**Body**

A celebration of Easter at a Roman Catholic convent run by Polish nuns in western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , which has sheltered hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) since the [*start of the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/vladimir-putin-ap-russia-ukraine-moscow-b2514364.html%22%20title=%22With%20the%20election%20behind%20him,%20Russia’s%20leader%20says%20he%20aims%20to%20create%20a%20buffer%20zone%20in%20Ukraine) , has become a symbol of how the historically troubled relations between [*Poles and Ukrainians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/nato-ap-russia-vilnius-lithuania-b2520350.html%22%20title=%22Central%20and%20Eastern%20European%20countries%20mark%2020%20years%20in%20NATO%20with%20focus%20on%20war%20in%20Ukraine) have been transformed.

On [*Easter Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/easter-sunday) , the church within the convent is crowded with parishioners – some of them refugees who are living here, and others from the surrounding area – for the Roman Catholic mass, said in Ukrainian by Polish and Ukrainian priests.

Among the parishioners are Roman Catholics, Ukrainian Catholics, and members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – most of them refugees from [*eastern Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/glide-bomb-russia-ukraine-air-strikes-b2521301.html%22%20title=%22‘Building%20destroyers’:%20The%20Russian%20glide%20bombs%20changing%20the%20face%20of%20the%20war%20on%20Ukraine’s%20eastern%20front).

Sister Julia, the most senior of the three nuns – two Polish, one Ukrainian – who run the convent, was born in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and has been in Yazlovets, the village that is home to the convent, since shortly after Ukraine became independent in 1991.

She says: “There have been very difficult and painful moments in the history between Poles and Ukrainians, but if you can say that something good has come out of the nightmare of a war, then the profound bonds that have arisen between Ukraine and Poland are certainly among those positive things.”

The convent occupies a building that was once the 18th-century palace of a Polish aristocratic family, who donated it in 1863 to the Roman Catholic Church. It is perched atop one of the rolling hills that circle Yazlovets, in western Ukraine’s Ternopil region.

The handsome, sprawling building hints at the former magnificence of the village. In the 15th and 16th centuries its enterprising Ukrainian, Polish and Jewish populations – augmented in the 14th century by Armenians fleeing the Mongol hordes – made Yazlovets into a thriving village that for generations rivalled Lviv, some 100 miles to the northwest, as the principal city of the region.

In the First World War, the town (as it was then), part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, had the misfortune to be close to the border with the Russian empire, and was severely damaged by Russian artillery, which also scarred the convent and palace.

The Second World War further ravaged Yazlovets, which became part of Soviet Ukraine and was stripped of its status as a town and designated a village. During the war, Ukrainian and Polish guerrillas, both fighting the Nazi occupation, also took part in vicious ethnic cleansing against each other’s communities in parts of western Ukraine, which has left memories of horrors that Moscow has long exploited to try to prevent the healing of old animosities.

Ironically, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, along with the huge support given by Poland, has produced the sort of rapprochement between the two nations that Moscow desperately wanted to scupper.

Since the Russians first invaded Ukraine in 2014, the convent has cared for refugees fleeing the occupied areas. And since the full-blown February 2022 onslaught, Sister Julia says, some 200 people have stayed at the convent, though some only for a short time.

Currently some 33 refugees are permanently housed there – eight women and 25 children, who either attend local schools or have online lessons. Sister Julia says that in recognition of all the assistance the nuns have provided to refugees and the local community, the local authorities decided this weekend to hand over the former palace in its entirety to the convent.

Sister Julia says: “So many people and groups – religious and secular – from Poland, America, Germany, France, Spain, even Japan have provided assistance. Some come to repair and build, or chop the wood we need for heating. Others have delivered vehicles full of food, clothes, medicines.

“Some of that we have used, but this place has also served as a collection point for aid delivered from all over the world, and most of it has been sent on to the east, including to the soldiers at the front lines.”

Nadia, 74, and her daughter Oksana, 54, who fled from their eastern Ukrainian city of Lysychansk in April 2022, were first evacuated to Lviv in western Ukraine and then given shelter in Poland, along with hundreds of thousands of other Ukrainians. After 10 months, they jumped at the chance to go to Yazlovets, arriving there in January 2023.

Nadia says: “I think that I first really felt the presence of God when so many strangers in Ukraine and Poland offered me a home, food, clothes when I and my daughter had nothing and no money. The nuns at Yazlovets do not try to press the Catholic faith on us, but all of us can see the strength of their faith and admire the work they have done to help others.

“In any case, there is one God, isn’t there? And we attend the masses because they give us hope.”

After Sunday mass, the nuns and the refugees eat a traditional Easter breakfast of smoked meats, boiled eggs, a sweet Easter bread and other delicacies blessed at a mass on Saturday, with friends in their rooms and later at a communal meal.

Six people from another refugee family share their meal in the room they all sleep in. Kateryna, 30, lives there with her four children, aged four to 13. Her husband, Mykola, was a volunteer soldier defending their native city of Kharkiv after the 2022 invasion, and was killed in battle against the Russians in March that year.

She, the children and her husband’s mother were evacuated to Yazlovets soon after Mykola’s death.

She says: “I can’t express how grateful we are for the peace and safety we have found here. We were all devastated and felt hopeless after the death of my husband. The nuns here have given us not only shelter but hope.”

While her three eldest children attend online lessons, Kateryna busies herself making camouflage nets for Ukrainian frontline troops. The six of them eat their breakfast with a framed photograph of Mykola on the table.

Kateryna says: “The two eldest children were christened in the Ukrainian Orthodox faith, while the two youngest were christened as Roman Catholics here. I have no problems with that. Today we celebrate the resurrection by one calendar, and then we will mark Easter Orthodox on May 5.”

Many Ukrainians were shocked when, in March, [*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) seemed to suggest that Ukraine should haul up the white flag of surrender to avoid more deaths.

Sister Julia says: “I know that the Pope cares deeply about Ukraine. I feel his words were misinterpreted and there might be people of ill will around him. I know he has sent much assistance here and he wants Ukraine to be free.

“As to Ukraine and Poland, I think that our two nations have much in common going a long way back in history, and share similar traits of deep faith and courage. I believe that the future and survival of Poland and Ukraine depend on both standing together.”

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Rachel Riley on the joy of reading to her children amid the hectic juggle of family life*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNC-X0M1-JBNF-W36C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 28, 2024 Thursday 11:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** CELEBRITY NEWS; Version:1

**Length:** 987 words

**Byline:** Lisa Salmon

**Highlight:** The Countdown presenter talks to Lisa Salmon about balancing work and family, and how reading to her young daughters is the highlight of her day.

**Body**

At the tender age of two, Rachel Riley’s youngest daughter is too young to share her maths whizz mum’s love of numbers.

But it’s a different story when it comes to books, and the excited youngster happily chatters about one of her favourite books, [*The Tiger Who Came to Tea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-tiger-who-came-to-tea) , babbling: “Big mouthful! Yuuum!”when her laughing mum asks what the tiger does when he eats all his sandwiches.

It’s just as well the toddler is so enthusiastic about books, as her Countdown presenter mum is the new ambassador for Oscar’s [*Book Club*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/book-club) and the children’s picture book award Oscar’s Book Prize, which aims to champion early-years reading.

“When they’re really little, aged before five, it’s the key stage for setting good habits,” explains Riley, 38. “[*Reading*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/reading) and a love of books is beneficial, and will obviously help them with their reading confidence, getting them a head start before they go to proper school.”

Breaking off to warn: “I can hear my two-year-old coming up!”, she adds: “As a parent, reading with your children does bring you a lot of joy. I really enjoy it, it’s one of the highlights of the day when we get into bed and cuddle up together and read books. And my little one Noa just cuddles in and tells me exactly what she wants to read.”

Riley, who has daughters Noa and Maven, aged four, with husband [*Pasha Kovalev*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pasha-kovalev) , who she met on Strictly Come Dancing in 2013, is on the judging panel for this year’s Oscar’s Book Prize, which is seeking the best new illustrated book for young children. The prize was founded by the parents of Oscar Ashton, who loved storytelling but died from a heart condition at the age of three-and-a-half in 2012.

“I don’t think you can spoil a kid with enough books,” says Riley. “I remember when I was younger, the school used to give out book tokens if you did well, and going to the bookshop and choosing one for yourself. It’s really important to get kids at a young age engaged and interested in reading, and there’s some lovely books out there.

“Reading with children is such a nice thing – it’s just family time, and it calms them.”

Riley and Kovalev read to their girls every night, and she explains: “They’re not too far apart in age, so they do enjoy some of the same books, and if we’re both at home, we can do them separately and they can get their own books, and otherwise, in one bed and reading the books together before we go to sleep. It just calms them, and Noa repeats a lot of the words – they can almost recite them off by heart, it’s really sweet.”

Such family time is a precious thing for Riley, who juggles bringing up her two daughters with travelling from her home in London to film Countdown in Manchester. Riley explains that five shows a day are filmed over three days, every couple of weeks. “So I just go up to Manchester for a few days, and then come back down for a week or two weeks, and go up and down,” she says.

The children don’t go to Manchester with her, although they have done in the past, she explains. “They used to because I was breastfeeding for the best part of four years – until Noa was nearly two. So all that time, they were coming up, and I could feed after work or during shows and all that kind of juggle. But Noa’s two-and-a-half now, so thankfully those days are just a memory and I can get a bit more independence back.

“It’s definitely a juggle. Pasha and I are lucky that because we’re both freelance, we can try to share, and if we have a job or a call or something, we can try to do it when the kids are at preschool or when the other one’s around.”

She says family organisation “changes all the time”, and because Noa started preschool in January, the couple have found themselves with a small window of free time during the day. “It’s the first time in four years where we have a couple of hours to ourselves in the day, which is novel,” she reflects.

“The time just whizzes past though. It’s like any parents – everything’s a juggle and sometimes you can’t get everything done. So I’ve got a million emails stacked up, and the house is a mess most of the time – but the kids are happy. You can’t do everything, and you’ve just got to prioritise.”

Something that can help a little with the juggle sometimes, she says, are the four ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** the couple have staying in their home while war rages in their country. The couple have been welcoming the refugees for nearly two years.

“It’s like having an extended family in the house,” says Riley. “There’s always three women and a little boy, so there’s always extra hands with the kids, and my little girls think they’ve got a big brother – it’s actually pretty nice.”

She says having the family staying with them has been rewarding, and is particularly poignant for her because the Jewish side of her family came to England more than a century ago to flee violence in Europe.

“So we wanted to be able to help people, we had the space, and we can look back and say that we did something – we didn’t like what we saw, and we tried to help.”

Their guests speak Ukrainian and Russian, and as Kovalev is Russian, Maven and Noa are learning Russian as well as English. “The girls get a bit of Russian speaking, so it’s all been mutually beneficial,” explains Riley. “I think they say when you volunteer, you get more out of it yourself – and we’ve been lucky with such a lovely family.

“Obviously we all hope that they can go home and get safety, because that’s what they want to do. They’ve said we have to go and stay with them when everything’s fine, so the girls are really excited to go to Ukraine at some stage – everyone hopes that’ll be sooner rather than later.”

[*Rachel Riley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rachel-riley) is an ambassador for Oscar’s Book Club and the children’s picture book award Oscar’s Book Prize, which aims to encourage reading with young children. Amazon is donating Oscar’s Book Prize shortlisted books to schools and nurseries in areas where children have less engagement with books.

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Government spends a third of aid budget on asylum seekers in UK as hotel costs soar*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WH-WP71-DY4H-K4D2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 7:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 780 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Report finds estimated £3.5bn spent mostly on hotels in 2022 ‘limited UK response’ to international crises

**Body**

The government spent £3.5bn of aid money on supporting [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) and [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) already in the UK last year -one third of Britain’s entire annual budget -while allowing hotel costs to “soar”, a watchdog has found.

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) said the Home Office’s “failure to tackle the asylum processing backlog and competition for scarce accommodation” was taking money away from programmes abroad.

International development funding was also used to support Afghan and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** brought to the UK on bespoke schemes.

A report said that because the [*aid budget*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid-budget) is capped at 0.5 per cent of GDP, rocketing spending inside the UK meant that the Foreign Office “had to pause all but essential aid and was unable to plan” in 2022.

“One important consequence is that the UK’s ability to respond to global crises and humanitarian emergencies has been sharply curtailed,” its report said.

“This was seen in the limited UK response both to devastating floods in Pakistan and to the worsening drought in the Horn of Africa, which is expected to lead to widespread famine.”

Previous parliamentary reports have warned that the government must address the “factors driving irregular migration”, including climate change, conflict and repressive governments, rather than “focusing narrowly” on trying to stop small boats.

The latest report came after the government announced it was [*evicting Afghan refugees from hotels,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/johnny-mercer-afghan-uk-government-government-veterans-b2309449.html%22%20title=%22Ministers%20warned%20over%20‘eviction%20notices’%20being%20given%20to%20Afghan%20refugees) and that those who turn down an offer of alternative accomodation will not receive a second one.

Parliament is currently considering the Illegal Migration Bill, which the government claims will “deter” Channel crossings by enabling it to detain and deport anyone arriving via small boat.

The government has not published the official impact assessment for the plans or information on how much they will cost, amid questions over immigration detention capacity.

Dr Tamsyn Barton, chief commissioner of the ICAI, said: “Soaring in-donor [country] refugee costs have caused major disruption to the UK aid programmes, causing many major aid programmes to be put on hold.

“We found that this diversion has also led to a significant loss in the efficiency and equity of UK humanitarian aid, as in-donor refugee support is an expensive way to use aid compared to supporting crisis-affected people in their own country and region.”

The watchdog found that the Home Office’s failure to address a “critical shortage” of accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers, driven by its record asylum backlog as well as rising Channel crossings, was driving costly spending on [*hotels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotels).

“The failure to provide timely asylum decisions means that most asylum seekers remain dependent on Home Office-provided accommodation for the full 12 months of the official development assistance-eligible period,” it added.

The report called for the government to consider capping how much of the UK’s aid budget can be spent on in-country refugee costs, after finding that the current situation was “poor value for money”.

The Home Office told the watchdog it was spending £120 per person per night in hotels, including catering and other services, compared to £18 for longer-term accommodation in houses and flats.

“While the Home Office has recently started planning long-term solutions, the short-term nature of its response to date has contributed to the spiralling costs,” the ICAI said, warning that the government did not “effectively oversee the value for money” from lucrative private accommodation contracts.

The report said that the Home Office had provided a “list of improvements” to the management of asylum contracts and sourcing accommodation, but said the ICAI had not seen any evidence to verify or assess the changes.

Labour MP Sarah Champion, chair of parliament’s International Development Committee, said the review confirmed that the Foreign Office needs to protect aid money from the “Home Office’s continued profligate spending”.

She added: “Our valuable aid budget is being squandered as a result of Home Office failure to get on top of asylum application backlogs and keep control of the costs of asylum accommodation and support contracts.

“While there are no limits on spending, there is no incentive for the Home Office to seek value for money or check its spending: the Home Office is a department out of control.”

The review also expressed concern about safeguarding lapses in hotels, particularly for women and girls, and variable standards of services for asylum seekers.

The ICAI made six recommendations to the government, warning that sustaining the current level of in-country spending would “damage to the UK’s aid objectives and reputation”.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Poland shaken by reports consular officials took bribes to help migrants enter Europe and US*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6960-DBV1-DY4H-K002-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 16, 2023 Saturday 4:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 899 words

**Byline:** Vanessa Gera

**Highlight:** Poland’s conservative governing party was hoping to make migration a key campaign theme ahead of the country’s Oct. 15 parliamentary elections

**Body**

Poland’s conservative governing party was hoping to make migration a key campaign theme ahead of the country’s national election. But not like this.

The [*Law and Justice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/law-and-justice) party is being rocked by reports that Polish consulates issued visas in Africa and Asia in exchange for bribes, opening the door for migrants to enter the [*European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) Union — which some used as a launching pad to enter the United States.

Details about the corruption scandal are coming to light a month ahead of the country’s parliamentary elections Oct. 15, leaving Law and Justice struggling to control the damage.

On Friday, a former deputy foreign minister who was dismissed amid reports of his involvement was hospitalized after an apparent suicide attempt.

Law and Justice has been the election frontrunner in a field of several parties, and it's not clear if the affair will dent its support. But opposition politicians have seized on the issue, accusing the government of corruption and hypocrisy, given its strong anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Critics say the governing party raised the specter of immigration to frighten Poles and then offered promises of keeping them secure, while a corrupt cell operating within the diplomatic corps opened a channel for migrants to enter the EU.

“This is the biggest scandal we have faced in the 21st century. Corruption at the highest levels of government, bringing a direct threat to all of us. And it’s because of people whose mouths are full of phrases about security,” Senate Speaker Tomasz Grodzki, an opposition politician, said in a televised address to the nation Friday evening.

Poland has opened its door to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, who are primarily white and Christian, but governing party officials have long made clear that they consider Muslims and others from different cultures to be a threat to the nation’s cultural identity and security.

Media reports allege Poland’s consular sections issued about 250,000 visas to migrants from Asia and Africa since 2021 in return for bribes of several thousand dollars. Poland is a member of the EU’s visa-free zone known as Schengen, and once those migrants arrived in Poland they could cross Europe's borders freely.

Szymon Holownia, who leads a center-right opposition party, said the governing party “jeopardized the safety of millions of Poles by conducting the disgusting, commercial practice of selling visas."

Government officials acknowledge some wrongdoing occurred.

The [*Foreign Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-ministry) announced Friday it had dismissed an official "in connection with the ongoing findings regarding irregularities in the visa issuance process.” It said the official was Jakub Osajda, the director of the ministry’s office of legal and compliance management. It also announced an audit of its consular department and all consular posts.

That followed the dismissal of the deputy foreign minister in charge of consular matters, Piotr Wawrzyk, last month as the first reports of the scandal appeared in the media. Wawrzyk was hospitalized after a suicide attempt, Polish media reported Friday.

The state prosecutor's office said Thursday it charged seven people suspected of corrupt activities in accelerating visa procedures, with three of them under temporary arrest.

The prosecutor general, Zbigniew Ziobro, said authorities were working to bring the wrongdoers to justice and insisted the scale of the affair was smaller than what the media and opposition claim.

He said Wawrzyk had attempted suicide because he couldn't bear the hatred against him.

Wawrzyk had been responsible for preparing a regulation making it easier for foreign workers from countries including Iran, Pakistan and United Arab Emirates to enter Poland.

According to the Onet news portal, Wawrzyk personally insisted that temporary work visas be issued to groups of people from India who posed as crews working for the Indian movie industry, popularly known as Bollywood.

Onet said the Indians paid $25,000 to $40,000 for the visas hoping to use them to reach the U.S. It reported that U.S. officials had alerted Poland to the matter.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said at a briefing Thursday that he could not confirm the reports, adding, "I wouldn’t want to speak to private conversations between our two governments.”

The governing party fought back with new election videos on social media seeking to link the leading opposition leader, Donald Tusk, to widespread migration to Europe in his past roles. Tusk was the Polish prime minister from 2007 to 2014, and was president of the European Council, an EU body, from 2014 to 2019.

The government also is holding a referendum along with the election with questions on migration. One question asks voters whether they support accepting “thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa” as part of an EU relocation plan.

Law and Justice ran on a strong anti-migrant messeage when it won power in 2015, a crisis year for Europe when more than a million refugees and migrants fled from Syria and elsewhere. Party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski said then that migrants brought diseases to Europe as well as “parasites and protozoa" — remarks that were heavily criticized.

The party has refused to accept any of the migrants and refugees who have arrived in the EU in past years. It also built a tall steel wall on its border with Belarus to keep migrants out after large numbers began arriving there in 2021.

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Asylum-seekers’ human rights ‘routinely abused’ in Calais, Rishi Sunak warned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SW-RF21-DY4H-K1RV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 4, 2022 Friday 11:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Government ‘mocking’ those fleeing war with Suella Braverman’s ‘invasion’ rhetoric, Calais Appeal says

**Body**

People seeking to make the treacherous journey across the Channel to seek asylum in Britain are experiencing “routine” [*human rights*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/human-rights) abuses in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , charities have warned [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak).

In a letter to the new prime minister, grassroots organisations under the banner of [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) Appeal accused his nascent government of “mocking” the rights of those fleeing war, after home secretary [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) invoked the [*far-right rhetoric*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/suella-braverman-migrant-crisis-invasion-b2215370.html%22%20title=%22Suella%20Braverman%20‘putting%20lives%20at%20risk’%20with%20‘migrant%20invasion’%20claims%20day%20after%20firebomb%20attack) of an “invasion” on England’s south coast.

As the record numbers of people crossing the Channel in small boats dominate headlines, aid groups warned the “harsh reality on the ground” is being ignored, with Calais and Grand Snythe remaining “cruel and dangerous” places for the thousands of displaced people living there.

French police are continuing to create a “hostile environment” in the region, carrying out evictions in makeshift camps every 36 to 48 hours, the eight humanitarian groups warned – in what they alleged was a “direct result of UK taxpayer money funding French border police”.

“During these evictions, people’s limited personal belongings – tents, blankets, bags, identity papers, mobile phones, medicines and clothes – are often destroyed on the spot or thrown into skips,” Mr Sunak was told.

“The right to shelter is routinely abused. The state refuses to provide any access to water within a reasonable distance of living sites and organisations under our umbrella are threatened with fines for distributing warm meals.”

While aid groups celebrated a court’s decision last month to order authorities in northern France to lift a two-year ban on distributing food to migrants last month, Calais Appeal warned that other state clampdowns still remain in place.

The UK government has “poured money into fortifying the border through drones, fences” and barbed wire, the groups said, while Britain has agreed to [*hand over tens of millions of pounds*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-france-money-migrant-crossings-b1936071.html) to France to police its northern coast.

Meanwhile, Downing Street has signalled an intent not only to press ahead with Boris Johnson’s government’s ailing plan to send [*asylum-seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers) to Rwanda – described by Ms Braverman [*as her “dream”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-rwanda-dream-obsession-b2195296.html) – but also [*to extend it to other countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/belize-uk-asylum-seekers-rwanda-b2216999.html).

The [*announcement of the scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-offshore-asylum-seekers-boris-johnson-priti-patel-b2057541.html) had a “devastating and immediate” effect on the mental health of those displaced in northern France, Calais Appeal warned Mr Sunak on Thursday.

“Families feared they risked being flown to Rwanda before their asylum claim had been heard, and that they would remain in Rwanda if their claim was accepted,” they wrote. “The atmosphere was very tense and despondent whilst people dealt with these uncertainties; two people took their own lives amidst all the confusion and misinformation.”

In contrast, the “admirable success” of the [*visa scheme for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-uk-b2201930.html) , many of whom were briefly accommodated in Calais, shows the UK and France are able to collaborate to provide people with safe passage, the groups said.

But they warned that the government “is failing to fulfil this responsibility to people of other nationalities facing equal threats” who “are treated with an inhumane disregard at almost every stage of their journey” – despite some 80 per cent of all asylum applications in the UK succeeding.

The letter to Mr Sunak came just under three weeks ahead of the anniversary of [*the deadliest day of the Channel crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/channel-migrants-france-boat-sinks-b1963634.html) , during which at least 31 people drowned trying to reach Britain.

“They died because the UK’s asylum system is broken,” the groups told Mr Sunak, adding: “In limiting people’s options to arrive to the UK safely you are forcing them to undertake horrendous, life-threatening journeys.”

They added: “As long as people seeking safety, reuniting with their families and a new home are ignored and harassed by the authorities, we’ll be here in solidarity.”

A government spokesperson said: “Countries across the world have a shared moral responsibility to tackle illegal migration and we are working extremely closely with the French on the ground to stop people making dangerous journeys across the Channel.

“Together, we have stopped over 28,000 illegal crossings since the start of the year – nearly twice the number at this stage last year. Our priority is to break the business model of people smugglers who are exploiting vulnerable people and putting their lives at risk through these dangerous and illegal journeys.”

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Gary Lineker’s urgent talks with BBC ‘inching forward’ as schedule chaos continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67S4-BP21-JBNF-W4H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2023 Monday 6:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 740 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** BBC hopes to bring its star presenter back to his hosting seat before long

**Body**

The BBC is locked in urgent talks with Gary Lineker to get him back to work and end [*the staff boycott that has crippled the broadcaster’s weekend sports schedule*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-tweet-match-of-the-day-latest-b2298989.html) , The Independent understands.

Senior sources at the BBC said that talks with the Match of the Day host were “inching forward”, with the aim of getting Lineker back to work this week. A breakthrough would be announced immediately if reached.

BBC director general Tim Davie has made it clear he wants to see the presenter back on air after he was suspended on Friday for comparing the government’s asylum crackdown to 1930s Germany.

His suspension led to dozens of pundits, commentators and presenters staging a mutiny, causing its weekend sports coverage to descend into chaos – with the BBC forced to axe Football Focus, Fighting Talk and Final Score from its schedule.

Match of the Day was replaced on Saturday night by a shortened highlights reel featuring no commentary and without studio punditry, with Sunday’s Match of the Day 2 also set to air without presenters.

Lineker, who has not made any public statements since being taken off air, was tight-lipped as he left his home on Sunday, telling reporters “I can’t say anything” when asked if he had spoken to Mr Davie.

His son George, however, tweeted his support for his father on Sunday, saying: “Proud of the old man after a busy few days. Shouldn't need to apologise for being a good person and standing by his word. The reaction of the public has been overwhelming. Thanks for the support.”

Talks come after The Independent revealed the BBC fears it cannot sack Lineker or force him to follow social media rules on impartiality because of ambiguities in his contract. The corporation would be forced to pay millions if they wanted to oust Lineker and would probably lose any legal claim brought by the Match of the Day presenter, senior figures believe.

In his first interview since the fallout, Mr Davie apologised for the disruption caused to the corporation’s coverage while praising Lineker as “the best in the business” and said he wants to find a “reasonable solution” to get him back on air.

However, despite one of the biggest meltdowns in the corporation’s history, Mr Davie said he would he will not resign. “As a keen sports fan, I know like everyone that to miss programming is a real blow and I am sorry about that. We are working very hard to resolve the situation and make sure that we get output back on air,” Mr Davie said.

The BBC’s coverage of the Women’s Super League match between Chelsea and Manchester United on Sunday aired without a pre-match presentation and with world feed commentary used instead of regular BBC presenters.

For a second day, Radio 5 Live also replaced its usual live sports coverage with pre-recorded content. The station did provide match commentary from its two scheduled Premier League games on Sunday afternoon but the sports presenter Alistair Bruce-Ball admitted it had been a “very difficult decision” to come on air.

Ahead of the Fulham game against Arsenal, Mr Bruce-Ball said: “It’s been a very difficult decision to make personally – I can assure you it’s not been taken lightly – but I’m a BBC staff member, I’m a radio commentator for this station and, just like yesterday, we are here to provide our football service to you, our audience.”

Former BBC executive Peter Salmon, who was previously controller of BBC One and director of sport, told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg the situation is “complex” and Lineker is a “major figure”. He added: “Twenty-five years on ‘Match of the Day’ – he’s more than just a TV presenter, he’s a national figure.

“He’s got views, he’s got passions, he’s been involved in looking after ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It may be that Gary’s outgrown the job and the role in the BBC. Twenty-five years in, before that Des Lynam, Gary took over, he’s been brilliant. Sometimes there’s a point at which you cross the line.”

Former BBC director-general Mark Thompson said he “absolutely hopes” and “believes” Mr Davie will survive the impartiality row surrounding Lineker. Asked by Kuenssberg whether he thinks the presenter will be back on air by Sunday night, he replied: “I hope so.”

On whether the TV pundit should apologise, he told Sky News Sophy Ridge on Sunday: “I don’t agree with his comments and I personally think that he was wrong to say what he said, but I don’t think it’s for me to decide how that issue is resolved.”

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Asylum-seekers’ human rights ‘routinely abused’ in Calais, Rishi Sunak warned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SS-TFJ1-DY4H-K41X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 4, 2022 Friday 11:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Government ‘mocking’ those fleeing war with Suella Braverman’s ‘invasion’ rhetoric, Calais Appeal says

**Body**

People seeking to make the treacherous journey across the Channel to seek asylum in Britain are experiencing “routine” [*human rights*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/human-rights) abuses in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , charities have warned [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak).

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**Load-Date:** November 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian MP: It doesn't feel like our finest hour but PM's speech gives us hope*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C7-5RT1-JBNF-W371-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 5:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 656 words

**Byline:** Edd Dracott

**Highlight:** Inna Sovsun, deputy leader of the Holos Party, said Boris Johnson is seen as a 'hero' in Ukraine after his speech in the Verkhovna Rada.

**Body**

A Ukrainian MP has said Boris Johnson's speech in their parliament gave them "hope we are not alone" but contested his description that the nation is experiencing its "finest hour".

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) was given a warm reception as he echoed the words of [*Winston Churchill*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/winston-churchill) in his videolink address to the Verkhovna Rada on Tuesday - describing Ukraine's resistance against Vladimir Putin's invasion as its "finest hour, that will be remembered and recounted for generations to come".

Inna Sovsun, the deputy leader of the Holos Party, said Mr Johnson is "probably the biggest friend that Ukraine has right now" after attending the address with hundreds of her colleagues.

Responding to his "finest hour" statement however, the 37-year-old told the PA news agency: "I don't know if the definition of 'finest' is supposed to be something nice and beautiful - certainly it doesn't feel like that.

"It will probably be a glorious time described in history textbooks (and) reading about them is probably nice but living through them is hell, frankly speaking.

"But what we definitely understand and what we agree is this is a historic moment... when the nation is being transformed and reborn as a different type of nation.

"If that is the definition of the finest hour that could be it - but again, living through that is not something you'll want for your children."

Ms Sovsun pointed out that while Mr Johnson was speaking [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) were reading that Russian forces had stormed a steel plant filled with Ukrainians in the besieged city of Mariupol.

But she added that Mr Johnson is the first world leader to address the Ukrainian Parliament since the war began and his address was widely well-received.

Boris Johnson addressing Ukrainian parliament today. I have never seen this many standing ovations for a single speech. [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is certainly lucky to have a friend like the [*#UK*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UK?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/xZWlCvNDgB*](https://t.co/xZWlCvNDgB) - Lesia Vasylenko (@lesiavasylenko) [*May 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/lesiavasylenko/status/1521447647046942723?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I have never seen this many standing ovations for a single speech... (Ukraine) is certainly lucky to have a friend like the UK," tweeted Ukrainian MP Lesia Vasylenko.Ms Sovsun said the UK's Prime Minister was already "seen like a hero" in Ukraine before his address thanks to his vocal support of the nation."Prime Minister Johnson is probably the biggest friend that Ukraine has right now... the reaction (to his speech) has been of course positive," said the 37-year-old."It brings hope that we are not alone and the world is (still) standing with Ukraine."He's the guy who is saying the same (things) we are saying to the West, so he's pretty much seen like a hero here in Ukraine."Mr Johnson announced that the UK will continue to provide military aid to Ukraine, which Ms Sovsun said is also giving the country hope - but added that specific weaponry such as artillery is still required.She also said she had hoped issues with visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** hoping to travel to the UK would be addressed in Mr Johnson's announcements."The UK (does not have) a very friendly visa policy towards Ukrainians, this has always been an issue," she said."Visa policy is something that we hope would change, because right now getting the visa is extremely complicated and that is what refugees are complaining about."We hope there will be changes in that direction as well - that was not announced, we hoped it would be."Prime-Minister [*@BorisJohnson*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) spoke online to the Ukrainian parliament [*@verkhovna\_rada*](https://twitter.com/verkhovna_rada?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). He recognized the West's failure to react in 2014 when [*#russia*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/russia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) annexed [*#Crimea*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Crimea?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Promised further military to [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Until the victory! [*pic.twitter.com/US2w0Ob0q5*](https://t.co/US2w0Ob0q5) - Inna Sovsun (@InnaSovsun) [*May 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/InnaSovsun/status/1521446239811907590?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Fellow Ukrainian MP Vadym Ivchenko said approximately 90% of MPs attended Mr Johnson's speech.

"We (are) proud of what he is doing... good speech and good reaction," he told PA.

Mr Ivchenko added that despite the fresh package of aid announced "of course we need more".

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Urgent talks between BBC and Gary Lineker ‘inching forward’ as schedule chaos continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RY-W021-DY4H-K4P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2023 Sunday 4:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:2

**Length:** 740 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley

**Highlight:** BBC hopes to bring its star presenter back to his hosting seat before long

**Body**

The BBC is locked in urgent talks with Gary Lineker to get him back to work and end [*the staff boycott that has crippled the broadcaster’s weekend sports schedule*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gary-lineker-bbc-tweet-match-of-the-day-latest-b2298989.html) , The Independent understands.

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His suspension led to dozens of pundits, commentators and presenters staging a mutiny, causing its weekend sports coverage to descend into chaos – with the BBC forced to axe Football Focus, Fighting Talk and Final Score from its schedule.

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His son George, however, tweeted his support for his father on Sunday, saying: “Proud of the old man after a busy few days. Shouldn't need to apologise for being a good person and standing by his word. The reaction of the public has been overwhelming. Thanks for the support.”

Talks come after The Independent revealed the BBC fears it cannot sack Lineker or force him to follow social media rules on impartiality because of ambiguities in his contract. The corporation would be forced to pay millions if they wanted to oust Lineker and would probably lose any legal claim brought by the Match of the Day presenter, senior figures believe.

In his first interview since the fallout, Mr Davie apologised for the disruption caused to the corporation’s coverage while praising Lineker as “the best in the business” and said he wants to find a “reasonable solution” to get him back on air.

However, despite one of the biggest meltdowns in the corporation’s history, Mr Davie said he would he will not resign. “As a keen sports fan, I know like everyone that to miss programming is a real blow and I am sorry about that. We are working very hard to resolve the situation and make sure that we get output back on air,” Mr Davie said.

The BBC’s coverage of the Women’s Super League match between Chelsea and Manchester United on Sunday aired without a pre-match presentation and with world feed commentary used instead of regular BBC presenters.

For a second day, Radio 5 Live also replaced its usual live sports coverage with pre-recorded content. The station did provide match commentary from its two scheduled Premier League games on Sunday afternoon but the sports presenter Alistair Bruce-Ball admitted it had been a “very difficult decision” to come on air.

Ahead of the Fulham game against Arsenal, Mr Bruce-Ball said: “It’s been a very difficult decision to make personally – I can assure you it’s not been taken lightly – but I’m a BBC staff member, I’m a radio commentator for this station and, just like yesterday, we are here to provide our football service to you, our audience.”

Former BBC executive Peter Salmon, who was previously controller of BBC One and director of sport, told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg the situation is “complex” and Lineker is a “major figure”. He added: “Twenty-five years on ‘Match of the Day’ – he’s more than just a TV presenter, he’s a national figure.

“He’s got views, he’s got passions, he’s been involved in looking after ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It may be that Gary’s outgrown the job and the role in the BBC. Twenty-five years in, before that Des Lynam, Gary took over, he’s been brilliant. Sometimes there’s a point at which you cross the line.”

Former BBC director-general Mark Thompson said he “absolutely hopes” and “believes” Mr Davie will survive the impartiality row surrounding Lineker. Asked by Kuenssberg whether he thinks the presenter will be back on air by Sunday night, he replied: “I hope so.”

On whether the TV pundit should apologise, he told Sky News Sophy Ridge on Sunday: “I don’t agree with his comments and I personally think that he was wrong to say what he said, but I don’t think it’s for me to decide how that issue is resolved.”

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*US to welcome Ukraine refugees but no longer through Mexico*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658N-1M11-DY4H-K29X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 21, 2022 Thursday 2:30 PM GMT

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**Length:** 619 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The Biden administration is making it easier for refugees fleeing Russia's war on Ukraine to come to the United States from Europe while trying to shut down an informal route through northern Mexico that's emerged in recent weeks

**Body**

The Biden administration is making it easier for refugees fleeing Russia's war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to come to the United States from Europe while trying to shut down an informal route through northern Mexico that has emerged in recent weeks.

A program announced Thursday will streamline refugee applications for Ukrainians and others fleeing the fighting, but will no longer routinely grant entry to those who show up at the U.S.-Mexico border seeking asylum, as thousands have done since the invasion ordered by [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President Vladimir Putin began almost two months ago.

The U.S. says it expects to admit up to 100,000 refugees from Ukraine and about 15,000 have come since the Feb. 24 invasion, mostly through Mexico. Starting Monday, that route will no longer be an option except in extreme circumstances, officials said.

It's an effort for the U.S. to uphold its commitment to help [*Eastern European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) nations contend with the 5 million refugees who have fled Ukraine while trying to reduce the number of migrants seeking to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, which has become a political challenge for President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and his administration.

"We are proud to deliver on President Biden's commitment to welcome 100,000 Ukrainians and others fleeing Russian aggression to the United States," Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas said in a statement announcing the effort. "The Ukrainian people continue to suffer immense tragedy and loss as a result of Putin's unprovoked and unjustified attack on their country."

U.S. officials say a majority of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** want to stay in Eastern Europe because they have family fighting in the war and eventually hope to return home.

Advocates have said the U.S. should take far more than 100,000 refugees and do more to expedite the process.

To qualify for admission to the U.S. under the new expedited program, officially known as Uniting for Ukraine, people must have been in Ukraine as of Feb. 11; have a family sponsor in the United States; complete vaccinations and other public health requirements and pass background checks.

Typically, they would start the application process in their home country, but that's no longer possible because the U.S. pulled its diplomats from Ukraine. The State Department will expand resettlement operations in Eastern Europe under the new program to compensate.

Most will receive two years of residence and authorization to work in the United States under what's known as humanitarian parole. Those who coming to the U.S. through the formal refugee process, including thousands who will come as members of religious minority groups, will have permanent legal residency.

It will be a streamlined process in Europe, but refugees won't be able to complete it in Mexico, senior administration officials told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the program before the public announcement.

Instead, Ukrainians who show up at the border will generally be turned away without being able to apply for asylum under a public health order known as Title 42 that has been in place since the start of the pandemic in March 2020.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said the use of Title 42, which has been used to turn away more than 1.7 million people, is set to end May 23. The agency is under pressure to keep it in place not to control COVID-19, as it was supposedly intended, but to help ease an increase in migrants seeking to cross the border.

Critics of the use of Title 42 at the border have pointed out that it denies people their right under U.S law and international treaty to make claims for asylum and forces migrants to return to dangerous conditions in Northern Mexico and elsewhere.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*To save a life: Refugees make protective vests for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6591-TF71-JBNF-W1GT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 23, 2022 Saturday 7:38 AM GMT

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**Length:** 622 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A Czech leatherwork company that makes a wide variety of handmade products - travel bags, wallets and belts - never intended to add personal protective gear that would save lives in a war to its offerings

**Body**

A Czech leatherwork company that makes a wide variety of handmade products - travel bags, messenger totes, wallets and belts - never planned to add personal protective gear that would save lives in a war to its offerings.

The Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has changed that.

After Russian troops launched their assault on Ukraine, Tlusty & Co. hired refugees from Ukraine to help the company join a manufacturing operation equipping Ukrainian volunteers with body armor to face the invading troops.

The Prague-based company agreed to a request from the Post Bellum nongovernmental organization to join a project to supply the protection gear similar to bulletproof vests to Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces. Thousands of Ukrainian volunteers have joined the troops to resist the Russian invasion.

"We specialize in completely different production," Tlusty & Co. owner Ivan Petruv said. "We were facing a situation where we had to decide. And because we consider ourselves part of a community that wants to help in this situation as we can, which is only natural when you see the news, we decided to say yes."

To make the new production happen was a race against the clock, he said. The company needed to get new machines, new materials and above all, to hire extra employees to join the 20-25 staffers in a country whose unemployment rate of 3.4% reflects a lack of available workers in many fields.

"What would take weeks if not months under normal circumstances, we had to solve in hours and several days," he said.

Since the war began, 300,000 refugees who fled Ukraine have arrived in the Czech Republic, mostly women with children, so Petruv said they became an obvious place to look for new hires.

"We published an advertisement at 8 a.m. and at noon we had a list of 70 people," Petruv said.

Four days later, the 15 most qualified people started to work to complete the unusual contract. They sew ballistic plate carriers while other Ukrainians working for Post Bellum assemble the whole gear by inserting steel plates into the vests. The [*NGO*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngo) finances it all through a crowd-funding campaign.

Natalia Bielonosova is one of the company's new workers. She came to [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague) from her town of Irpin, located near the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. with a friend.

"I wanted to make the protection gear for Ukraine," Bielonosova said. "That's a way for me to help my country."

Her husband, a humanitarian worker, stayed at home and her son serves in the Ukrainian army.

"He has no electricity, gas, heating or warm water but has survived so far," she said of her husband.

Of her son, she says "it's painful to read about what's happening. I'd like a solution to be found to end the fighting."

With Irpin and many places badly damaged by heavy Russian shelling, Bielonosova can see her future in Prague, the Czech capital.

"They've destroyed cities and destroyed infrastructure. It would be a very hard life (to go back)," she said.

The work she and other ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have done has impressed Petruv.

"We'd like them to stay," he said. "We're talking about hardworking, skillful people who deserve the job."

The Czech company has so far made 720 of the protective vests with 400 more to deliver. What happens next is unclear.

Petruv said his company was ready to continue the project but "we would be delighted to end it as soon as possible, because this isn't something we want to do. We do it only because of the current situation and a feeling of responsibility."

Meanwhile, he is planning a new project for his Ukrainian workers for the time when peace is restored. It would be products designed for Czech kids and their families.

It's called "[*Mothers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mothers) for mothers."

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*European leaders stream into Ukraine to show solidarity*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6563-W5V1-JBNF-W2VS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 9, 2022 Saturday 6:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer have joined a stream of European leaders showing their support for Ukraine

**Body**

U.K. Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Saturday joined the stream of European leaders showing their support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) by traveling to the nation's capital for face-to-face meetings with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Johnson's surprise visit included a pledge of new military assistance, including 120 armored vehicles and new anti-ship missile systems. This came a day after he promised to send an additional 100 million pounds ($130 million) of high-grade military equipment to Ukraine, saying Britain wanted to help Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression.

Johnson also confirmed further economic support, guaranteeing an additional $500 million in World Bank lending to Ukraine, taking Britain's total loan guarantee to up to $1 billion.

"Today I met my friend President @ZelenskyyUa in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) as a show of our unwavering support for the people of Ukraine,'' Johnson said on Twitter. "We're setting out a new package of financial & military aid which is a testament of our commitment to his country's struggle against Russia's barbaric campaign.''

The head of Ukraine's presidential office, Andriy Yermak, said "the conversation was rich and constructive," but offered no details.

An image of the two leaders meeting was posted online by the Ukrainian Embassy in London with the headline: "Surprise," and a winking smiley face.

The package of military aid Britain announced Friday includes more Starstreak anti-aircraft missiles, another 800 anti-tank missiles and precision munitions capable of lingering in the sky until directed to their target.

"Ukraine has defied the odds and pushed back Russian forces from the gates of Kyiv, achieving the greatest feat of arms of the 21st century,″ Johnson said in a statement. "It is because of President Zelenskyy's resolute leadership and the invincible heroism and courage of the Ukrainian people that Putin's monstrous aims are being thwarted.''

As Zelenskyy makes a continuous round of virtual appearances to drum up support from lawmakers around the world, an increasing number of European leaders have decided the time is right to travel to Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, for in-person talks. European Commission President [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) was in Kyiv on Friday, following earlier visits from the Czech, Polish and Slovenian prime ministers.

Nehammer met with Zelenskyy earlier Saturday and pledged that the EU would continue to ratchet up sanctions against Russia "until the war stops."

"As long as people are dying, every sanction is still insufficient," he said, adding that Austrian embassy staff will return to Kyiv from western Ukraine.

Von der Leyen, who heads the European Union's executive branch, travelled to Warsaw on Saturday to lead a fundraising event for Ukraine. She was joined by Polish President Andrzej Duda, with Zelenskyy and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appearing by video link.

At the end of the 90-minute meeting, von der Leyen said 10.1 billion euros ($11 billion) had been raised for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The event was held in Warsaw because more than 2.5 million of the 4.4 million people who have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion began Feb. 24 have entered Poland. Many have stayed, though some have moved on to other countries.

Convened jointly by von der Leyen and Trudeau, the event sought to attract pledges from governments, global celebrities and average citizens.

It ended with Julian Lennon singing his father John Lennon's peace song "Imagine," which he said is the first time he did so publicly.

Julian Lennon posted on social media that he always said he would only sing the song if it was the "end of the world." He says it's the right song to sing now because "the war on Ukraine is an unimaginable tragedy," and he felt compelled to respond in the most significant way that he could.

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Associated Press Writers Colleen Barry in Milan, Geir Moulson in Berlin and Monika Scislowska in Warsaw contributed.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ex-minister admits refugee scheme 'bumpy' as he welcomes Ukrainian family*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657J-5F41-JBNF-W1XD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 16, 2022 Saturday 8:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 603 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Robert Jenrick said the process of getting the family to the UK had been 'overly bureaucratic'.

**Body**

Former Cabinet minister [*Robert Jenrick*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-jenrick) has said the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme is "bumpy" and visas are taking too long to be processed, as he revealed the refugee family he offered sanctuary to have arrived in the UK.

Mr Jenrick is among the first [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) to have managed to get a Ukrainian family to the UK, with Tory North Norfolk MP Duncan Baker announcing earlier this month that he had welcomed a mother and her son.

But Mr Jenrick said the process by which [*Maria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maria) , 40, and her two children, Bohdan, 15, and Khrystyna, 11, had got to the UK was "traumatic". Their father has stayed in Ukraine to fight in the war.

"We want to support them for as long as long as they need to be here."[*@RobertJenrick*](https://twitter.com/RobertJenrick?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) MP speaks to [*@christopherhope*](https://twitter.com/christopherhope?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) about the Ukrainian family staying with his family. Listen to the latest [*#ChoppersPolitics*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ChoppersPolitics?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) here [*https://t.co/qb1xtLCmtM*](https://t.co/qb1xtLCmtM) [*pic.twitter.com/jSSkB0Eegs*](https://t.co/jSSkB0Eegs) - The Telegraph (@Telegraph) [*April 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1514947899242823685?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Environment minister Victoria Prentis took in a 25-year-old Ukrainian refugee last month under a separate visitor visa scheme, while other MPs and ministers have said they have applied to host families.

Mr Jenrick told the Telegraph's Chopper's Politics podcast: "It has been a very difficult experience for them. Even the experience of coming here was traumatic.

"They spent seven hours queuing at the Polish border before they were able to finally leave Ukraine, catch the flight to the UK, and the experiences which they've had and their relatives have had in different parts of the country over the last two or three months are really harrowing."

On the process, he said: "Truth be told it has been a bumpy start to the scheme. It's taken too long to get visas, for us it took about three weeks to get all three visas approved.

"And so there are people who are frustrated, it has tested the patience of sponsors and, more importantly, of the families and individuals themselves.

"But having been involved in some schemes that are not dissimilar to this in the past, like the Hong Kong scheme, Syrian scheme, Afghan scheme as a minister, as communities secretary, I know that. But I do think that we will get over those bumps, we are getting over them now."

Mr Jenrick said the scheme as it stands is "overly bureaucratic".

He added: "There were simple things that we could and should have done from the outset, like having the form in Ukrainian, for example.

"And I'm not sure whether you need to be doing checks on minors who are extremely unlikely to be threats to this country."

He said some security checks are needed, but added: "The checks need to be done quickly and in this case I'm afraid it has taken too long."

Mr Jenrick said he has not yet received the £350 he is entitled to for hosting the family, but if it is offered he will either not accept it or pass it directly to the refugees.

"So far... it's been very rewarding to see them feeling safe at last after a very traumatic experience and beginning to stabilise them and rebuild their lives," he said.

Former health secretary [*Matt Hancock*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/matt-hancock) said last week he is planning to take in seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at his Suffolk home.

He said the visa process had been a "challenge".

Around 16,400 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes by Monday, according to Government figures.

About 13,200 had arrived under the Ukraine family scheme and 3,200 under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, provisional data shows.

Some 94,700 applications have been received for both schemes and 56,500 visas had been granted by Thursday, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office said.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654B-SPS1-DY4H-K1TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 1, 2022 Friday 9:59 AM GMT

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**Length:** 687 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Russian troops left the [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) nuclear site as [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) braces for attacks elsewhere in the country. The governor of the Russian border region of Belgorod, meanwhile, accused Ukraine of flying helicopter gunships into Russian territory early Friday morning and striking an oil depot.

Here's a look at the coverage of the war from our journalists in Ukraine, [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) and beyond. All times Eastern. You can find all our text, photos and video by going to our Russia-Ukraine war hub on [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Newsroom.

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UPCOMING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-CUBA'S CARS --Francisco Pérez Rodríguez has a car problem - one that's starting to be all too common for many Cubans.He's been rebuilding the engine of his father-in-law's Moskvich - one of tens of thousands of cars and other vehicles that poured into Cuba from its Cold War allies in the Soviet bloc and later Russia over the past half century. To run, it needs a new timing belt. But Pérez Rodríguez said that's something only available these days in Russia.

ROMANIA TRANSYLVANIA REFUGEES -Despite Romania being used mainly as a transit point for hundreds of thousands of refugees, one city in Transylvania, home of Dracula character, reports that 75 percent of Ukrainians who arrived there decided to stay and integrate into local society. Romania opened its doors for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, offering temporary identification documents and work permits, in order to make life easier for those who escaped the war.

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SENT/DEVELOPING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - Russian troops have left the heavily contaminated Chernobyl nuclear site. Ukrainian authorities say the soldiers departed early Friday after returning control to Ukraine. Meanwhile, eastern parts of the country braced for renewed attacks and Russians blocked another aid mission to the besieged port city of Mariupol. By Nebi Qena and Yuras Karmanau. SENT: 1:200 words, photos, videos, developing. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-DRAFT FEARS - As the Russian army bogs down in Ukraine, many youths back home feel increasingly jittery about the prospect of being drafted and sent into combat. A regular spring conscription starts Friday, aiming to round up 134,500 young men for a one-year tour of duty. That is making such fears particularly acute. SENT: 1,100 text

CHINA-EU - The European Union will seek China's assurances that it won't assist Russia in circumventing economic sanctions leveled over the invasion of Ukraine at an annual summit Friday. EU officials also say they will look for signs that Beijing is willing to cooperate on bringing an end to the war at the virtual meeting. By Ken Moritsugu. SENT: 550 words, photos.

UKRAINE-INVASION-REFUGEES -African refugees say the recent decision to grant refugee status and other humanitarian protections to Ukrainians fleeing war underscores the racial bias inherent in American immigration policy. Wilfred Tebah says he and other immigrants from Cameroon have long been deserving of similar humanitarian considerations. They also argue that Congo and Ethiopia should qualify because of their ongoing conflicts, as should Mauritania. By Philip Marcelo. SENT: 1,160 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-AUSTRALIA -Prime Minister Scott Morrison says that Australia will send armored Bushmaster vehicles to Ukraine after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy specifically asked for them while appealing to Australian lawmakers for more help in Ukraine's war against Russia. SENT: 570 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-RELIGIOUS-MINORITIES -The top-ranking Ukrainian Catholic cleric in the United States warned that religious minorities in the Eastern European country stand to be "crushed" if Moscow gains control, as fighting raged on more than a month after the Russian invasion began. SENT: 570 words, photo.

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PHOTOS

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AP PHOTOS on Day 36: Russian tanks destroyed outside Kyiv

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top consumer-ready VIDEOS:

Kharkiv residents clean up debris from air strike

Russia war sanctions mean a struggle for Cuban car owners

Kirby: Russian troops regrouping for redeployment

- The AP

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine scheme is nothing to boast about yet*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-JP61-JCS0-D2VD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 23, 2022 Wednesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 18

**Length:** 635 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Within hours of the UK's Homes for Refugees scheme portal going live last Monday, the government boasted that 44,000 members of the British public had already registered their interest in hosting those who have fled the war. Most will be aware that the figure has since climbed to more than 150,000.

Off the back of this, Sajid Javid said he expected to "see hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians arrive here in the UK". The health secretary told LBC this week that this shows how the UK is "supporting Ukraine in every single way that we can", echoing levelling up secretary Michael Gove's claim last week that the scheme draws on "our proud history of supporting the vulnerable in their hour of greatest need".

The sponsorship scheme, launched on Friday,allows Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so.

With millions of Ukrainians having fled from their homes, many of them now languishing in crowded humanitarian centres in bordering countries, one would expect that the 150,000 rooms being offered in the UK would be quickly filled up. A warm and secure home is exactly what these traumatised women and children are in desperate need of right now.

But progress on actually getting refugees into UK homes under the scheme appears to be slow - perhaps not yet even happening at all.

The government has refused to reveal how many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have applied to the scheme since it opened for applications on Friday - quite a contrast to the speed and willingness with which it gave out the figures on people coming forward to host.

Charities are convinced the number of applications so far will amount to a "trickle". Lawyers say the application process is "convoluted" and "nigh on impossible" to complete, with "very difficult" forms to fill in and all documents submitted required to be in PDF format - a difficult feat when many are applying from crowded spaces from their mobile phones.

Before they even get to this stage, the scheme requires that each Ukrainian refugee applying can name the person in the UK who will host them. Mr Gove made the questionable suggestion last week that this could be done via social media. This led to a flood of Facebook pages being set up designed to "match" hosts with refugees - prompting concerns it leaves vulnerable people exposed to abuse.

To make matters worse, volunteers working with refugees on the ground in bordering countries say most Ukrainians are not even aware that the scheme exists - or if they do have no help to apply. One charity said there were no UK representatives encouraging refugees to go to the UK, adding that there was "no guidance on the UK visa applications at all".

The government could prove that these are not legitimate problems by agreeing to publish the numbers for the scheme and showing us that in fact large numbers have applied - but it has refused to do so. Everything we know so far points to an application process that is complicated and difficult to access, not least for people who have just fled a war zone.

To actually help Ukrainians, the scheme must be far more accessible and go further than inviting 150,000 Brits to click a button to say they would like to help. There is nothing to boast about yet.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Ukraine has shown Britain what progressive patriotism can look like*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6545-MN11-JBNF-W0XD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 3:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 640 words

**Byline:** Emma Burnell

**Highlight:** We have much to be proud of, and a story of national collectivism that can shame the government's turn to austerity and individualism

**Body**

The situation in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - and the response of its people from Zelensky downwards - has shown that a positive narrative of national identity is perfectly possible. Neither does it have to be denied to achieve a sense of international solidarity or national change and development.

Now is the perfect time for progressive people in the UK to ask how we too could adopt this narrative of national solidarity to build a better future.

When I was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, [*nationalism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nationalism) in Britain was seen, particularly on the left, to be synonymous with fascism. This was not unreasonable, knee-jerk thinking. There were fascists marching in the streets and running for elections, and as such, the potent national symbols they claimed as theirs - like the flag of St George and the Union Jack - were rejected by people who had all too often seen them in pamphlets from far-right candidates.

In the 1990s, there was a reasonably successful attempt to change all of that, as Britpop dominated culture, and football and celebratory lad culture supplanted grunge in the national consciousness. "Things can only get better," thought the left, as it embraced nationalism with varying degrees of success.

But as the pendulum swung back - from Iraq and migrant scare stories, through to Brexit and [*austerity*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/austerity) - pride in the UK fell out of fashion. Britpop was seen as too Blairite; the Union Flag was claimed by Leavers and too often rejected by dismayed Remainers.

But this is not how the general public feels. These attitudes exist only in the unreal worlds of social media and hyper-political activism. They do not reflect the country's natural sense of belonging together as a national community. That is a sense the left should and could feel part of - it is the very definition of collectivism, after all.

During the past month, we have seen the contrast between Ukraine's proud national sense of identity and solidarity, and the "Nazi" image the Russian propaganda tried to paint it as. This has sat in sharp contrast with the bullying sense of national authoritarian entitlement coming from Putin. When you are patriotic only under pain of death or imprisonment, that pride doesn't really run that deep.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

The spirit of 1945 that the left is so rightly proud of comes from our post-war sense of national solidarity. Without the deprivations of war, the impetus to build the welfare state, the NHS and a vast wave of social "homes for heroes" might never have existed. And while it is unlikely we will see UK boots on the ground, our interdependent world will see the home front suffering deprivations, thanks to a series of worldwide crises.

Our national response to the global pandemic has helped us build strong bonds of communities as we supported each other through two difficult years. Our national generosity has been shown in the people's - if not the government's - openness to welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

We have much to be proud of, and a story of national collectivism to relate that can - and should - shame the government's hard turn back to austerity and individualism. We can counter Priti Patel's small island narrative of closed borders and a hostile environment with one that makes us proud of the national spirit of giving and welcoming.

Now is the time for us to give up our squeamishness about nationhood and celebrate a future narrative of what Britain can be, when given the right chance and the right leadership.

Now is the time to truly remember the lessons of 1945 and apply them properly. We can use this post-crisis opportunity to take up the mantle of the great socialists and reformers, and make Britain a place we can feel proud of again.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tories accused of leaving refugees in limbo as only 10% of Homes for Ukraine scheme applications granted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653X-VKB1-JBNF-W2WG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 10:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:6

**Length:** 725 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Labour condemns 'shameful scale of bureaucracy' as figures show just 2,700 sponsorship visas issued

**Body**

Ministers have been accused of preventing desperately vulnerable people from reaching sanctuary in the UK as it emerged that just one in 10 applications to the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme have been granted.

Government figures published on Wednesday show that 28,300 applications have been submitted under the sponsorship scheme since it launched nearly two weeks ago, of which 2,700 have so far been allowed.

However, when asked how many Ukrainians had arrived in the UK under the scheme, refugees minister Richard Harrington declined to do so, saying it was "too early" to publish the data.

Meanwhile, [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) ministers have sent a letter to home secretary Priti Patel and levelling up minister Michael Gove, urging them to address the "shameful" situation that is leaving [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) waiting "in limbo" before they can reach safety.

The letter, sent jointly by shadow ministers Yvette Cooper and Lisa Nandy, states: "The shameful scale of bureaucracy is preventing desperately vulnerable people from reaching sanctuary in the UK.

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

"While the response of the British public has been overwhelming, with more than 150,000 families signed up to open their homes, the system you have created is squandering that generosity and failing to deliver the support that our country rightly wants to provide."

It adds: "The government has known for months about the potential invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It is therefore unacceptable that, more than a month on from the start of the conflict, there has been so little progress, and there are so many people waiting in limbo before they can reach some security and support."

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is designed to allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so. More than 150,000 people have so far registered their interest in hosting.

Responding to the figures, Sonya Sceats, chief executive at Freedom from Torture, said: "In a month where people across the country signed up to welcome more refugees than the government has in 10 years, these woeful numbers prove why visa-based schemes are an unsuitable gateway for refugees fleeing Ukraine to reach safety here in the UK.

"Increasing reports of horrendous sexual violence against Ukrainian women and girls make it all the more urgent for the government to cut the red tape, so that survivors can get here quickly and access services from specialist trauma services like Freedom from Torture."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Alistair Carmichael described the government's response as "appallingly slow and chaotic, leaving thousands of Ukrainians in limbo trying to get a visa".

"Ministers need to work harder and faster to match the compassion shown by the British public. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should be allowed to come to the UK now, without first having to apply for a visa," he added.

Refugees minister Lord Harrington said: "The response of the British public has been incredible, opening their hearts and homes to the people of Ukraine, and we must do everything we can to make the most of this extraordinary generosity.

"We are starting to see progress because of changes the Home Office made to streamline the visa process and put additional resources into the system. However, we need to do more and will be making further improvements to bring people to the UK as quickly as possible."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Escape to France with your UK sticker*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651M-4VX1-JBNF-W4X7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2022 Saturday 3:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS & ADVICE,TRAVEL; Version:2

**Length:** 637 words

**Byline:** Simon Calder

**Highlight:** The Man Who Pays His Way: be careful what you wish for

**Body**

Simon Calder, also known as The Man Who Pays His Way, has been writing about travel for The Independent since 1994. In his weekly opinion column, he explores a key travel issue - and what it means for you.

Do you own a car? Does it have a GB sticker? Are you heading for Continental Europe? If you answered those in the affirmative, it is my duty to inform you that, ahead of your journey, the government says you must "cover or remove" the offending item.

The reason: during the coronavirus pandemic [*ministers found time to ask the United Nations to change the decades-old "GB" identifier to "UK".*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/brexit-uk-cars-id-cards-b1929256.html)

A Department for Transport spokesperson told me: "Changing the national identifier from GB to UK symbolises our unity as a nation."

That is not quite what the French make of it, according to Bill Swan, a retired business architect who is currently on holiday in France.

He and his wife Deirdre paused at an aire on their way south from the port of Dieppe: specifically Beaune-les-Mines, just north of Limoges.

"We were feted," he reports. "A French couple pulled in as we were leaving, excitedly stopping us and pointing to our UK car sticker."

Marvellous that the French have decided to forgive the venom of Brexit and share the joy for our unity as a nation, you might conclude. But hang on ...

"We were asked which town we were fleeing from," says Mr Swan, who is from lovely Rye in East Sussex.

Last time I checked, there was no one escaping from this charming Cinque Port on the edge of Romney Marsh.

A case of mistaken motoring identity, it turned out.

"They had taken us for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. My poor French response probably intensified their misapprehension."

You can understand the mistake: French motorists are accustomed to the GB identifier for British vehicles, and it would be reasonable to assume that Ukraine's identifier is UK (in fact it is UA).

Mr Swan, a keen supporter of Remain, briefly contemplated seeking the couple's sponsorship of an application for French nationality. And then he "started to wonder why the British government felt the need to switch from GB to UK?".

He describes it as "a pathetic signal that we haven't forgotten about Northern Ireland, even if we have put a border down the Irish Sea", and adds: "Nobody in France seems to have noticed until it provoked the incorrect assumption, and about half of British cars travelling seem to still be on 'GB' stickers."

As Mr Swan and every other Remainer knows, Leave was propelled to victory in the 2016 EU referendum by an alliance of the right wing of the Conservative party, Nigel Farage's UKIP and trade unions such as the RMT.

It was brave of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers to announce it was "campaigning hard" for Leave, given the economic damage that the UK leaving the European Union would cause to its members' interests, especially in the ferry business.

[*One key reason: to "end attacks on seafarers"*](https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-sets-out-six-key-reasons-for-leaving-the-eu/). The RMT explained: "The EU has promoted undercutting." That is the practice of replacing crew with cheaper overseas labour. Leave the European Union and that threat will disappear, was the implication. But on Thursday, [*P&O Ferries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/po-ferries) announced it was doing exactly what the union warned about.

Long-serving crew were told to leave their ships and await "a major announcement" - which turned out to be a short video message telling them with brutal brevity that their careers had just ended.

Having spent Thursday and Friday in Dover, the port most affected, my hope is that P&O Ferries will feel the heat of public opinion and make a humiliating U-turn - apologising to, and bringing back, the seafarers. I wonder if the [*RMT union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rmt-union) , in turn, might say sorry for the failure of Brexit to prevent the mass sackings we were warned about? Meanwhile, drive that UK car with pride.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Musician praises ‘determination’ of Ukrainian teenagers he taught in Lviv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-53R1-DY4H-K35V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 27, 2023 Sunday 6:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 861 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Ashley Valentine spent five days teaching the piano to teenagers.

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) musician who travelled to [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) to teach displaced Ukrainian teenagers at a summer school has praised their “determination” to learn despite “living and breathing” the ongoing war.

Ashley Valentine spent five days teaching piano lessons to between 15 and 20 displaced teenagers aged 13 to 18 in the western Ukrainian city from August 14, through working with not-for-profit Make It Possible Ukraine.

“[The not-for-profit] rented a little music studio just on the outskirts of the city so I could give piano lessons,” the 40-year-old who lives in [*East Dulwich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/east-dulwich) , south-east [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , told the PA news agency.

“In the very first lesson, a load of teenagers turned up and and some of them had never ever played the piano or had never even touched a key, so I taught them simple pieces and they started laughing and smiling a bit.

“A couple of others who came played pieces from (Austrian composer) Franz Schubert – really advanced level stuff and they hadn’t played in two years, and I was helping by giving advice.”

More than five kilograms worth of music books made up the majority of Mr Valentine’s luggage for the trip, which he bought from donations made to a Crowdfunding page he set up.

He said he was “completely and utterly surprised” at smashing his £200 target, which stands at over £1,200, with most of the money being given to the not-for-profit to facilitate its projects.

“It started off with a few friends giving money and sharing my Crowdfunding link with people,” he said.

“I have a friend in America who shared it with some work colleagues, so there were some random donations from people in St Louis (in Missouri) as well.

“It was humbling to see how passionate people were also about this.”

Mr Valentine said the teenagers were “excited” to receive the books, which helped to bring to life their musical interests.

“I listened to them to see what level they were at and found out what they were interested in playing,” he said.

“One said he liked Hans Zimmer so I let him play from one of the books which had movie songs in it, like the theme from the movie Gladiator, and he loved it.

“One girl sang me a folk song, so I brought a book with me that had British, Irish and Scottish folk songs, and introduced her to some of those and she really liked that.”

The week ended with a concert Mr Valentine played as part of at the Lviv Organ Hall, which was attended by all his students and charity volunteers, who gave him a “standing ovation”, as well as a Ukrainian flag which they all signed for him.

“It was sold out and it went pretty well, but it was also so hot – I wore a suit and was absolutely drenched by the end of it”, he joked.

Mr Valentine reminisced fondly about a girl called Vitalina who attended with her grandmother Rudenko, who was previously a piano teacher in Kharkiv and despite the pair not being able to speak much English, the group connected through their love of music.

“Vitalina was playing music from (Polish composer and pianist) Frederic Chopin really beautifully, but I just gave her some tips through an interpreter that was there, but when she went I had to try my best to give advice,” he said.

“Her grandmother initially sat with a stern face but then started warming to me a bit, and then they kept coming back day after day and she played some really beautiful pieces for me.

“They both came to the concert and the girl and her grandmother gave me a little music box, and they’d gone to the trouble of getting someone to translate a little note to me, which was really nice.”

A key inspiration behind the trip was sparked from Mr Valentine teaching the piano to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at different schools in the UK who fled their homes when [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

“They’re absolutely model pupils and they practice so, so hard, and one really wanted to learn the Ukrainian national anthem and within a few weeks, he was able to do it,” he said.

“I went to Ukraine in 2015 and teaching the children got me thinking that there are so many others who, like them, have had their music studies interrupted with the war.

“I wanted to teach piano as a sort of distraction for them from the war – they’re living and breathing it every day – and they were very grateful and also so determined.”

While in Lviv, Mr Valentine also witnessed and took part in the work charity Frontline Kitchen do, in terms of making meals for soldiers on the front line in the Ukrainian military.

“Chopping the vegetables, especially the beets, were messy,” he said.

“Talking to and learning about the other volunteers and their reasons for coming was the fun bit.”

He also got to experience what it was like living in a country blighted by war as he had to download an app called Air Alert, which monitored when air raids occurred.

“One day I was there, a building was destroyed and I also heard two big bangs, but the strength and kindness of Ukrainians was always present.

“When you went out for food, they’d always offer more or dessert at the end of meals – they’ve got hearts of gold.”

More information about Make it Possible Ukraine and how to make a donation can be found here: [*https://makeitpossibleua.org/donate54083264*](https://makeitpossibleua.org/donate54083264)

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson should sort Home Office mess rather than make 'nonsensical' Ukraine trip, says senior official*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6527-JR81-JBNF-W3WV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 12:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 624 words

**Byline:** Anna Isaac,Adam Forrest and Kim Sengupta

**Highlight:** Exclusive: 'Huge risks' attached to visit during Russian invasion, says Foreign Office official

**Body**

It would be "nonsensical" for [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) to visit [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) during the Russian invasion of the country, a senior government official has told The Independent.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) official said the prime minister's time "would be better spent addressing [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) dysfunction" over the Britain's response to the refugee crisis.

Mr Johnson is "desperate" to pay a trip to Ukraine to "experience what is happening there", the Conservative party chairman [*Oliver Dowden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oliver-dowden) has confirmed.

Requests had been made to the FCDO regarding the possibility of Mr Johnson visiting Ukraine in-person, The Independent understands.

But the departmental official warned there were "huge risks associated with such an operation for both UK officials, special forces and Ukrainian security concerns".

They added that an in-person visit from the prime minister was not a top priority for the Ukrainian government.

Two chief requests from Ukrainian counterparts remain - sending more arms and aid, and easing the flow of refugees to the UK, the official said.

Both Labour and Tory MPs have attacked the Home Office's slow response in allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to Britain, and campaigners have condemned home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's insistence on visa requirements.

The FCDO official also noted that US officials had been at pains to note that president Joe Biden would not visit Ukraine during his trip to neighbouring country Poland. This was important in order to not to inflame tensions with Russia yet further.

A visit from a UK or US premier would require logistical support that could, if it met with Russian forces, risked igniting a live engagement between a Nato member and Russia, the official said.

This is the same issue that Nato leaders said prevents them from securing Ukraine's skies from Russian attack, as it could lead to a vast escalation of the conflict.

The Tory party chairman defended Mr Johnson's desire to go to Ukraine, arguing that the risky visit would be important to let the PM "see what's going on, on the ground".

"It's actually to experience what is happening there, to see what is happening to the people on the ground," Mr Dowden told LBC - suggesting he wanted to meet president Volodymyr Zelensky in person.

"It's very different talking to somebody on the phone versus actually seeing it in practice," the Tory chair said.

The cabinet minister also clarified that no decisions have been taken yet, following reports that British security officials are "having kittens" about the prime minister's requested visit.

No 10 said on Tuesday that Mr Johnson would consider travelling to Kyiv if invited - though the prime minister's spokesman said president Zelensky had not, at this time, requested that the PM visit Kyiv.

A senior Ukrainian security official told The Independent that he had heard that Mr Johnson has expressed interest in showing his solidarity with Ukraine by travelling to meet president Zelensky.

The official, who has been to London and is known to Western officials, stressed that no official approach has been made about a visit by the prime minister by British officials.

But he pointed out that Ihor Zhovka, the Ukrainian president's advisor on international relations had invited president Biden to visit Kyiv.

He also pointed out that the prime ministers of Poland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic met Mr Zelensky in Kyiv after travelling by train from Poland.

Britain's standing in Ukraine is extremely high at present after supplies of arms to the country. Mr Johnson received a warm welcome during a visit to Kyiv in January in the run-up to the war.

EU leaders will gather in Brussels on Thursday along with US president Joe Biden, but Mr Johnson is not expected to join them.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russians push baseless theory blaming US for burst pipeline*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66H6-T341-DY4H-K520-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 30, 2022 Friday 6:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 703 words

**Byline:** David Klepper

**Highlight:** The Kremlin and Russian state media are aggressively pushing a baseless conspiracy theory blaming the U.S. for damage to natural gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea

**Body**

The [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) and Russian state media are aggressively pushing a baseless conspiracy theory blaming the United States for damage to natural gas pipelines in the [*Baltic Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/baltic-sea) in what analysts said Friday is another effort to split the U.S. and its European allies.

The Russian position is also reverberating on social media forums popular with American conservatives and far-right groups.

NATO leaders believe the damage to the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines between Russia and Germany is the result of sabotage. NATO has refrained from identifying a suspect pending an investigation into the damage.

Russia began blaming the U.S. quickly after the damage was reported Monday night. On Friday, speaking at a ceremony to annex four Ukrainian regions, Russian President Vladimir Putin said “Anglo-Saxons” in the West were behind the “terror attacks" but did not specify any nations.

Pravda and other Russian state outlets reported Thursday that the U.S. operates underwater robots capable of carrying out the acts of sabotage. The Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman wrote about her suspicions of U.S. involvement in a Telegram post.

“Europe must know the truth!” Maria Zakharova wrote on Telegram Wednesday.

The assertions of U.S. responsibility cite President Joe Biden’s threat in February to stop the recently completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline if Russia invaded Ukraine. “If Russia invades ... then there will be no longer a Nord Stream 2,” Biden said. “We will bring an end to it.”

The U.S. State Department has dismissed Russia's claims, with a spokesman calling them preposterous and saying the idea of U.S. involvement “is nothing more than a function of Russian disinformation and should be treated as such.”

The two Nord Stream lines were not in operation but were filled with tons of methane that began bubbling to the surface following the damage. Russia recently shut off the Nord Stream 1 pipeline as it ramped up energy pressure on Europe. Nord Stream 2 has never been used.

Fox News' [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) played the Biden clip on his show Tuesday and brought up the possibility that the U.S. was behind the sabotage.

“If they did this, this will be one of the craziest, most destructive things any American administration has ever done, but it would also be totally consistent with what they do," Carlson said.

Former President Donald Trump also reposted Biden's remarks on Truth Social along with a call for the U.S. to remain “cool, calm” in its relations with Russia. “Wow. What a statement. World War III anyone?” he wrote.

Messages left with spokespeople for Fox News and Trump were not immediately returned on Friday.

The suggestion that the U.S. caused the damage was circulating on online forums popular with American conservatives and followers of QAnon, a conspiracy theory movement which asserts that Trump is fighting a battle against a Satanic child-trafficking sect that controls world events.

The claim's popularity among the American far-right and the speed with which it spread from Russian state media reflect mounting skepticism about America's role in the war in Ukraine, according to Emma Ashford, a senior fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based Stimson Center and an expert on security and energy.

“Russia is quite good at capitalizing on these divides, but it doesn't create them,” she said.

It's not the first time Russia has spread disinformation seeking to redirect blame for the war and undermine Ukraine's allies. Earlier this year, Kremlin-controlled media mounted a disinformation operation asserting the U.S. had been running secret bioweapon labs in Ukraine. Carlson helped amplify that theory too.

Networks allied with the Kremlin have also spread frightening tales about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and blamed atrocities committed during the war on Ukrainians.

Seen in that context, the conspiracy theory alleging U.S. responsibility for the pipeline damage is consistent, the researchers concluded.

“The central theme is that this is a “false-flag” operation, an American plot designed to convince Europe that it was a Russian attack intended to signal the vulnerability of Europe’s energy supplies,” the researchers wrote.

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Follow the AP’s coverage of misinformation at [*https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation*](https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation).

**Load-Date:** September 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*In Baltics, Poland, grassroots groups strive to help Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67K7-61D1-JBNF-W3VB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 18, 2023 Saturday 7:56 AM GMT

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**Length:** 809 words

**Byline:** Kostya Manenkov and Liudas Dapkus

**Highlight:** Since Russia invaded Ukraine last February, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — three states on NATO’s eastern flank scarred by decades of Soviet-era occupation — have been among the top donors to Kyiv

**Body**

In a dusty workshop in northern [*Lithuania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lithuania) , a dozen men are transforming hundreds of wheel rims into potbelly stoves to warm Ukrainians huddled in trenches and bomb shelters. As the sparks subside, one welder marks the countertop: 36 made that day. Hours later, they've reached 60.

People from across Lithuania send old wheel rims to the volunteers gathering weekly in Siauliai, the Baltic country’s fourth-largest city. Two cars loaded with wood stoves wait outside the workshop ahead of the long night drive south.

Since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last February, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — three states on NATO’s eastern flank scarred by decades of Soviet-era occupation — have been among the top donors to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

Linas Kojala, director of the Europe Studies Center in Lithuania's capital Vilnius, said Ukraine’s successful resistance “is a matter of existential importance” to the Baltic countries, which share its experience of Russian rule.

“Not only political elites, but entire societies are involved in supporting Ukraine,” Kojala told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap).

In Siauliai, Edgaras Liakavicius said his team has sent about 600 stoves to Ukraine.

“Everybody here ... understands the situation of every man, every soldier, the conditions they live in now in Ukraine,” Liakavicius, who works for a local metal processing plant, told the AP.

Jaana Ratas, who heads an effort in Tallinn, Estonia to make camouflage nets for Ukrainian soldiers, echoed his words.

“My family and most Estonians, they still remember (the [*Soviet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet) occupation),” she said.

Ratas chose a symbolic location for her project. Five days a week, Estonian and Ukrainian women gather at Tallinn’s Museum of Occupations and Freedom to weave the nets from donated fabrics.

Lyudmila Likhopud, a 76-year-old refugee from Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia region, said the work has lifted her out of depression.

“I started feeling that I can be useful,” she told the AP.

In Latvia’s capital of Riga, Anzhela Kazakova — who ran a furniture store in the Black Sea port of Odesa — is one of 30 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** working for Atlas Aerospace, a drone manufacturer that has supplied more than 300 kits to the Ukrainian army.

Ivan Tolchinsky, Atlas Aerospace’s founder and CEO, grew up in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, held by Kremlin-backed separatists since 2014. He had long petitioned both the EU and Ukraine to supply drones to Kyiv’s forces fighting the separatists. Final permission arrived a day before Moscow’s full-scale invasion, he said.

Atlas Aerospace has since increased production 20-fold, Tolchinsky said, and is planning to open a site in Ukraine despite withering Russian strikes on infrastructure.

Tolchinsky’s drones are just some of the weapons flowing to Kyiv from its Baltic allies. Together with their southern neighbor Poland — another NATO and European Union member with a history of Soviet oppression — the three small states rank among the biggest donors per gross domestic product helping Ukraine.

Lithuania, with a mere 2.8 million inhabitants, was the first country to send Stinger air defense missiles, according to Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov.

One of the latest Lithuanian initiatives is a crowdfunding drive to help Ukraine defend itself against Russian drones and missiles. Launched in late January, it initially aimed to raise 5 million euros by the Feb. 24 first anniversary of the invasion. That goal was reached within weeks, and organizers have since doubled it as donations keep flowing.

One fundraising group has grown into a major player that participates in international tenders purchasing military equipment for Kyiv.

“We have expanded 10 times in less than a year. (We used to supply) five drones in one batch, but now it’s 50 or more,” said Jonas Ohman, founder of the nongovernmental organization Blue/Yellow. The group recently won a bid for military optics, edging out rivals including the Indian military, and clinched a contract with an Israeli company for multi-purpose high sensitivity radars for Kyiv.

“It’s entirely another level now,” Ohman said.

In Poland, millions of zlotys have been raised to fund everything from advanced weapons to treating the wounded. Backed by over 220,000 contributors, journalist Slawomir Sierakowski was able to gather almost 25 million zlotys ($5.6 million) to buy an advanced Bayraktar drone for Ukraine.

Ohman, the head of the Lithuanian NGO, drew parallels between his compatriots’ readiness to help Kyiv and local partisan movements fighting Soviet rule after World War II.

“It is about personal responsibility in tough times," he said. “Just like in 1945 when (the) Soviets returned, the government was gone, but the struggle for freedom continued in the woods for years.”

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Associated Press writer Joanna Kozlowska contributed to this report from London.

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Follow AP’s coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Irish Government 'doing everything it can to find accommodation for Ukrainians'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-XGC1-JBNF-W4W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 7:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 633 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin said that housing will need to be refurbished for the thousands of refugees who are fleeing.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier has said the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is doing everything it can to procure accommodation for the thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland.

Micheal Martin said that housing and accommodation will need to be refurbished for the thousands of refugees fleeing the war-torn country.

While many are being accommodated in hotels, the Government is attempting to source other properties.

More than 7,000 refugees have arrived in Ireland, with the number expected to increase significantly in the coming days and weeks.

Speaking in [*Washington DC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington-dc) on the second day of his trip to the US as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations, Mr Martin said there is currently no estimate for how much the war in Ukraine will cost the Irish Government.

Mr Martin said that some housing will need to be refurbished while the Government will look to procure hotels, B&Bs and other facilities.

"Those other facilities will have to be refitted and reconfigured to make them suitable for residential," Mr Martin said.

"There will be significant costs on the accommodation front. We have over 7,000 refugees that have come into Ireland. It is significant and it is growing but we, through the whole of government approach, we are doing everything we possibly can to procure as much as they possibly can."

Mr Martin said the sanctions against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) by the EU and United States are having an impact on the country's economy.

He also said that he hopes peace talks between Ukraine and Russia will lead to some results.

"I would hope that the current talks, tentative though they are, could yield some results in terms of the ceasefire and cessation of the violence in the first instance, then demilitarisation," he said.

Really engaging and encouraging lunch hosted by [*@IDAIRELAND*](https://twitter.com/IDAIRELAND?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@scienceirel*](https://twitter.com/scienceirel?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) in Washington today.Good ideas on how we can boost innovation and future-proof Ireland as a global home of research. [*pic.twitter.com/WAiv1Scrpv*](https://t.co/WAiv1Scrpv) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1504144678471487493?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"In particular we believe it's imperative that humanitarian corridors, genuine humanitarian corridors are created, maintained and sustained as quickly as possible."

Turning to the dramatic increase in energy prices, Mr Martin said he will not move unilaterally on the EU's VAT directive.

He defended the Irish Government's reaction to tackling the rise in energy and living costs, saying Ireland moved faster than many other EU member states.

He added: "The Government will not be able to shield the entire population from the full impact of this war, on fuel prices and our energy prices.

"There are limits to what any government can do in a situation like this, and that is why this war should end.

"In the first instance because of the appalling death and destruction on the people of Ukraine and their cities and their towns, and also the broader danger it poses to the world in terms of an extension of that conflict.

"We are at a very dangerous moment in terms of where we are globally as a result of this war.

"Accidents can happen and we need to avoid that at all costs.

"But when in a war situation like this on the continent of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , where the sanctions that have been imposed by Europe and US are the severest kind that we create shocks to the system, it will create a degree of instability in the economy. It will create price pressures, particularly on energy, food and other commodities.

"Those are the realities of the fact that Russia has waged war on Ukraine and all of the consequences going from that.

"No government is going to be in a position to protect in its entirety their societies from those consequences.

"We took measures last week with respect to hauliers and so on.

"So into the future we keep this under review, I think the more targeted measures will probably yield the best results."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine refugees tell harrowing tales even as numbers ease*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-G991-JBNF-W0MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 4:31 PM GMT

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**Length:** 632 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Elena Yurchuk saw families with children blown up and the hospital she worked in reduced to rubble during Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

Elena Yurchuk saw families with children blown up and the hospital she worked in reduced to rubble during [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

"I don't know if I have a home or not," said the 44-year-old nurse from the northern Ukrainian town of Chernihiv. "Our city is under siege and we barely escaped."

Yurchuk has arrived to safety in the Romanian border town of Suceava, which has welcomed thousands of refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine in the past days. Chernihiv, she said, now resembles a "ghost town."

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) in cars are blown up by mines, a car with children and a young family was blown up ... literally behind us," Yarchuk said.

While the number of people arriving in neighboring countries from Ukraine appears to have eased in the past week, the refugees' harrowing accounts of destruction and death are evidence of the continued suffering of civilians in Ukrainian cities besieged by Russian forces.

At the train station in Przemysl, [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , refugees described traveling in packed trains and "people sleeping on each other" during their journeys to safety. Some heard explosions as they passed through a western region of Ukraine near Lviv in the area where Russian missiles pounded a military training base, killing at least 35 people.

"When I went through Lviv there was an explosion. They bombed two military bases," said Elizaveta Zmievskaya, 25, from Dnipro. "The sky became red."

More than 1.5 million refugees have arrived in Poland since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 - out of a total of around 2.7 million people that the United Nations say have fled so far.

But Polish border guard spokeswoman Anna Michalska said that the numbers of refugees arriving have eased in the past week with about 79,800 arriving on Saturday, compared to 142,000 a week earlier. In Romania, 29,636 refugees arrived on March 7, with the number dropping to 16,676 on Saturday.

Still, the refugees said their escape to safety was as hard as ever.

Roman Titov Chuguyev, 16, traveled with his brother for more than 10 hours in a crowded train before meeting their mother who was already in Poland.

"We had to travel by ourselves," he said. "It was very crowded, lots of people sleeping on each other. In the cabin for six people there were eight to 10 people inside. It was just very hard."

His mother Svetlana Titova said she was relieved that her two sons have finally arrived.

"I had no connection with them," she said. "I was worried, but I was here with others who were waiting."

For Natalia, a 55-year-old Ukrainian refugee from Zaporizhizhia, this was her second time fleeing, after leaving the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, when Russia annexed it.

"It was scary," she said. "We did not wait for them (Russians) and this is not our first experience. But it was scary."

Most of the refugees fleeing Ukraine have been women and children, because men from 18-60 have stayed behind to fight and are forbidden from leaving the country. Many already have moved to other countries in Europe, mostly to stay with friends and family there.

At dawn on Sunday, a bus carrying about 50 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** overturned on a major highway in northern Italy, killing one person, Italian firefighters said.

In Britain, the government announced it will pay a monetary reward to people who offer their homes as a refuge to Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion. Officials said Sunday the "Homes for Ukraine" program, to be introduced this week, will see sponsors receive a government payment of 350 pounds ($456) per month.

But refugees like Svitlana Prihodnia, a 55-year-old from Dnipro, just wish they never had to leave at all.

"Everybody dreams that they will go back home soon," she said.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the Ukraine crisis at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine scheme is nothing to boast about yet*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-JP61-JCS0-D2SH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 23, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 17

**Length:** 635 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN

**Body**

Within hours of the UK's Homes for Refugees scheme portal going live last Monday, the government boasted that 44,000 members of the British public had already registered their interest in hosting those who have fled the war. Most will be aware that the figure has since climbed to more than 150,000.

Off the back of this, Sajid Javid said he expected to "see hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians arrive here in the UK". The health secretary told LBC this week that this shows how the UK is "supporting Ukraine in every single way that we can", echoing levelling up secretary Michael Gove's claim last week that the scheme draws on "our proud history of supporting the vulnerable in their hour of greatest need".

The sponsorship scheme, launched on Friday,allows Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so.

With millions of Ukrainians having fled from their homes, many of them now languishing in crowded humanitarian centres in bordering countries, one would expect that the 150,000 rooms being offered in the UK would be quickly filled up. A warm and secure home is exactly what these traumatised women and children are in desperate need of right now.

But progress on actually getting refugees into UK homes under the scheme appears to be slow - perhaps not yet even happening at all.

The government has refused to reveal how many ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have applied to the scheme since it opened for applications on Friday - quite a contrast to the speed and willingness with which it gave out the figures on people coming forward to host.

Charities are convinced the number of applications so far will amount to a "trickle". Lawyers say the application process is "convoluted" and "nigh on impossible" to complete, with "very difficult" forms to fill in and all documents submitted required to be in PDF format - a difficult feat when many are applying from crowded spaces from their mobile phones.

Before they even get to this stage, the scheme requires that each Ukrainian refugee applying can name the person in the UK who will host them. Mr Gove made the questionable suggestion last week that this could be done via social media. This led to a flood of Facebook pages being set up designed to "match" hosts with refugees - prompting concerns it leaves vulnerable people exposed to abuse.

To make matters worse, volunteers working with refugees on the ground in bordering countries say most Ukrainians are not even aware that the scheme exists - or if they do have no help to apply. One charity said there were no UK representatives encouraging refugees to go to the UK, adding that there was "no guidance on the UK visa applications at all".

The government could prove that these are not legitimate problems by agreeing to publish the numbers for the scheme and showing us that in fact large numbers have applied - but it has refused to do so. Everything we know so far points to an application process that is complicated and difficult to access, not least for people who have just fled a war zone.

To actually help Ukrainians, the scheme must be far more accessible and go further than inviting 150,000 Brits to click a button to say they would like to help. There is nothing to boast about yet.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government blasted for 'shameful' false claim about helping Ukrainian NHS staff*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-FV01-DY4H-K1BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 10:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 647 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** Families of health service staff are still locked out under the government's existing scheme

**Body**

The Health Secretary has been branded "shameful" after he falsely claimed Ukrainian [*NHS*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nhs) staff were covered by the government's refugee scheme.

[*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) on Monday said a Ukrainian on a work visa employed in the National Health Service could bring their family to the UK.

But the scheme is not open to those in Britain on a work visa, and the opposition says the government has "repeatedly refused" to help the families in question.

Mr Javid was quizzed over the hole in provision for those fleeing the Russian invasion on Monday Morning and appeared to flounder.

Asked about Ukrainians on work visas in the NHS, he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme:

"In the situation that you just gave, a Ukrainian living in working here, you will be able to bring their family here into the UK under the extended family scheme.

"And that scheme is already up and running. It will be made a lot easier and a lot simpler from tomorrow when it will become a online only process."

However, the conditions of the scheme as laid out on the government website say it covers only British nationals, EU nationals, people with settled status or permanent residence, or refugee status themselves.

Asked whether he was sure, because the government's website said the opposite of what he was claiming, Mr Javid instead said another not-yet-launched scheme could be of assistance.

The government is today expected to announce a hosting scheme whereby British nationals will be able to sponsor Ukrainians coming to the UK.

But it will still not give Ukrainians living in Britain on work visas - including in the NHS - the automatic right to having their family join them.

"Well, what I can say for sure is that under the hosting scheme for anyone that is living in Britain they can host a Ukrainian family," Mr Javid told the broadcaster.

"There's two separate schemes and and I think taken together these schemes will mean that anyone, whether they have a relative in the UK or not, will be able to get safe passage and sanctuary in the UK. These are two very broad schemes."

Labour's shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: "Sajid Javid said on the Today programme that Ukrainian NHS staff on work visas can bring family to UK under Family Scheme.

But the government's website says no. Their families are still being turned away. The government has repeatedly refused to include those families. Truly shameful."

The department for health and social care, which Mr Javid leads, has been contacted for comment on this story.

Britain has stood out among European countries in not offering an open door policy to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) - with the government coming in for international criticism.

At the start of the week French interior minister Gerald Darmanin, wrote a strongly-worded letter to his British counterpart Priti Patel, accusing the UK of a "lack of humanity" for not opening its doors.

Ms Patel announced more measures to relax biometric checks on Thursday but Labour has said the measures will still result in delays. The opposition says emergency protection visas should be introduced, though it has also stopped short of calling the UK to emulate the UK's open door policy and waive visas entirely.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian sailor who sank Russian billionaire boss's £5m yacht signs up to fight for his homeland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-9M31-JBNF-W407-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 7:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:2

**Length:** 586 words

**Byline:** Shweta Sharma

**Highlight:** He opened valves to allow water in and later confessed to sabotaging 156ft luxury yacht Lady Anastasia

**Body**

A Ukrainian sailor who tried to sink a superyacht allegedly belonging to his Russian boss in [*Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spain) after the war broke out, is determined to sign up with the Ukrainian army to fight for his homeland.

Taras Ostapchuk, 55, a mechanical engineer, is headed towards the war-torn Ukrainian capital of [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/vladimir-putin-ukraine-kyiv-liz-truss-boris-johnson-b2027343.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20War%20crimes%20investigation%20begins%20after%20UK%20pushed%20for%20action%20on%20Putin) by train after flying to Warsaw in Poland. He shared a picture with a Ukrainian road sign in the background, according to a Spanish newspaper Ultima Hora.

"I am going to fight for my country," he told the newspaper.

"I have never picked up a gun, but if necessary I will," he said.

Mr Ostapchuk was arrested in Mallorca, [*Spain,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spain) for allegedly sabotaging a 7m (£5.8m) luxury yacht named 'Lady Anastasia' which belonged to Alexander Mijeev by flooding the engine room of the vessel.

The 156-foot-long boat with five cabins and a jacuzzi is owned by the CEO of Rosoboronexport, a Russian state-owned weapon supplier of defence conglomerate Rostec.

Mr Ostapchuk said he will talk to a military commander and join the [*Ukrainian army in Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-bombing-zhytomyr-hospital-b2027106.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20maternity%20hospital%20in%20Zhytomyr%20severely%20damaged%20by%20Russian%20missile%20strike) where his son will be reportedly waiting for him.

"As soon as I arrive in the first city in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , I will look for a military commander and ask him if they need me," he told the Spanish media shortly before his departure.

Taras Ostapchuk is in Ukraine and ready to fight [*https://t.co/HICxvQZjYo*](https://t.co/HICxvQZjYo) - Majorca Daily (@MajorcaDaily) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MajorcaDaily/status/1498929275227017216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"I said to myself: Why do I need a job if I don't have my country? I had a good job as chief mechanic on the ship and a good salary, but I'm going to fight for my country," he added.

"I lost my job, but that's not a problem. I will not lose my country."

He said he is "not a hero" but he will pick up a gun if needed for his country and even if he is old he has a lot of experience in mechanics.

He was arrested on 26 February but released on [*detention a day later on Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sailor-russia-yacht-sink-b2024804.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20War%20crimes%20investigation%20begins%20after%20UK%20pushed%20for%20action%20on%20Putin) with a charge. It is not clear whether his departure from the country is in violation of any law while charges by the Spanish police remain unclear.

His lawyer Neus Canylles said Mr Ostapchuk wanted economic revenge against his boss because he was allegedly "responsible for all the missiles that were falling in Kyiv".

"As he has told in his story: He arrived at the ship, closed the fuel hatches, lowered the electricity and then opened the two water inlet valves that caused sea water to start coming in," the lawyer said.

The sailor claimed that he took the decision to sink the shop after seeing the devastation caused in Ukraine by a Russian missile in a residential building in Kyiv, which was similar to where he lived.

He said he "[*understood" that the missile*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russian-missile-strikes-ukrainian-apartment-block-b2024857.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20missile%20strikes%20Ukrainian%20apartment%20block) was produced by a company that belongs to Mr Mijeev.

Hours after being released in Mallorca where the yacht was docked and just before boarding a flight to the Polish capital, Warsaw, he told Associated Press that he will go to Ukraine to defend his country.

"All Ukrainian citizens must be defenders of our fatherland because it is being subject to Russian aggression," he said. "We must stop this war.

After his release, he had said: "I don't regret anything I've done and I would do it again."

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Spain: Prosecutors shelve fraud probes haunting former king*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/spain-madrid-abu-dhabi-united-arab-emirates-swiss-b2027022.html)

[*UN: Droughts, less water in Europe as warming wrecks crops*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/spain-granada-greenpeace-inequality-intergovernmental-panel-on-climate-change-b2026524.html)

[*Fugitive Briton accused of laundering £1bn arrested in Spain while walking dogs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/spain-vat-spanish-catalonia-british-b2025646.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mea Culpa: pet peeves; Olivia Fletcher takes over this week's round-up of errors*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-FG51-JCS0-D4KW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 13, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 28

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** OLIVIA FLETCHER

**Body**

Sometimes admitting we've made a dog's dinner of something is the tough but right thing to do. Case in point: an article we wrote about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to Hungary. In it, we said: "One woman, holding a designer handbag, showed off her full-bred bichon frise poodle."

A "bichon frise poodle" isn't actually a full-bred dog, which is one whose parents are from the same breed. This makes the phrase "full-bred bichon frise poodle" an oxymoron. The dog is in fact a cross-breed. We'd have been better off omitting the word; it would have avoided the error and made the phrase more concise too.

We also could have been less ambiguous when we mentioned the designer handbag. I think it sounds like the pet could be inside the woman's purse, like something socialite Paris Hilton would have done with her pooch in the Noughties. But it could also mean the woman was holding a designer handbag while showing off the dog.

Age isn't just a number: Simon Gamble wrote to us about an interview we did with Franz Ferdinand frontman Alex Kapranos last week. We asked the Scottish musician nearing his 50th birthday how he'll stay stylish in his fifth decade. But Simon pointed out that he's about to leave that decade behind and enter his sixth. As the lyrics to the Franz Ferdinand song "Take Me Out" go: "I say, don't you know?" Well, I suppose sometimes we don't.

Armed struggle: Last week, we were guilty of tautology in one of our headlines. We titled an article: "Distressing footage captures moment British journalists shot during armed ambush in Ukraine."

I think it's reasonable to assume the ambush was armed if journalists were being shot, which means we could have omitted "armed" for brevity's sake. And while we're here, I reckon we could have got away with omitting "distressing" from the headline too. Is there a situation we could imagine in which journalists being shot at in an ambush wasn't distressing? Probably not.

Lessons in sensitivity: Another headline qualm. Last week we published a letter from one of our editors about the death of cricketer Shane Warne with this headline: "Ashes to Ashes: Warne dying shocked the same as Bowie". It's a rather crass way to honour the spin bowler who took 708 wickets for Australia (and disrespectful to David Bowie, for that matter). We shouldn't have used the term "ashes" given how morbid it sounds.

Fortunately, we changed the headline on our website. We went with: "The news of Shane Warne's death was to cricket what David Bowie's was to music." Thanks to Richard Thomas who pointed this out.

Reaching the limit: We could have made ourselves clearer in another editorial when we wrote: "The government's response is embarrassing and shameful, and all the more so because it is so at odds with the sunny rhetoric of ministers promising uncapped and limitless schemes - whereas the reality is that the rules severely delimit their access."

John Harrison wrote to say that "limit" would have been the correct term to use. Delimit means to define the boundaries of something; we meant to limit, as in restrict. I find it's better to stick to simpler terms to avoid errors like this.

Several upsets: Our crusade against "multiple" isn't over yet, as a headline we wrote demonstrated last week. "Multiple bombs rain down on Ukraine in dashcam footage," we said. Sigh. Even though many of our writers use "multiple" and "several" interchangeably, "multiple" just sounds much clunkier.

Speaking of upsets, we misspelt Nuremberg (incorrectly written as "Nuremburg") last week when we mentioned the historic trials in a story about Russia's attack on a Ukraine power station. I think it's only right that we get the spelling of an important moment, er, right. We've corrected the spelling error on our website.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war in pictures: Civilians flee as Russia shells evacuation routes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-BCB1-JBNF-W3NN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 2:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 696 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Ukrainian territorial defence fighters wed near Kyiv as people flee over an improvised bridge in Irpin, 16 miles away.

**Body**

Ukrainian families have been shelled as they tried to flee the town of Irpin, just northwest of Kyiv, reportedly killing at least eight people.

The victims included a family of four with two children, Irpin's mayor Oleksandr Markushyn said. It was reported that they died on Sunday afternoon after Russian mortar shells hit a damaged bridge that they were attempting to cross.

Pictures showed crowds of people sheltering under the destroyed bridge and families traipsing across carrying pets, infants, and bags of their belongings. Civilians were captured running for cover amid the sound of shelling, and photographs shared by media outlets showed dead bodies lying on the street in Irpin.

Kyiv's military commander, Oleksiy Kuleba, warned in a televised statement on Sunday that the roads out of the city were so unsafe that civilians couldn't evacuate. "Unfortunately, unless there is a ceasefire, we cannot evacuate," he said. "There is fire on residential buildings, civilians. The invader is preventing evacuations."

More than 1 million Ukrainians have fled to Poland since the start of the Russian invasion, the Polish border guard has said.

The European Union's high representative for foreign affairs, Josep Borrell, said on Monday that the EU must expect and prepare to welcome 5 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war. "We are already at one and a half million refugees in one week," he said. "If the bombardments continue like this, if they continue to bombard the cities indiscriminately, we can expect 5 million... exiles who seek to escape the war."

More than 200 children have been evacuated from an orphanage in Ukraine's conflict zone. The 215 children left their orphanage in Zaporizhzhia, in southeast Ukraine, on the day that Russian troops attacked a nearby power station.

"My heart is being torn apart," Olha Kucher, director of the Zaporizhzhia Central Christian Orphanage, told Reuters.

Two members of the Ukrainian military got married in their fatigues on Sunday at a checkpoint in Kyiv. Lesia Ivashchenko and Valerii Fylymonov, both members of the Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces, were showered with flower petals during the ceremony.

"It is hard to call it unconditional happiness in this situation, but we surely feel uplifted," the bride told The Washington Post.

Former heavyweight boxing world champions Wladimir and Vitali Klitscho were among those present. Vitali Klitschko, who is now the mayor of Kyiv, said: "Life continued and the people live and their love helps the war."

Lithuania's foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis called for an embargo on Russian energy sales on Monday. Speaking at a joint meeting with the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Mr Landsbergis said: "Energy sources which we import pay for the Russian military operation. We cannot pay for oil and gas with the blood of Ukraine."

US secretary of state Antony Blinken said that the United States and its allies were "ready to meet any threat" to Nato. He added that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) was trying to "undermine Lithuania's democracy and sow polarisation with cyber attacks and disinformation."

The city of Chernihiv, north of Kyiv, has suffered severe structural damage. A senior US defence official said on Sunday that the US assesses that about 95 percent of the Russian forces that had been arrayed around Ukraine are now inside the country. They said that Russian forces continued to advance in an attempt to isolate Chernihiv, but were being met with strong resistance.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Ftopic%2Frefugees-welcome-0&data=04%7C01%7CHolly.Bancroft%40independent.co.uk%7Cf24a0c33153b46f1cb6808da001bd9e5%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637822416874902030%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=KL1tPR1s9yX4NEjYD%2B3OBN6aILpWTPiXqnrcIJuXnnE%3D&reserved=0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.change.org%2Fp%2F10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees&data=04%7C01%7CHolly.Bancroft%40independent.co.uk%7Cf24a0c33153b46f1cb6808da001bd9e5%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637822416875214480%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=e00zr8rHEtCumezCQpZSY8CsJmDHuoKIVdRPnYesVY4%3D&reserved=0) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gofundme.com%2Frefugeeswelcome&data=04%7C01%7CHolly.Bancroft%40independent.co.uk%7Cf24a0c33153b46f1cb6808da001bd9e5%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637822416875214480%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=2Ot1ZhlJ4SRR93xIadfOi0xyT0MEC4lyhlCQPVI1gA%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Sunak says he is supporting the nation during this cost of living crisis - he is not*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652M-4H31-JCS0-D3G9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 24, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** BUSINESS; Pg. 45

**Length:** 637 words

**Byline:** JAMES MOORE CHIEF BUSINESS COMMENTATOR

**Body**

"Is that it," a heckler piped up when the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, took an unusually long pause for breath as he delivered his spring statement.

They could easily have saved that for the end. Faced with an unprecedented squeeze on household incomes - the inflation rate has jumped to 6.2 per cent before Sunak stood up and it is poised to rise again - he offered thin gruel at best.

Tory MPs, in an income bracket able to cope, were given some honey to sweeten their servings. A penny off the basic rate of income tax in future, a year long cut in fuel duty now. Both of those levies have been desired by the party.

Let's take the fuel duty cut first: ask yourself who will benefit most from a reduction in prices at the pumps. The answer, of course, is the wealthy drivers of large cars. The SUVs and the executive saloons that do so much to pollute urban air quality and create snarl ups.

You could argue that removing VAT from solar panels, heat pumps, or insulation will help to counter the environmental of that, a bit. The measure is welcome. But it too primarily benefits people with the money to afford these things.

"We will support people," Sunak said. "We will stand by them." Really? Where is the evidence of that. Sure, increasing the national insurance threshold will reduce the impact of the decision to increase the overall rate when it comes to lower earners. It nets out as a positive for anyone on less than £34,000.

But beyond that, there was very little on offer, particularly for the poorest in society for whom things are rapidly getting very grim indeed. The chancellor sought to buy off his critics by doubling to £1bn the amount of money amiable to local authorities to dispense via the Household Support Fund.

That won't go nearly far enough. Universal Credit and the state pension are only going up by 3.1 per cent this month with inflation expected to hit close to 8 per cent. The impact will be brutal.

How are people already facing with the horrible "heat or eat" dilemma supposed to cope? What are they supposed to do? Pray?

Debt charities have real cause for concern because those people may end up getting into debt. There is already evidence that the number of people borrowing to pay for day to day essentials is rising. This is a deeply disturbing development because it is a recipe for disaster.

Something else that swiftly became apparent after economists had gone over the figures was that Sunak chose not to revise government spending plans in response to rapidly rising inflation. This means that even departments originally slated for above inflation increases are now likely to face a real-term spending cut.

They will face a stark choice: either cut pay for staff or cut frontline services. The most likely result is that both get hit. Who would work in teaching or nursing or, well, you name it, faced with that?

The government's critics often point to the low opinion that it appears to have of the British people. A recent, and oft cited example is its miserable response to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, based on the clearly erroneous assumption that some Britons hate anyone from overseas and are too mean to help them.

It also appears to think that they are stupid; that they will fall in line with Tory MPs and cheer that future income tax cut while they face a cost of living crisis and a faltering economy. All while the nation's public services are being strip-mined to pay for that cut.

Thinking of the electorate as stupid is a dangerous game for Sunak to be playing. Having done well during the Covid-19 pandemic, his economic stewardship is starting to come under a harsh spotlight. He is rapidly losing his shine.

The chancellor says he is standing behind people - but he is taking their legs out from under them as he does it. They are probably going to notice how cold it is on the floor.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boston man flew to Europe and drove into Ukraine in daring rescue mission to save coworker and his family*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-MN31-DY4H-K1YJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 5:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 562 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** Andrew Smeaton, chief information security officer at Boston-based company DataRobot, made the 4,500 journey into the warzone to rescue his colleague Kris van Huystee and his family

**Body**

A man from Boston has launched a daring rescue mission to save a coworker and his family who were trapped in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Andrew Smeaton, a 53-year-old from Quincy, flew from Boston to Frankfurt, Germany, then onto Krakow, [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , last week before driving across the Ukrainian border into the war-ravaged country.

He eventually reached his colleague Kris van Huystee in the western city of [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) , driving him, his wife, their 12-year-old son, and pet dog and cat to safety in Poland.

The chief information security officer at Boston-based tech company DataRobot told Boston25 that he made the 4,500 mile journey after learning that several of his 250 Ukrainian colleagues were stranded in the country following [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion.

"I think it was just the right thing to do. Anyone would have done it," he said.

[*Follow live updates on Russia's invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-latest-nato-china-putin-b2035188.html)

When he reached Poland, Mr Smeaton said that he came up against the challenge of getting a car to make the journey across the border.

In the end, he managed to trade his wristwatch for a battered car which was low on oil and had its hood held in place with duct tape and set off on the journey with nothing but one container of gas, a pen knife and two bottles of water.

On the drive into Ukraine, he said he passed several checkpoints and people questioned why he was headed into the country -while most were fleeing in the opposite direction.

"One of the Ukranians asked, 'Where are you going?' I said, 'Ukraine' and he said, 'I know, but why?' I said, 'I've got to pick up a friend,'" he told Boston25.

"He pointed and said, '[But] the Russians, the Russians." I said, 'Yeah, I know.' He just looked at me and said goodbye."

Mr van Huystee, an automation specialist for DataRobot who has lived in Ukraine for the last decade, said he and his family had been getting "pretty desperate", with him becoming increasingly concerned for his family's safety.

"It was very difficult for us to arrange transportation through the border... I was very scared for my family," he said.

When he first saw his coworker arriving in Lviv, he was "super relieved", saying it "really meant the world" to him that Mr Smeaton had risked his own life to save the lives of him and his family.

"Seeing a familiar face, a guy who went out of his way to risk his life to come and get me, it really meant the world," he said.

However, the danger wasn't over yet, with the group making the fraught journey back towards the border with Poland.

"It took 15 seconds for them to get in the car and we didn't speak the entire journey back until they got over the Ukraine border. Then there were tears," said Mr Smeaton.

He added that it was far from being "like the movies", saying that "there's no James Bond. There's no Aston Martin".

Now, Mr van Huystee feels he owes "my life" to Mr Smeaton and the colleagues are now working together to help others also fleeing Ukraine.

"Now we feel safe. We're in a good place. Andy and myself at DataRobot, we're just doing our best to get as many other people over here as possible," Mr van Huystee said.

"I owe him my life. He saved us. When I first got here, I told him I'd do whatever I can to help out with the operation."

The two men said they are staying in Krakow to work with World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit that is providing meals to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have evacuated their homes and arrived into Poland.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*No 10 to waive red tape for Ukrainians fleeing with pets*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-PTG1-JCS0-D07H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 14, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 670 words

**Byline:** JANE DALTON

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who carried their pets as they fled their homes will be allowed to bring the animals into the UK without paperwork or facing vaccine and quarantine bills, The Independent has learnt.

The government is preparing to announce emergency measures to make it easier for the victims of war to keep their pets with them rather than abandoning them in countries en route to the UK, such as Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Germany.

With more than 2.5 million Ukrainians having been forced to leave the country, sources say ministers will waive the strict rule that requires owners to have a pet passport or health certificate to bring in their pets. It's believed the government is also set to announce it will cover the cost of vaccines, including for rabies. In addition, quarantine costs will be free. Officials are also considering setting up a new system of home quarantine if demand exceeds places in UK quarantine facilities. Ukrainian dogs and cats that have already been vaccinated should not need to be quarantined.

British animal-protection activists have been lobbying the government to relax entry restrictions on pets belonging to those fleeing war. And the government move is understood to be considered a trade-off for the government's dropping the flagship Animals Abroad Bill, which would have banned imports of real fur, body parts from trophy-hunting, foie gras, shark fins and live exports of livestock, as well as adverts for elephant rides.

Under the UK's rules, owners may enter or return to Britain with a pet cat, dog or ferret only if the animal has been microchipped, has apet passport or health certificate and has beenvaccinated against rabies. Normally, animals from Ukraine would also need a blood test for rabies at least three months before travelling. But it's understood these requirements will all be waived. The government is preparing to unveil a system of paying British people £350 a month for hosting refugees from Ukraine.

Last week lobbyists wrote to animal welfare minister Zac Goldsmith and environment secretary George Eustice, calling for an emergency pet passport scheme and offering help in setting up cat and dog health check systems. They warned that forcing people already devastated by war to potentially leave their beloved animals to die would deepen their trauma.

Dominic Dyer in his letter: "If UK policy remains that no companion animals can enter the UK with refugees, we could see tens of thousands ofdogsandcatshaving to be euthanised in Poland, Hungary and Romania in the weeks ahead. Each of these animal deaths would bring further misery to the women and children who have escaped war and would make Britain's immigration policy look extremely cruel in comparison to other EU member states."

The International Fund for Animal Welfare has estimated up to half of Ukrainian families fleeing are pet owners. If the rules on microchipping and paperwork are not followed, any pet would normally be put in quarantine for up to four months, under the UK's strict measures to keep the country rabies-free.

A government spokesperson said: spokesperson said: "We recognise the difficult and distressing situation that Ukrainian nationals currently face, and the UK government is working at pace to support them. We have strong biosecurity measures in place to protect the public and other animals from diseases which can be brought to the UK by animals from overseas. The government is looking at options to provide support to Ukrainian nationals who are entering the UK with their pets."

Mimi Bekhechi, vice-president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, welcomed the decision, saying its workers in Poland and Ukraine had "seen first-hand the dangerous lengths that people are going to bring their animals with them when fleeing".

She said: "It's only right that the UK be a place of safe harbour for them. We hope the quarantine periods for animals can be shortened and that quarantined animals will be allowed regular visits from their human family members."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Mea Culpa: pooches and pet peeves*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6505-H921-JBNF-W221-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 643 words

**Byline:** Olivia Fletcher

**Highlight:** Olivia Fletcher minds our language in last week's Independent

**Body**

Sometimes admitting we've made a dog's dinner of something is the tough but right thing to do. Case in point: an article we wrote about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to Hungary. In it, we said: "One woman, holding a designer handbag, showed off her full-bred bichon frise poodle."

A "bichon frise poodle" isn't actually a full-bred dog, which is one whose parents are from the same breed. This makes the phrase "full-bred bichon frise poodle" an oxymoron. The dog is in fact a cross-breed. We'd have been better off omitting the word; it would have avoided the error and made the phrase more concise too.

We also could have been less ambiguous when we mentioned the designer handbag. I think it sounds like the pet could be inside the woman's purse, like something socialite Paris Hilton would have done with her pooch in the Noughties. But it could also mean the woman was holding a designer handbag while showing off the dog.

Age isn't just a number: Simon Gamble wrote to us about an interview we did with Franz Ferdinand frontman Alex Kapranos last week. We asked the Scottish musician nearing his 50th birthday how he'll stay stylish in his fifth decade. But Simon pointed out that he's about to leave that decade behind and enter his sixth. As the lyrics to the Franz Ferdinand song "Take Me Out" go: "I say, don't you know?" Well, I suppose sometimes we don't.

Armed struggle: Last week, we were guilty of tautology in one of our headlines. We titled an article: "Distressing footage captures moment British journalists shot during armed ambush in Ukraine."

I think it's reasonable to assume the ambush was armed if journalists were being shot, which means we could have omitted "armed" for brevity's sake. And while we're here, I reckon we could have got away with omitting "distressing" from the headline too. Is there a situation we could imagine in which journalists being shot at in an ambush wasn't distressing? Probably not.

Lessons in sensitivity: Another headline qualm. Last week we published a letter from one of our editors about the death of cricketer Shane Warne with this headline: "Ashes to Ashes: Warne dying shocked the same as Bowie". It's a rather crass way to honour the spin bowler who took 708 wickets for Australia (and disrespectful to David Bowie, for that matter). We shouldn't have used the term "ashes" given how morbid it sounds.

Fortunately, we changed the headline on our website. We went with: "The news of Shane Warne's death was to cricket what David Bowie's was to music." Thanks to Richard Thomas who pointed this out.

Reaching the limit: We could have made ourselves clearer in another editorial when we wrote: "The government's response is embarrassing and shameful, and all the more so because it is so at odds with the sunny rhetoric of ministers promising uncapped and limitless schemes - whereas the reality is that the rules severely delimit their access."

John Harrison wrote to say that "limit" would have been the correct term to use. Delimit means to define the boundaries of something; we meant to limit, as in restrict. I find it's better to stick to simpler terms to avoid errors like this.

Several upsets: Our crusade against "multiple" isn't over yet, as a headline we wrote demonstrated last week. "Multiple bombs rain down on Ukraine in dashcam footage," we said. Sigh. Even though many of our writers use "multiple" and "several" interchangeably, "multiple" just sounds much clunkier.

Speaking of upsets, we misspelt Nuremberg (incorrectly written as "Nuremburg") last week when we mentioned the historic trials in a story about Russia's attack on a Ukraine power station. I think it's only right that we get the spelling of an important moment, er, right. We've corrected the spelling error on our website.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'This illusion is one our parents believe in': Rapper Oxxxymiron urges fellow Russians to rethink Ukraine conflict*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6515-26C1-DY4H-K4F3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 8:57 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,MUSIC,CULTURE; Version:2

**Length:** 672 words

**Byline:** Annabel Nugent

**Highlight:** Musician cancelled six sold-out shows in Moscow and St Petersburg in protest of the invasion

**Body**

Russian rapper Oxxxymiron has issued a passionate appeal to Russians who support the country's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The musician held a live-streamed concert in Istanbul on Tuesday night (15 March) to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Oxxxymiron - real name Miron Yanovich Fyodorov - paused the concert to deliver an impassioned speech directed at Russian people who support the war in Ukraine.

Journalist Jonny Tickle shared a clip of the speech on Twitter alongside an English-language translation.

"It seems to me - rather, I'm sure - that the people who are for this war are in fact against this war. They just believe that this is really a special operation to bomb military facilities. In fact, this special peacekeeping operation does not exist. It is a war," said Oxxxymiron.

"Unfortunately, this illusion is one that our parents believe in," he continued, adding that "it it very important to talk to them because they're probably not bloodthirsty people but they watch too much television".

The rapper went on to say that he "really wants to appeal to those who don't agree with me", stating: "I want to ask you to consider the possibility of alternative viewpoints in your brain.

"You don't have to immediately agree with me and agree with us, but you can't just go along with everything you're told."

"Unfortunately, this illusion is one that our parents believe in. It is very important to talk to them because they're probably not bloodthirsty people, but they watch too much television."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504195525641482240?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The 37-year-old continued to say that "the videos and the photos that I receive every day are not fakes", adding that "they aren't coming from Ukrainian officials. They're from my friends who are there right now, who send me photos and stories that are totally f\*\*\*ed up".He concluded: "So I beg you very much, I beg you, I do not order you, I beg you, to investigate the alternative to the opinions you have already formed."In February, Oxxxymiron [*cancelled six of his sold-out concerts in Moscow and St Petersburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/oxxxymiron-russia-concert-cancel-ukraine-b2023041.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20rapper%20Oxxxymiron%20cancels%20sold-out%20concert%20in%20protest%20of%20Ukraine%20invasion) in protest of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of Ukraine."Explore alternate points of view. Why do you think all our alternative media was shut down? Why do you think we're blocking Instagram and Facebook? Why is it all blocked? Maybe because they aren't allowing you to get an alternative point of view."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504195874225803270?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "I can't perform while Russian missiles fall on Ukraine," he said in a video posted to Instagram. "[I am] postponing six of my major gigs in Moscow and St Petersburg indefinitely."On Wednesday (16 March), Ukrainian officials said a theatre in the port city of Mariupol, where dozens of civilians were sheltering, [*has been bombed by Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-mariupol-theatre-bombed-russia-children-b2037694.html). Sergei Orlov, Mariupol's deputy mayor, told BBC[*that people had been taking cover in the city's drama theatre since the war began.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-mariupol-theatre-bombed-russia-children-b2037694.html) "So I beg you very much, I beg you, I do not order you, I beg you, to investigate the alternative to the opinions you have already formed."- Jonny Tickle (@jonnytickle) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jonnytickle/status/1504196076458364931?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He estimated that between 1,000 and 1,200 people were residing in the theatre when it was bombed. Orlov said, however, that the number of casualties was not yet known.

You can follow live updates on The Independent's live-blog of the Russia-Ukraine crisis [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-vladimir-putin-latest-nuclear-news-b2036868.html?page=2#post-603108).

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson accuses Putin of 'barbaric' targeting of Ukrainian civilians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-1C01-JBNF-W3KH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 11:42 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 642 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The Prime Minister spoke as Russian forces stepped up their attacks on Ukrainian cities.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has accused [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) of unleashing "barbaric and indiscriminate" violence against Ukrainian civilians as Russian forces closed in on Kyiv.

A military convoy around 40 miles long is north of the Ukrainian capital and there are fears that the city will face a barrage of rockets and shells which could inflict devastating civilian casualties.

Ukraine has already accused Russia of war crimes during the invasion over the bombardment of civilian areas in the second city Kharkiv.

Speaking during a visit to Warsaw, Mr Johnson said the Russian president had decided to "bomb tower blocks, to send missiles into tower blocks, to kill children, as we are seeing in increasing numbers".

But he said that in the "grim war" Mr Putin had "fatally underestimated" the resistance of the Ukrainians and the resolve of the West to act.

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) paid tribute to the "leadership and courage" of Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president.

"I think he has inspired and mobilised not only his own people, he is inspiring and mobilising the world in outrage at what is happening in Ukraine," Mr Johnson added.

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, said he plans to open an investigation "as rapidly as possible" into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

UK Deputy Prime Minister [*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) , a former Foreign Office lawyer, said it must be clear "both to Putin but also to commanders in Moscow and on the ground in Ukraine that they will be held accountable for any violations of the laws of war".

He told Sky News: "Those that engage in war crimes will be held to account."

Western officials fear that the slow progress of the Russian invasion will lead Mr Putin and his commanders to adopt more brutal and indiscriminate tactics to achieve the Kremlin's goals.

Mr Raab told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "We can expect, for every stutter and stumble, him to try and come back for even more heavy-handed tactics, but that is a sign that the initial phase at least - and this is going to be a long haul - has not lived up to his expectations."

The latest intelligence from the Ministry of Defence said the advance on Kyiv had made little progress over the past 24 hours, probably due to logistical problems.

But there had been increased use of artillery north of the capital.

Satellite images from the Maxar company showed the extent of the Russian forces massing around Kyiv, with a column of armoured vehicles, tanks, artillery and support vehicles stretching 40 miles.

That force was 17 miles from the capital on Monday.

Mr Johnson is visiting Poland and Estonia to help show the UK's support for its eastern Nato allies.

Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) was in Geneva addressing the United Nations Human Rights Council, where she was due to accuse Mr Putin of "violating international law".

"He is violating human rights on an industrial scale and the world will not stand for it," she will say.

Mr Johnson's visit to Poland, one of the main destinations for people fleeing from Ukraine, came as the UK Government faced pressure to do more to address the refugee crisis.

The Prime Minister told his Polish counterpart Mateusz Morawiecki: "We stand ready, clearly, to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in our own country, working with you, in considerable numbers, as we always have done and always will."

But shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "At the moment, what the Home Office is doing is trying to just tweak the existing system.

"They're trying to carry on with a version of business as usual, with a version of asking people to apply for traditional work visas or traditional visitor visas or traditional family visas that are still narrowly drawn.

"And the normal system just doesn't work when you are facing war in Europe, when you're facing a crisis on this scale."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Delivering medical supplies to Ukrainians was 'sobering', says student nurse*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-TGX1-JBNF-W50R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 11:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 614 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Liberty Rose and a team of four others travelled to Poland as part of community interest company Bridge To Unity.

**Body**

A student nurse who travelled to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to deliver medical supplies to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has said the experience was "sobering".

Liberty Rose, 26, from the [*University of Portsmouth*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/university-portsmouth) , undertook the mission with four others - Matt Simmons, Hannah Jarvis, Don O'Leary and Mike Petty - as part of community interest company Bridge To Unity.

The group crowdfunded roughly £25,000 of medical supplies for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Poland, Zintegrowana Sluzba Ratownicza (ZSR), which included first aid kits and bandages.

They arrived in Poland on the evening of March 5 and went to ZSR's warehouse at 5.30am on March 6,

Miss Rose told the PA news agency: "It was sobering. The first refugee I saw, just as we were driving up to the warehouse, was a young woman just sat on the grass in the freezing cold with her head in her hands.

"As we parked up, there were three men in a row.

"One man was emptying supplies from his van, throwing it to the man in the middle, who was then throwing it over to the guy who was stacking up a big tower of nappies.

"And, as you look around, there's dogs, people drinking hot drinks, eating noodles out of packets, a little boy stuck between two of three low-rise camp beds trying to play with a car."

The warehouse has a capacity of 2,500 but a ZSR volunteer said she "wouldn't be surprised if there's a lot more people than that".

The trip coincided with an announcement by the [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-defence) that the number of Ukrainians entering Poland has exceeded 1.5 million.

Miss Rose said the medical area in the warehouse had supplies and well-trained and bilingual volunteers, but the [*NGO*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngo) was being overwhelmed with people seeking medical help and it became apparent that they desperately needed another ambulance.

Alexandra Kenchington, 37, a doctor at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, who volunteers with Bridge To Unity, said: "Our next plan is to buy an ambulance for them and deliver that, hopefully in the next few weeks, so that they can continue to do their work.

"If we crowdfund enough for an ambulance and kit it out with medical supplies, we know that is something that is going to last them a lifetime."

ZSR has been "touched" by the support from Bridge To Unity, said Miss Rose.

"They want to continue to team up with us and said if we ever need help in [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) , they wouldn't think to twice to help."

She added: "(The people at ZSR) have jobs, they have families. They're volunteers for this.

"Sometimes the members crash in the medical room in the warehouse, with about three low-rise camp beds.

"It's just phenomenal what these people are doing. We're touched by their hospitality and they're touched by our endeavours to support them."

There was one moment on the trip in particular which Miss Rose described as "the most beautiful moment in my life".

She met the son of a Ukrainian woman - a mother with whom she had "the longest hug I've probably ever had", a mother who just wanted to "be at home, preparing food with my husband, walking my dog in the park".

"Her little boy was on his phone and he was stood in the corner looking very nervous.

"I went over and asked him what he was playing on his phone and he showed me a game, Clash Of Clans.

A 26-year-old woman from England and a nine-year-old boy from Ukraine who would never have crossed paths, and all it took was a game and his face lit up

Student nurse Liberty Rose

"Neither of us could actually communicate with each other verbally because of the language barrier, yet we were able to play together for a good 45 minutes.

"A 26-year-old woman from England and a nine-year-old boy from Ukraine who would never have crossed paths, and all it took was a game and his face lit up."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Leonardo DiCaprio donates funds to Ukraine after incorrect reports circulate online*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-RTK1-JBNF-W1FT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 11:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,FILM,CULTURE; Version:2

**Length:** 695 words

**Byline:** Peony Hirwani

**Highlight:** Several other actors such as Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher have also donated funds to Ukraine

**Body**

[*Leonardo DiCaprio*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leonardo-dicaprio) has donated funds to Ukraine after his team debunked an earlier report about a supposed £7.6m donation to the country.

On Tuesday (8 March), Polish News published a report stating that DiCaprio donated $10m (£7.6m) to his grandmother's native country of Ukraine, which has been fighting a [*Russian invasion for the past two weeks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-troops-b2031656.html).

According to the Associated Press, however, a person close to the 47-year-old actor said that neither DiCaprio's donation nor the details of his heritage were accurate in the since-deleted story.

The source revealed the news to AP on the condition of anonymity, because they weren't authorised to speak publicly about the matter.

The incorrect report mentioned that DiCaprio had a personal connection to the war-ridden nation, as his maternal grandmother Helene Indenbirken was born in Odesa.

It also reported that the actor's donation to Ukraine was announced by the International Visegrad Fund (IVF).

However, Lucia Becov, the public relations manager of IVF, told The Independent that they are "not aware" of any such announcement.

"We are not aware, neither do we have any information about Leonardo DiCaprio donating $10m (£7.6m) to Ukraine," Becov said. "International Visegrad Fund has not announced this information."

According to AP, the source revealed that DiCaprio has, however, donated to the humanitarian groups CARE, [*International Rescue Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-rescue-committee) , the [*United Nation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nation) 's High Commissioner for Refugees, and Save the Children in support of Ukraine.

The details of exactly how much donation the actor made has not been disclosed.

Several other actors have also donated funds to Ukraine amid the ongoing crisis.

Last week, [*Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher said they will match donations of up to $3m*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/ukraine-russia-mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-b2028418.html) (£2.25m) to help supply humanitarian aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, said in a video on Instagram: "The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating. There is no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity."

"I have always considered myself an American, a proud American. I love everything this country has done for myself and my family. But today, I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian."

Vladimir Putin declared war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on 24 February, describing it as a "special military operation" to disarm the eastern European country and remove leaders who he described as neo-Nazis.

Nato and its allies have viewed this as a pretext for an invasion to conquer the entire of Ukraine and install a pro-Russian administration.

The war in Ukraine has forced over two million residents to flee the country, and hundreds have either died or have been injured. [*It is the fastest exodus of people Europe has seen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugee-numbers-crisis-latest-b2029605.html) since the Second World War, officials have said, warning that the war could displace nearly five million people.

At least three people died on Thursday 10 March [*after Russia's attack on a maternity hospital in Mariupol,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-live-putin-zelensky-b2032596.html) according to the Ukrainian city's deputy mayor - including a six-year-old child. Seventeen others were injured, including pregnant women.

This article was amended on March 10, 2022, as an earlier version inaccurately reported that Mr DiCaprio had made the donation of £7.6.million.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Additional reporting by AP

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*James Cleverly grilled over Ukraine visas in interview after 'around 50' issued*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-GX41-JBNF-W4ND-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 9:30 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 626 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Home Office said 5,535 applications had been completed while 'around 50' given green light

**Body**

A government minister has been grilled [*over revelations that as few as 50 visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-priti-patel-visas-b2029731.html) have been granted for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to UK.

[*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) , a [*Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-office) minister, acknowledged that "only small numbers" fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's brutal invasion had come to Britain but so far - but insisted the process "has only just started".

The testy exchange came after the Home Office disclosed that only "around 50" visas had been granted under the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) Family Scheme as of [*10 am Sunday while 5,535 applications had been completed.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-priti-patel-visas-b2029731.html)

Under the scheme - announced last week - Ukrainians with family ties to the UK can apply for a visa lasting up to there years while Priti Patel, the home secretary, is said to be examining a separate "[*humanitarian route*](https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/17864334/priti-patel-ukraine-refugees-rules-relaxed/) " for those without family links.

But pressed on Sky News on the low numbers granted visas so far, Mr Cleverly insisted: "This situation has occurred only over the last couple of days.

"Of course, the vast majority of people have just crossed the border into the neighbouring countries and of course what we are saying is we are supporting them there.

"We are also going to make sure we host Ukrainians here in the UK whether temporarily... we have got to make sure that we have the processes in place to do that".

In at times testy exchange with presenter Kay Burley, who asked the minister "what processes", Mr Cleverly replied: "If you're going to ask questions, you've got to let me reply".

Quizzed again on the approved visa figures, he went on: "We have processes in place whereby people with family here in the UK and indeed those without family in the UK can come to the UK.

He added: "Only small numbers have come thus far and I would remind you the process has only just started and the vast majority of people are physically still in the countries neighbouring Ukraine.

"We want to help these people whether they've been in Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, where are a large number of people are, and also we want to help them when they come to the UK".

Speaking on LBC, however, the Conservative MP Tom Tugendhat, the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, told LBC it was "certainly not a success" when asked if the government had failed in approving just 50 Ukrainian refugee visas so far.

"What we need to do is to make sure that we get the Home Office absolutely delivering, to make sure that we get the support for those who are most in need," he said.

"The British people are extremely generous, you and I both know that.

"This isn't some sort of, you know, illegal scam. This is, perfectly obviously, people fleeing for their lives and we need to be absolutely there to support them."

Ms Patel, who was also under [*fire for the visa approval numbers on Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-priti-patel-visas-b2029731.html) , also told [*The Sun*](https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/17864334/priti-patel-ukraine-refugees-rules-relaxed/) that the Home Office was now "investigating the legal options to create a humanitarian route" for those without ties to the UK and fleeing the conflict.

"This means anyone without ties to the UK fleeing the conflict in Ukraine will have a right to come to this nation," she added, despite already [*ruling out an open door policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-eu-labour-b2025568.html).

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin 'doesn't care' about sanctions because he believes Russians 'can suffer', says defence secretary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WY-N5C1-JBNF-W4W8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 9:19 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 641 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Ben Wallace was told Russian people 'could suffer greater than Europeans' during trip to Moscow

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) believes the Russian people can easily "suffer" from economic sanctions imposed by the west over the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , said the UK's defence secretary.

[*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) said the Russian president "doesn't really care" about the impact of sanctions, suggesting there was a false sense of "pride" in the Kremlin at what the Russian people can withstand.

The cabinet minister claimed Putin was in for a "shock" since the measures imposed on the Russian banking system had caused considerable damage to the country's economy.

Asked on Sky News if Putin cares about sanctions, Mr Wallace said: "You're point about does he care, he obviously doesn't really care."

The minister said: "When I went to the Russia myself, the Russian ministry of defence they were very clear the Russian people could suffer greater than mine or greater than Europeans - 'We can't be harmed by sanctions'.

"I think there's definitely a sense of pride that somehow that Russia suffering equals Russian leadership."

Mr Wallace: "I think he's about to be shocked. This is the 21st century. Russian people, like European people, don't want to go through what they're about to go through."

The UK, US and EU has banned top Russian banks from the Swift financial system, the rouble has plummeted and Russians have been seen [*struggling to get cash out of ATMs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-sanctions-belarus-ukraine-invasion-b2025460.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20invasion%20sanctions:%20Everything%20Russians%20now%20can't%20do). "I think that would have been way beyond the expectations of the Russian system," said Mr Wallace.

The defence secretary also said Russia forces were "behind schedule" in Ukraine and were finding it "very slow going" in their [*attempt to take Kyiv and the country's other major cities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-ukraine-conflict-kyiv-us-b2025988.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20progress%20on%20Kyiv%20has%20'stalled'%20with%20units%20'surrendering%20without%20a%20fight',%20US%20official%20says).

He warned that Russia would use indiscriminate carpet-bombing tactics against Ukrainian cities in an attempt to "bombard them into submission".

Mr Wallace told Sky News: "What you are seeing now is those heavy bombardments at night, they won't come into the cities as much, they will ... carpet-bomb cities, indiscriminately in some cases. That is the brutality I'm afraid we are witnessing and it's going to get worse."

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) will address the Commons during PMQs on Wednesday following his trip to Poland and Estonia, and is likely be pressed on further action the government could take on sanctioning Russian oligarchs and supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

In a possible hint that the government could still go further in terms of individual sanctions, the PM said the silence of Russian oligarchs who had investments in the UK over the Ukraine invasion was "inexplicable" and pressed them to "denounce this act of aggression".

Mr Johnson told ITV News during his trip to Poland: "And those oligarchs who have connections with the Putin regime and who are benefiting from their association with the Russian state, we are going to expose and distrain their assets."

[*Fresh sanctions slapped on Moscow by the Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-belarus-uk-sanctions-liz-truss-b2026141.html%22%20title=%22Liz%20Truss%20slaps%20sanctions%20on%20Belarus%20for%20supporting%20Russian%20invasion%20of%20Ukraine) are designed to prevent Russia from using foreign reserves to lessen the economic impact that international measures are causing.

Additional economic measures introduced by foreign secretary on Tuesday night ban UK individuals and entities from providing financial services to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, as well as the Ministry of Finance and National Wealth Fund.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) - the country's sovereign wealth fund - and its chief executive, Kirill Dmitriev, have also been sanctioned, with their assets frozen and a travel ban in place for Mr Dmitriev.

Ms Truss said the decision was aimed at "degrading Russia's economy" as the West looks to pile financial misery on the country following its invasion of Ukraine.

The foreign secretary also slapped sanctions on Belarus in response to Alexander Lukashenko's support for the Russian invasion. Four senior defence officials and two Belarusian military enterprises have been sanctioned with immediate effect.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Teenager charged after violent protests outside asylum seeker hotel in Merseyside*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67J0-NWP1-JBNF-W12J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 12, 2023 Sunday 4:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** CRIME,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 754 words

**Byline:** Martha McHardy

**Highlight:** Jarad Skeete, 19, of Irwell Close, Aigburth, Liverpool, was among 15 people arrested after a riot outside the Suites Hotel in Knowsley

**Body**

A [*teenager*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/teenager) has been charged with violent [*disorder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/disorder) and assault after a protest broke out outside a hotel housing [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0).

Jarad Skeete, 19, of Irwell Close, Aigburth, [*Liverpool*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liverpool) , was among [*15 people arrested after violence broke*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asylum-hotel-merseyside-13-arrested-b2280419.html) out outside the Suites Hotel in Knowsley on Friday evening, [*Merseyside Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/merseyside-police) said.

A police officer and two members of the public were hurt as missiles including lit fireworks were thrown and a police van was set alight, when clashes between pro-and anti-migrant groups turned violent.

Skeete has been remanded in custody and will appear at Wirral Adult Remand Court on Monday.

The 14 others arrested – 12 men and two women – have been released on conditional bail pending the outcome of police inquiries.

Knowsley Council said that the hotel has been used to accommodate asylum seekers since January when the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) gave less than 48 hours’ notice of its intention to do so.

Knowsley MP Sir George Howarth said the demonstration was triggered by “an alleged incident posted on social media” – where a man was said to have made inappropriate advances towards a teenage girl. Police investigated and, on the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, no further action was taken.

Sir George said: “[*The people of Knowsley are not bigots*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/yvette-cooper-merseyside-home-office-merseyside-police-refugee-council-b2280242.html) and are welcoming to people escaping from some of the most dangerous places in the world in search of a place of safety.

“Those demonstrating against refugees at this protest tonight do not represent this community,” he said.

Clare Moseley, founder of refugee charity Care4Calais, said she was among 100 to 120 people from pro-migrant groups who went to the scene in reaction to the protest to show support for the asylum seekers, adding it was “like a war zone”.

The violence was also condemned by politicians. Shadow levelling up secretary and [*Wigan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wigan) MP [*Lisa Nandy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lisa-nandy) described the disorder as “absolutely horrendous”, and criticised the government for creating a “toxic mix” of anti-migrant rhetoric and poor service provision.

She told the BBC: “The story of the last decade has been the story of people across this country throwing open their homes to refugees from Ukraine, stepping up to support the Syrian appeal, when we had impending disaster.

“Even in the last few weeks, we’ve had people across the north of England stepping forward to put forward record donations to help with the appalling situation in Turkey and Syria.

“There are a small number of far-right activists who whip up hate and hostility in this country, we all need to speak with one voice when we say that we utterly condemn them.”

Ms Nandy described the government’s decisions to contract out asylum services, forgo consultation with communities and place refugees in unsuitable accommodation as a “recipe for disaster”.

Referring to home secretary [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) , she said: “When you lay onto that a government that talks about things like an ‘invasion’ in relation to immigration, you have a perfect storm, a really toxic mix that is being created.”

On Saturday, Ms Braverman condemned the disorder, adding that the “alleged behaviour of some asylum seekers is never an excuse for violence”.

Foreign Office minister Andrew Mitchell also criticised the violence and said the government was seeking to limit the “excessive use” of asylum hotels.

He told the BBC’s Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg programme: “We live in a country where peaceful protest is part of our way of life and I strongly support that.

“But violence in the way that we saw on Friday night is completely unacceptable, and the government condemn it absolutely.”

He rejected suggestions that the government had helped stir up anti-migrant sentiment, adding that it has housed “thousands and thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***” along with people from Hong Kong and Afghanistan.

“We have a duty to welcome these people – often they are caught in desperate jeopardy, but equally we have a duty to house them appropriately and to work with local people,” he said.

“The Home Office is trying very hard now to stop the excessive use of hotels and find different ways of placing them in appropriate places in the community. And that is something that the Home Office will achieve.”

Assistant Chief Constable Paul White said the force respected the right to protest but the abuse of officers and damage to police vehicles was “disgraceful”.

“We have arrested some of those suspects and will continue without hesitation to review all and any evidence which comes in, through CCTV, images or other information you may have,” he said.

**Load-Date:** February 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Russian energy sector next in line for UK sanctions over Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-3901-JBNF-W37P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 6:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 678 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Body**

Britain is to step up action against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's [*oil*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oil) and [*gas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gas) industries as part of its efforts to isolate [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's regime globally.

[*Sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sanctions) imposed by London in the wake of the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) have so far focused largely on the banking and defence sectors, along with a handful of oligarchs close to the Russian president.

But The Independent understands that the focus will move next week to measures directed at the energy industries which earn Russia much of its international revenues.

It is hoped that these steps will have a quicker impact than the faltering campaign to freeze the UK assets of wealthy Russians, which has been slowed by legal requirements to establish a watertight case for each individual before acting.

Putin cronies such as [*Alisher Usmanov and Igor Shuvalov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-usmanov-shuvalov-sanctions-b2028076.html) are now unable to sell, rent, visit or even repair their mansions worth millions in the UK. And ministers are even talking of seizing them to use as housing for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

But with dozens of oligarchs being considered for sanction along with 350 members of the Moscow parliament, officials admit it could take months for blacklists to take effect.

On Friday the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, used meetings with allied counterparts in Brussels to urge the west to wean itself off Russian energy supplies as a key means of[*imposing a price on Putin for his aggression.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-war-b2028568.html)

The EU foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, did not rule out the suspension of EU gas imports, telling reporters who asked if that was an option: "We will consider everything. Everything remains on the table."

While sanctions have disrupted much of Russia's trade with the outside world, gas and oil supplies have kept flowing, and the spike in global prices has done much to offset the impact on Moscow of losses elsewhere.

The UK imports only about 3 per cent of its gas from Russia, compared to about 40 per cent for the EU, which also gets 25 per cent of its oil from its eastern neighbour.

Boris Johnson has said that Europe needs to "work together to wean ourselves off - to end the dependency on - Russian gas", and has suggested that the UK could assist allies with renewable technologies to help make the switch from fossil fuels.

And ministers have told officials working on the UK sanctions package in Whitehall that energy is an area where they want tougher action.

Measures already announced in the financial sector are believed to have had a knock-on impact on Russian energy firms, for instance by stopping Gazprom from continuing to raise billions for investment from the London markets, as it has in recent years.

Any direct sanctions on energy firms are likely to be taken in coordination with US and EU allies, as unilateral action might have the impact only of raising prices on the global market.

Practical measures to wean the EU off its reliance on Russian energy could include a significant increase in deliveries of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from sources such as Qatar at ports across the continent, with the aim of meeting demand next winter if supplies from Russia are cut off.

It is thought that EU states like Germany and Italy, which are heavily reliant on Russian gas, have enough stocks to see them through the remainder of the colder months, and there are hopes that new distribution networks could help ensure supplies of LNG are available to them by the autumn.

A partial ban on Russia's use of the Swift financial transaction system has permitted continued payments for fuel.

And while Russian ships are banned from docking at British ports, vessels from other countries carrying Russian gas are still allowed to unload.

Dockers at the LNG terminal on the Isle of Grain in Kent refused to unload tankers carrying Russian gas.

Also likely to be next in line for UK measures is the services sector, with the Treasury already taking action in the insurance market and similar steps likely to follow.

And legislation is expected to give longer-term effect to the exclusion of Russian aviation from UK airports, after it was initially introduced last week through temporary orders.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Don't tell her, but Suella has stumbled on a winning tack*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689W-GF11-F072-41KH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 26, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 795 words

**Byline:** TOM PECK

**Body**

Shall we cast our minds back to the Year of Our Lord 2016? And lo! Who has appeared, in the pages of the Daily Express? "'Immigration swells UK population by size of Newcastle every YEAR,' says Boris Johnson". About 350,000 a year it was, back then. It's easy to forget, because there was another big number doing the rounds at the time, which also began with 350 and also turned out to be complete bollocks.

"So what do we do about it?" Johnson wondered. Well, that's easy. We "take back control". So we did. And yet, somehow, seven years later, Newcastle has been upgraded to Glasgow. The new number, announced yesterday morning, is 606,000. And it's a number that, frankly, British politics is not programmed to cope with.

It doesn't really matter that it has shown Brexit, yet again, to have been an entirely pointless exercise of which there is absolutely no upside to be found anywhere. The vast majority of British people already know that. They've just stopped caring. They can't face doing anything about it, and neither of the main parties can face it either, so that's that.

Also, according to every poll carried out in the last seven years, the public have stopped caring very much about immigration. They can see that it is good for the economy, the NHS, and every other facet of British public life. They can see that migrants pay more in tax than they claim in benefits; and also - and this is the big one - unlike actual born-and-bred Brits, once they've stopped working, they tend to go home again.

They don't retire here, racking up massive healthcare bills for the younger and much poorer generation to cover. And nor do they commit, more or less en masse, other huge acts of economic vandalism like, say, voting for Brexit.

The home secretary has spent all of this week saying that the public don't care about her attempts to work her way out of doing the same speed-awareness course as everybody else. She says they care about what she is doing on immigration; what she is doing to "stop the boats". And yet, for some reason, since the vast number came out, not a word has been heard from her. She is, it transpires, very good at saying what the public want her to be talking about, but not so good at actually talking about it.

There are, naturally, a variety of normal ways in which someone in her position could respond. They could say, for example, that 150,000 of the 600,000 are ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, some are Afghan refugees, and some are Hongkongers taking advantage of their visa rights, which were extended in the wake of a Chinese crackdown there. They could say that a large proportion comprises students coming to British universities, to enrich those institutions and also make them cheaper for British students.

These would be normal, rational responses to a policy that benefits Britain. But the trouble is, if you're a Tory, then you can't say those things. It's been 13 years since David Cameron promised to bring net migration down to the "tens of thousands". Last week, the cabinet secretary under Cameron, Gus O'Donnell, said in a panel event that when he advised the then prime minister on the ways he might make that happen - like, say, leaving the EU - Cameron replied:"Don't be daft. It's an announcement, don't get carried away."

It wasn't "just an announcement" to Theresa May, who devoted six full years as home secretary and three as prime minister to a futile attempt to deliver on a promise Cameron didn't actually care about and knew was meaningless. And her chief of staff at the time, Nick Timothy, also wrote last week of Boris Johnson's promise in the 2019 manifesto that "overall numbers will come down". And that having published the manifesto, the former PM called round his ministers and told them not to repeat the line because he disagreed with it.

And this is precisely how you end up where we are. Which is to say, being governed by a party that's capable of a sensible policy on immigration, but not capable of a sensible conversation on it. That is entirely content to let the numbers rise and rise and rise, while promising repeatedly to bring them down, on the calculation that the ever-shrinking band of voters who care about immigration will always trust them more than Labour to do something about it, even after more than a decade of the opposite being true.

They can make politics out of the pantomime cruelty, by sending Suella Braverman to Rwanda to have her picture taken next to some buildings that might one day theoretically have room for 140 of the 606,000 net migrants a year, for a down payment of £120m that's already been paid in full even though the policy is illegal. But they can't possibly deliver on the big promise, because - quite rightly - they don't actually want to. They just can't admit it.

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*No-fly zone would not help Ukraine, says UK armed forces chief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-BS81-DY4H-K2C7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 2:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 613 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said the invasion in Ukraine 'is not going well' for the Kremlin.

**Body**

A no-fly zone "would not help" to defend [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the head of the UK's armed forces has said.

Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said the invasion in Ukraine "is not going well" for the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) , with Russia's military might not proving as strong as expected in the face of the Ukrainian resistance.

However, he said the key call of Kyiv - a no-fly zone - would not help those on the ground.

On Sunday, Ukrainian newspaper The Kyiv Independent reported the country's President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) had reiterated his demand as he said: "The world has the power to close our skies for Russian rockets and aircraft."

Sir Tony told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "The advice that we as senior military professionals are giving our politicians is to avoid doing things that are tactically ineffective and definitely to avoid doing things that tactically might lead to miscalculation or escalation.

"The no-fly zone would not help.

"Most of the shelling is coming from artillery, most of the destruction is coming from artillery, it's not coming from Russian aircraft.

"If we were to police a no-fly zone, it means that we probably have to take out Russian defence systems and we would have Nato aircraft in the air alongside Russian aircraft, and then the potential of shooting them down and then that leads to an escalation."

The view was echoed by Deputy Prime Minister [*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) , who said it would be "very difficult, very challenging", but added "we will do everything short of that to support Ukrainians".

"We're not going to get ourselves into a direct military conflict with Putin because that would be a massive escalation, but also that feeds Putin's narrative," he told Trevor Phillips On Sunday on Sky News.

"Putin wants to say that he's actually in a struggle with the West - he's not."

Labour's shadow defence secretary John Healey also said the implementation of a no-fly zone would give the Russian president a "get-out-of-jail-free card".

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer told ITV News: "Everybody understands why we can't have a no-fly zone, why direct military assistance is not possible. That means sanctions have to be the strongest we have ever seen, the most effective we've ever seen."

Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly called for a no-fly zone but [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) warned that imposing one would be considered "participation in the armed conflict".

Nato has ruled it out as the alliance fears it would spark a wider conflict.

General Philip Breedlove, a former Nato Supreme Allied Commander Europe, told Times Radio allies should enforce a humanitarian no-fly zone, with different rules of engagement than a military one "whereby we talk to our enemy, and we say, we are not going to fire on you unless you fire on us".

But Mr Raab said he did not think Mr Putin would agree to such a move.

He told Times Radio: "I think it's interesting, I just can't see why Russia would agree to that and what we've been clear on is we're not going to get into direct military conflict between the UK or Nato and Russia."

He added: "We've had ongoing discussions with all of our allies and, indeed, with the Russians, and if we thought that there was an easier or credible route to provide that humanitarian support, of course, we'd want to look at it more seriously."

Read More

[*Ukraine-Russia war news: Zelensky responds to nuclear plant attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-war-b2028568.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*More than 80,000* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *could arrive in Ireland, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ireland-department-of-justice-department-of-justice-europe-dublin-b2029680.html)

[*Hampshire couple take Molly the motorhome to help people fleeing Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-hampshire-andover-un-refugee-agency-gofundme-b2029669.html)

[*Former head of Orange Order must abide by Labour values - Sarwar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/labour-orange-order-north-lanarkshire-scotland-islamophobia-b2029668.html)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Two men who like a joke... but only one is a real leader*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WP-T8T1-JCS0-D1TX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 1, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 38

**Length:** 639 words

**Body**

At the start of the war, Ukraine and the UK both had leaders whose reputation was built on rhetoric and joke telling.

Over the past week, Volodymyr Zelensky has grown into a true leader. He has done it because of his close and immediate affiliation with his people, and a demonstrable will to stand with them even at his own peril.

Sadly, Boris Johnson has remained the man he was at the outset. Detached from the majority of his people, demonstrably not willing even to follow his own laws, concerned only for his own benefit.

He and his guardians would still have us believe that the UK is leading the world in the challenge to Vladimir Putin, when it is clear that the government has no desire to do more for humanitarian aid for example than the minimum possible to suggest it has done something.

Johnson's leadership has shown that Partygate was not an aberration, it's very much how he operates, and he is incapable of any other way. The Ukrainian people now know they have a leader to rely on when need is greatest. We know now that we certainly do not.

Gary Wiltshire Scallastle, Isle of Mull

Ukraine is led by a former comic actor who has developed magnificently into statesmanship as he leads his people against the Russian onslaught.

The UK is led by an erstwhile journalist who might have been expected to have at least some understanding of government, but who has descended into self-aggrandising, clowning and incompetence. Some of his behaviour bears more resemblance to that of Putin than of Volodymyr Zelensky.

I'll refrain from listing Johnson's misdemeanours, but this government's refusal to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the UK without visas marks a new low point, and further damages the reputation of our formerly esteemed country.

Susan Alexander Frampton Cotterell, South Gloucestershire

<strong>No first use</strong>

In 2016, Theresa May declared without hesitation that she was willing to order a nuclear strike to kill hundreds of thousands of people if circumstances required.

At the time, there was no prospect of her having to do so. Now that the prospect has suddenly become real, one hopes that western nuclear powers commit to "no first use" which, at present, is not the case.

To start a nuclear war with a pre-emptive strike based on intelligence would be an act of extreme folly - remember Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

Robert Forsyth Deddington, Oxfordshire

<strong>Refugees welcome</strong>

Thank you to Jess Phillips for putting the plight of Ukrainians into focus (My Ukrainian constituents need visas for their families, it's the least the UK can do, yesterday). I fully support the call for an urgent response to our fellow human beings in their hour of need.

Jane Penson Chalfont St Giles

<strong>Fruit picking visas</strong>

The immigration minister, Kevin Foster, suggested refugees from Ukraine could apply for fruit picking visas if they wanted to come to this country in a now-deleted tweet.

I wonder what would be the fate of those fleeing the war if Poland, for example, applied the same criteria as desperate women and children turned up at their border. "Sorry you can't enter the country until you have had a prior visa application approved at our embassy in Kyiv" might be the border greeting.

Alan Pack Canterbury, Kent

Kevin Foster's suggestion that refugees, who will be mostly women with children, traumatised and potentially recently widowed, should come here and solve the labour problem for fruit farmers was breathtakingly crass and insensitive. It is time for him to go!

Dr Ruth Campbell Stirling

<strong>An offer he can refuse</strong>

I find it unbelievable that President Biden thought that President Zelensky would accept his offer of flying him and his family out of Ukraine.

Either make the offer to all the people of Ukraine or don't bother making an offer.

Kartar Uppal Sutton Coldfield

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson and Volodymyr Zelensky both enjoy a joke - but only Ukraine has a real leader*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WK-6T01-DY4H-K3RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 6:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 760 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

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Over the past week, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has grown into a true leader. He has done it because of his close and immediate affiliation with his people, and a demonstrable will to stand with them even at his own peril.

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Deddington, Oxfordshire

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**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Nicola Sturgeon urges UK Government to waive all visas for Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-C1F1-JBNF-W54W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 7:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 673 words

**Byline:** Lucinda Cameron

**Highlight:** Scotland's First Minister has written to Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

**Body**

[*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) has called on the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) to waive all visa requirements for any Ukrainian nationals fleeing the Russian invasion and seeking refuge in the UK.

In a letter to Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , Scotland's [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) said she is concerned current proposals from Westminster are "still insufficient given the gravity of the situation."

Mr Johnson announced on Tuesday that more Ukrainians will be allowed to enter the UK to join family members as they flee the war zone, which his official spokesman said would widen eligibility to around 200,000 people, twice the number previously estimated.

Ms Sturgeon urged Mr Johnson to offer "immediate refuge and sanctuary, where necessary" for those who may be displaced.

Ukrainians in the UK should be offered the assurance that they will be offered protection in the UK for as long as is required

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon

She said: "For those Ukrainians who were already in the UK prior to Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion, the UK Government announcement of temporary visa extensions and in-country visa category switching measures simply do not go far enough.

"Ukrainians in the UK should be offered the assurance that they will be offered protection in the UK for as long as is required, regardless of their migration status.

"In this respect it is vital that you lift No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and any employment restrictions so that individuals can support themselves and access vital public services during this difficult time without fear of breaching the conditions of their visa."

Her letter also says that Scotland stands ready to offer refuge and sanctuary for those who may be displaced as it did with the Syrian Resettlement Programme, which saw all 32 local authorities in Scotland welcome Syrian families into their communities.

Ms Sturgeon said it is vital that rapid, safe and legal routes be established immediately, cooperating with international partners wherever possible.

She said it is important to learn the lessons from the Afghanistan resettlement schemes in order to provide rapid and appropriate support to those who need it.

Ms Sturgeon added: "We cannot turn our back on the people of Ukraine during what is arguably the most serious moment the world has faced since the end of the Cold War, and one of the most dangerous since World War II."

She said further action is needed on three fronts - to support UK nationals and their family members who currently have a right to enter the UK but who face bureaucratic barriers, to establish a safe route for those fleeing conflict, and to support Ukrainian nationals currently in the UK or arriving here seeking refuge.

During a visit to Poland on Tuesday, Mr Johnson announced that individuals and organisations will be able to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

The first phase of the plan had allowed people in Ukraine who had immediate family members in the UK to come and join them, but the move was criticised for being too restrictive.

Downing Street said people living in the UK would now be allowed to bring in "adult parents, grandparents, children over 18 and siblings" in addition to those who had previously been allowed.

Mr Johnson said the widened access would allow "very considerable numbers" of Ukrainians to come.

At Holyrood earlier on Tuesday, Constitution Secretary [*Angus Robertson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/angus-robertson) said that MSPs from all parties should call on the UK Government to waive visa requirements for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

A UK government spokesman said: "The United Kingdom with Scotland within it has a strong and proud history of supporting people in need and that will never change.

"We are making it easier for people here to bring their Ukrainian relatives to join them in the UK and today we announced further measures, including our sponsorship scheme, that could see thousands more come to the UK.

"We welcome the Scottish Government and Scottish councils' offers to support these efforts, demonstrating that when we pull together we can achieve so much more."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Don’t tell her, but Suella has stumbled upon an immigration winner*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689R-WS81-JBNF-W1K4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 25, 2023 Thursday 4:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 795 words

**Byline:** Tom Peck

**Highlight:** The Conservatives have a sensible policy on immigration, it’s just that they’re incapable of having a sensible conversation about it, writes Tom Peck

**Body**

Shall we cast our minds back to the Year of Our Lord 2016? And lo! Who has appeared, in the pages of the Daily Express? “‘[*Immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/immigration) swells UK population by size of Newcastle every YEAR,’ says [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) ”.

About 350,000 a year it was, back then. It’s easy to forget, because there was another big number doing the rounds at the time, which also began with 350 and also turned out to be complete b\*\*\*\*\*ks.

“So what do we do about it?” Johnson wondered. Well, that’s easy. We “take back control”. So we did. And yet, somehow, seven years later, Newcastle has been upgraded to Glasgow.

The new number, announced this morning, is [*606,000*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/office-for-national-statistics-ukraine-people-hong-kong-immigration-b2345590.html). And it’s a number that, frankly, [*British politics is not programmed to cope with*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/immigration-uk-economiy-jobs-vacancies-nhs-care-homes-food-prices-inflation-b2345754.html).

It doesn’t really matter that it has shown Brexit, yet again, to have been an entirely pointless exercise of which there is absolutely no upside to be found anywhere. The vast majority of British people already know that. They’ve just stopped caring. They can’t face doing anything about it, and neither of the main parties can face it either, so that’s that.

Also, according to every poll carried out in the last seven years, the public have stopped caring very much about immigration. They can see that it is good for the economy, the NHS, and every other facet of British public life. They can see that migrants pay more in tax than they claim in benefits; and also – and this is the big one – unlike actual born-and-bred Brits, once they’ve stopped working, they tend to go home again.

They don’t retire here, racking up massive healthcare bills for the younger and much poorer generation to cover. And nor do they commit, more or less en masse, other huge acts of economic vandalism like, say, voting for Brexit.

The home secretary has spent all of this week saying that the public don’t care about her attempts to work her way out of doing the same speed-awareness course as everybody else. She says they care about what she is doing on immigration; what she is doing to “stop the boats”.

And yet, for some reason, on the day the vast number came out, [*not a word has been heard from her*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migration-uk-suella-braverman-sunak-b2345566.html). She is, it transpires, very good at saying what the public want her to be talking about, but not so good at actually talking about it.

There are, naturally, a variety of normal ways in which someone in her position could respond. They could say, for example, that 150,000 of the 600,000 are ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, some are Afghan refugees, and some are Hongkongers taking advantage of their visa rights, which were extended in the wake of a Chinese crackdown there.

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These would be normal, rational responses to a policy that benefits Britain.

But the trouble is, if you’re a Tory, then you can’t say those things. It’s been 13 years since David Cameron promised to bring net migration down to the “tens of thousands”. Last week, the cabinet secretary under Cameron, Gus O’Donnell, said in a panel event that when he advised the then prime minister on the ways he might make that happen – like, say, leaving the EU – Cameron replied: “Don’t be daft. It’s an announcement, don’t get carried away.”

It wasn’t “just an announcement” to Theresa May, who devoted six full years as home secretary and three as prime minister to a futile attempt to deliver on a promise Cameron didn’t actually care about and knew was meaningless.

And her chief of staff at the time, Nick Timothy, also wrote last week of Boris Johnson’s promise in the 2019 manifesto that “overall numbers will come down”. And that having published the manifesto, the former PM called round his ministers and told them not to repeat the line because he disagreed with it.

And this is precisely how you end up where we are. Which is to say, being governed by a party that’s capable of a sensible policy on immigration, but not capable of a sensible conversation on it. That is entirely content to let the numbers rise and rise and rise, while promising repeatedly to bring them down, on the calculation that the ever-shrinking band of voters who care about immigration will always trust them more than Labour to do something about it, even after more than a decade of the opposite being true.

They can make politics out of the pantomime cruelty, by [*sending Suella Braverman to Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/braverman-rwanda-immigration-david-cameron-b2344718.html) to have her picture taken next to some buildings that might one day theoretically have room for 140 of the 606,000 net migrants a year, for a down payment of £120m that’s already been paid in full even though the policy is illegal.

But they can’t possibly deliver on the big promise, because – quite rightly – they don’t actually want to. They just can’t admit it.

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians flee the country as Russian invasion triggers warning of major refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VR-H9S1-DY4H-K09R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2022 Thursday 7:41 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 661 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Countries are being urged to pledge support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as thousands flee to central Europe

**Body**

Ukrainians have been fleeing to neighbouring central European nations as [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's assault intensified and warnings were issued of a major refugee crisis.

Steady lines of people carrying backpacks and dragging suitcases formed at the border crossings and aid agencies warned the conflict could trigger one of the world's largest ever refugee crises.

The [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) said the situation was quickly deteriorating and called on countries to stand ready to support the thousands of displaced Ukrainians who were already "starting to flee their homes to seek safety" after Russia[*launched an all-out invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-sanctions-latest-b2022321.html) of its neigbhour by land, air and sea.

The US has predicted that up to five million people could be displaced by the conflict, and [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) alone is preparing to receive up to one million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

The International Rescue Committee urged EU member states to commit their support publicly, withsenior representative and former French minister Harlem Désir telling The Independent: "This should not be looked at as another migration crisis. This is a crisis of war. It should not be business as usual, we need real support for the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) people."

At the border crossing in Medyka, Poland. Vitalii Koval, 50, who was fleeing with his wife and two young daughters, aged 3 and 5, said: "It's the 21st century, why? It's just terrible, unbelievable."

Poland set up reception points for refugees near border crossings, and was preparing a medical train to transport wounded Ukrainians with a list of 1,230 hospitals that could admit the injured.

Csaba Bodnar, 27, and his younger brother Tamas, had travelled to the Hungarian border to escape conscription into the Ukrainian military. "No one wants to get conscripted, no one wants to die," Tamas said. "It's clear that those who can, they flee."

According to local media, the Hungarian government is expecting 600,000 Ukrainians to cross the border.

One NGO in Poland said their phones had not stopped ringing since early Thursday morning as Ukrainians tried to flee.

"Until yesterday the Ukrainians we talk to were saying they didn't want to panic, that they didn't have plans to move," said CEO of Forum Migracyjne, Agnieska Kosowicz. "Then from early this morning we started receiving calls of people crying over the phone, asking how they can flee."

Ukrainians living in Poland, of which there are around 1.5 million, were in a "panic" because many of their loved ones in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are unable to leave, Ms Kosowicz told The Independent.

Local officials have drawn up lists of accommodation for an influx of refugees.

"There are some 300,000 places identified for people if they arrive, but I don't think this is sufficient," Ms Kosowicz said.

"I don't think Poland is prepared for anything bigger than a few million people. Last year Poland evacuated 1,000 people from Afghanistan, and it was a huge challenge to the Polish system."

Slovakia's prime minister Eduard Heger said that Ukrainians fleeing their country should be treated with "compassion and understanding".

In Portugal, prime minister Antonia Costa said Ukrainians were "very welcome", adding: "Your family, friends and acquaintances who want to seek safety and destiny to continue their lives are also very welcome."

[*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) 's interior minister Nancy Faeser offered support to eastern [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) countries "in the event of large refugee movements".

She said Germany was in discussions with the European Council on whether to trigger a law that would offer Ukrainians an unbureaucractic way to receive temporary protection in the EU.

"All member states should tell the EU Commission and Poland that they are ready to welcome refugees," said Mr Désir of the International Rescue Committee. "They should give figures for the number of people they can take in and those numbers don't need to be a limit."

"All European states and other democracies should commit to welcoming them. Ukrainians share our values, that's why they are being attacked, and why they need our full support."

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Brexit is putting Britain’s standards in jeopardy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6686-D811-DY4H-K1HX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 28, 2022 Sunday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 691 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: No doubt the Tories will continue to argue the case for human rights around the world, only to be undone by their actions

**Body**

In the run-up to the EU referendum, and in the weeks after it, one of the more absurd promises made was that [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) was the breakthrough that would allow the UK to reassert its values in a troubled world. The first international trade secretary, [*Liam Fox*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liam-fox) , became very excited at thought of the country rejoining the World Trade Organisation as an independent member rather than through the European Union. Britain, apparently, was back.

It will come as a shock to no one, not merely that such an outcome has failed to come to pass, but that the opposite is true. Much was made, and is still being made, about the opportunities to sign new trade deals as an independent country. On countless occasions, we have been told that Brexit means the UK can insist on higher standards; that it enables Britain to make demands, in its negotiations with potential trading partners, on issues that the EU might have overlooked.

More recently, the current international trade secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, has given assurances to the House of Commons that “human rights” would play a role in any future trade deals, especially in those undertaken with Middle Eastern countries and with Gulf states that have a poor record on such matters.

A leaked document seen by The Independent [*has revealed that this promise is being quietly abandoned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-human-rights-trade-deals-gulf-b2151831.html). Again, this is no surprise. The UK already sells huge volumes of weapons to [*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) , with scant concern for the fact that they are used by the Saudi government in the civil war in Yemen, which has been described by the UN as the world’s most severe humanitarian disaster. Why any government would use trade negotiations to make demands on human rights of a country to which it is already selling billions of pounds’ worth of weapons could hardly be less clear.

But it further illuminates Brexit’s central deception. The EU is a huge market, and the UK was once an enormously influential country within it (and could have been far more influential, had it chosen to be). The UK’s power to influence human rights abroad was far greater while it was a member than it is from the outside.

The trade department is still on a desperate mission to sign deals all around the world, in an ultimately impossible mission to make up for [*the damage caused by Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-cost-uk-economy-eu-b2098289.html) , and so it continues to accept whatever terms it might be offered, for scant economic benefit.

No doubt the Tories will continue to argue the case for human rights around the world, only to be undone by their actions. The next prime minister also looks set to continue extracting the cost of the resettlement of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the international development budget, depriving some of the world’s least fortunate people of funds that really were being used to improve human rights.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

We will also have to see if the next prime minister bows to rising pressure to scale back the UK’s commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights – an action that large numbers of Tories, along with the elements of the media that exert pressure on them (including Nigel Farage), have convinced themselves will enable a solution to the growing small-boats crisis. It will not.

Most of Brexit’s biggest promises have been broken, but they were never made to be kept. Michael Gove promised to cut VAT on energy bills once Britain had left the EU. It hasn’t happened, in the middle of an energy crisis. He also promised “even higher” environmental standards. Instead, water companies have been liberated to [*flood the country’s prime swimming beaches with raw sewage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/sewage-pollution-water-companies-tories-b2154185.html%22%20title=%22New%20government%20plan%20to%20stop%20sewage%20spills%20branded%20‘joke’%20and%20‘licence%20to%20pollute’) , to the extent that small children on holiday in Devon and Cornwall and on the Sussex coast are not able to swim in the sea.

What remains to be seen is whether there will be an electoral cost for all of this. Brexit, by any fair assessment, is not proving to be all it was cracked up to be. If the people who voted for it start losing patience, then an already impossible job for the next prime minister will become even harder.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Cosying up to Russia would make cost of living crisis ‘100 times worse’, says minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667H-B9G1-DY4H-K1NC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 24, 2022 Wednesday 11:20 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK NEWS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 677 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Trying to repair relations with Moscow would be ‘catastrophic’, says UK Armed Forces minister

**Body**

Re-establishing relations with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) would be “catastrophic” and make the [*cost of living*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cost-of-living) crisis “100 times worse”, Britain’s Armed Forces minister has said.

James Heappey said any moves to repair ties with Moscow would only “embolden” [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) and allow him to expand beyond [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , as he urged the West to continue backing [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) ’s country.

Speaking as Ukrainians mark 31 years of freedom from the Soviet Union, the defence minister acknowledged some Britons “worrying about the cost of living” would want things to go back to normal.

“Arguably the most straightforward solution to the cost of living crisis is that we re-establish relations with Russia and everything goes back to the way that it was in the European energy market,” he told Sky News.

Heappey said: “Every single thing that I have seen in the last six months tells me that that would be catastrophic for security in the Euro-Atlantic.”

The minister added: “Within just a few years, we would find ourselves in a situation where an emboldened Russia was causing cost of living challenges that are 100 times worse than what we’re seeing right now.”

Heappey said appeasing Russia now would allow Putin’s regime “to expand their ambitions beyond Ukraine and into Nato territory in the Baltic, for example”.

He added: “We have to stand up for Ukraine with Ukraine, so that this all ends on Zelensky’s terms. Because if we do not, whatever the short-term pain and cost might be, we set the conditions for security in the Euro-Atlantic.”

The minister backed a call from Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg. Heappey said spending hikes were needed because of an “epoch change in our security situation”.

Writing in the Daily Telegraph on Ukraine’s independence day, Truss said she would “go further as prime minister” by declassifying more British intelligence to expose Russian misinformation.

The defence minister, backing Truss for the Tory leadership, pointed to her commitment to increase UK defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP – calling it “an enormous commitment for any government to make”.

However, the pledge comes as more urgent questions are raised about extra support to ease the pain of looming energy price rises – with gas and electricity bills set to hit around £3,600 in October.

Scottish Power has suggested that a state-backed fund wanted by many of the big energy firms so they can freeze prices for two years – with costs then repaid over the next 15 to 20 years – could cost £100bn.

But Heappey dismissed the idea, as he backed Truss’ immediate focus on cutting taxes and her reported preference for more “targeted” support.

“These are eye-watering amounts of money,” he told Sky News on the idea of a deficit fund. “I don’t think a universal freezing of everybody’s [*energy bills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/energy-bills) really helps to get taxpayers money to people who need it most.”

In a report published on Wednesday, the Institute for Government (IfG) said the cost of covering rising energy bills would amount to £23bn this autumn – rising to £90bn over the next year.

Meanwhile, refugee minister Lord Harrington has said the monthly £350 payments to sponsors of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should double to £700 to help them carry on hosting people for longer than six months amid the cost of living crisis.

Lord Harrington said he has been lobbying the Treasury “very hard” to double the “thank you” payment for Homes for Ukraine scheme sponsors.

“I can’t give them any guarantee right now,” Heappey told BBC Breakfast. “There are some that are finding it hard to continue to host their Ukrainian guests ... Therefore we need to look at how we are going to continue to support them.”

Zelensky told Ukrainians in an emotional speech to mark 31 years of independence that his country was “reborn” when Russia invaded – vowing to recapture annexed Crimea and occupied areas in the east.

In Wednesday’s recorded speech, which falls on the six-month anniversary of Russia’s 24 February invasion, Zelensky said that Ukraine no longer saw the war ending when there was peace, but when Kyiv was actually victorious.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Cosying up to Russia would make cost of living crisis ‘100 times worse’, says minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6678-6RF1-JBNF-W0JF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 24, 2022 Wednesday 8:36 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 677 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** Trying to repair relations with Moscow would be ‘catastrophic’, says UK Armed Forces minister

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** August 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Seven UK cities shortlisted to host Eurovision in 2023*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664W-V361-F072-44MX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 13, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 713 words

**Byline:** JACOB STOLWORTHY ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

**Body**

"Good evening and welcome to Eurovision 2023, live from Birmingham. Or possibly Glasgow, Leeds or Liverpool. Or could it be Manchester, Newcastle or Sheffield?"

The potential hosts of the Eurovision Song Contest have been whittled down to those seven cities, each of which will be hoping to stage the event in the UK for the first time in 25 years.

The candidates were announced by Scott Mills live on Zoë Ball's Radio 2 breakfast show yesterday. "It's exciting that we're talking about Eurovision in August," Mills said, before naming the cities selected by the BBC and European Broadcasting Union.

Since it was revealed Ukraine would be unable to host the event due to Russia's ongoing invasion of the country, 20 cities in the UK announced their bids to host the event next May. However, only seven have been named as contenders.

Mills said these cities were deemed to have the "capability and capacity" to host the event, stating they proved they had the "passion" involved to celebrate Eurovision. They will go through to a second and final stage, following which they will be expected to "give a bit more detail" about what they would do if they were successful in their bids.

The final decision will be announced later this year. The Eurovision contest was last hosted in the UK in 1997, the eighth time the event had visited British soil. Former Eurovision winner Lulu, Spice Girls star Mel B and mayors from across the UK have celebrated their cities being shortlisted to host the 2023 event.

Responding to the city being shortlisted, Manchester city council leader Bev Craig said: "Manchester stands ready to put on the biggest party in the UK at the city's AO Arena, taking our place in Eurovision's unique history. We have a large and proud Ukrainian community in Manchester. It would be our privilege to host this iconic celebration on their behalf and we will do everything we can to honour them throughout."

Spice Girl Mel B, who grew up in Leeds, said: "I'd love to see Leeds as the venue for Eurovision. It's a great city bursting with great people and fantastic character - the perfect backdrop for an iconic show like Eurovision."

Birmingham city council leader Ian Ward has been an avid watcher of Eurovision since the 1980s. "This is a city of sanctuary, a city which has welcomed people from around the world and made their home here," he said. "We would love the honour of hosting, on behalf of Ukraine, the Eurovision song contest next year," he said.

Glasgow was the only Scottish city to make the list after receiving backing from First Minister Nicola Sturgeon. Speaking on Good Morning Britain, 1969 Eurovision winner Lulu said she was rooting for the city. "I am excited about it, especially because of Ukraine. My heart and everyone's heart goes out to Ukraine and this is a chance to represent them and do right by them. It is so touching, I think it is going to be an amazing year," she said.

It was announced in July that the UK would host the event in Ukraine's honour, with Martin ?-sterdahl, the Eurovision executive supervisor, stating: "We're exceptionally grateful that the BBC has accepted to stage the Eurovision Song Contest in the UK in 2023."

Kalush Orchestra won the contest for Ukraine in May after receiving overwhelming support in the public vote. The UK's entry, Sam Ryder, came in second place. Shortly after the country's victory, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said in a Facebook post: "Our courage impresses the world, our music conquers Europe! Next year Ukraine will host Eurovision! For the third time in its history. And I believe - not for the last time."

Since then, though, Eurovision's governing board the Reference Group concluded that "given the current circumstances, the security and operational guarantees required for a broadcaster to host, organise and produce the Eurovision Song Contest under the ESC Rules cannot be fulfilled".

Ukraine will automatically qualify for the Eurovision grand final alongside the big five nations - the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain - who each get a free pass because of their financial contributions to the event. Yesterday, UK-based think tank and charity British Future called for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their UK host families to be given "priority tickets" to Eurovision 2023.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war -live: Putin’s troops forced to regroup as they suffer heavy losses in east, says Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GH-7NX1-JBNF-W0PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 26, 2023 Thursday 4:21 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:21

**Length:** 6283 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Maira Butt

**Highlight:** The Russian Army has suffered over 400 casualties a day in a drive to take the city of Avdiivka, Kyiv said

**Body**

Vladimir Putin’s troops have been forced to regroup while suffering over 400 casualties a day in a drive to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) , Kyiv claimed.

“The enemy is trying to move forward and then we beat them back,” Oleksandr Shtupun, a spokesperson for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s southern groups of forces, said.

“So by no means can you speak of a fixed situation of some sort. Heavy fighting is continuing, though activity has subsided somewhat. The enemy is going through some kind of regrouping.”

Mr Shtupun said Russian forces had suffered over 400 casualties a day in its campaign which has relied on small assault groups of 30 to 40 men.

Meanwhile, North Korea has shipped over 1,000 containers of military equipment to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , according to the UK Ministry of Defence.

It said Pyongyang was set to become one of Russia’s most significant foreign arms suppliers alongside Iran and Belarus.

On Wednesday, Vladimir [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) tested Russia’s ability to launch a massive retaliatory nuclear strike as he pulled the country out of an international test ban treaty.

Key Points

North Korea on course to be ‘significant supplier’ of arms to Russia Russia tests its ability to deliver massive retaliatory nuclear strike Russian drone strike in Khmelnitskyi region was likely targeting nuclear power station Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive

US says executing own soldiers is ‘barbaric'

The White House on Thursday said Russia is executing soldiers who have failed to follow orders and threatening entire units with death if they retreat from Ukrainian artillery fire.

It’s a development that U.S. national security officials believe reflects Russia’s morale problems 20 months into its grinding invasion of Ukraine, said White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby.

“It’s reprehensible to think about that you would execute your own soldiers because they didn’t want to follow orders and now threatening to execute entire units, it’s barbaric,” Kirby told reporters. “But I think it’s a symptom of how poorly Russia’s military leaders know they’re doing and how bad they have handled this from a military perspective.”

The White House has downgraded and released intelligence findings about Russian action over the course of the war. In the past, the administration has said it has acted to disclose the intelligence to highlight plans for Russian misinformation and other activity so allies remain clear-eyed about Moscow’s intent and Russia thinks twice before carrying out an operation.

This latest unveiling of intelligence about Russia’s struggles comes as President Joe Biden is pressing the Republican-controlled House to go along with providing more funding for Ukraine as Kyiv tries to repel Russia in a war that has no end in sight.

Russia likely to attack Ukrainian energy infrastructure over winter long range munitions

Russia will “likely use” its airforce’s long range aviation fleet of heavy bombers to strike Ukrainian energy infrastructure over winter, the UK’s Ministry of Defence said.

“The Russian airforce’s long range aviation fleet (LRA) of heavy bombers has not conducted air launched cruise missile strikes into Ukraine for over a month, one of the longest gaps in such strikes since the conflict began.

“Russia will likely use any recently produced inventory LRA munitions to strike Ukrainian energy infrastructure over the winter.

“Russia will highly likely continue to supplement any such campaign with Iranian-designed one-way attack uncrewed aerial vehicle attacks,” it said.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 27 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/SWYbN4Cgjx*](https://t.co/SWYbN4Cgjx) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/r5d74bIq38*](https://t.co/r5d74bIq38) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1717805638980370660?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) EU strategy on Ukraine has failed, Orban says 07:51 , Alexander Butler The European Union’s Ukraine strategy has “failed” and Ukraine will not win on the front line, Hungary’s prime minister Viktor Orban said.Mr Orban said he saw no reason for Hungary, which shares a border with Ukraine, sending any taxpayers’ money to the EU budget for financial support for Ukraine.It comes after the new Slovakian prime minister Robert Fico said his country would no longer be providing military aid to Ukraine, but it would continue to send humanitarian assistance.German prosecutors receive evidence of Russian war crimes07:20 , Alexander Butler A non-governmental organisation founded by Amal and George Clooney handed over dossiers of evidence regarding Russia’s alleged war crimes in Ukraine to German federal prosecutors on Thursday.At least three cases were filed by the Clooney Foundation for Justice (CFJ) which called on the German prosecutors to investigate Russia’s actions since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.“The organisation submitted detailed dossiers against the perpetrators and is representing 16 survivors and families of victims,” CFJ said in a statement. One of the cases was filed jointly with CFJ’s partner, the Ukrainian NGO Truth Hounds.[*German prosecutors receive evidence regarding ‘Russian war crimes in Ukraine’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/war-crimes-russia-ukraine-cfj-germany-b2436927.html) Moscow succession: What would happen if Putin dies?06:00 , Sam Rkaina[*Thyroid cancer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/thyroid-cancer) , Parkinson’s disease, leprosy or declining in the aftermath of a stroke -just a few of the many unproven ailments rumoured to have afflicted the Russian leader in recent years.Just this week, the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) were forced to deny [*rumours*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rumours) that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) had suffered a cardiac arrest in his bedroom, months after they were forced to deny that he had soiled himself.Since gripping the reins of power in 1999, Putin has established himself as one of the most infamous politicians in modern history, with a vicelike grip over Russia.His current term is set to expire next year, yet under[*sweeping changes to the constitution*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/putin-russia-election-vote-constitution-kremlin-a9578786.html) that were introduced in 2020, he could rule Russia until 2036.[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-death-health-russia-president-kremlin-b2436468.html) ‘If Western weapons to Ukraine stop, Ukraine would have a week to live'05:00 , Sam Rkaina Kirby pointed to the information as he renewed a plea for Congress to pass a nearly $106 billion supplemental funding request that Biden unveiled last week. The funding request includes more than $61 billion for Ukraine.“President Putin is not giving up on his aspirations to take all of Ukraine and as long as Russia continues its brutal assault we have to continue to support the Ukrainian people and their self defence, because his intentions are clear,” Kirby said. Putin “basically said that if Western weapons to Ukraine stop, Ukraine would have a week to live. So to ensure that we can continue to do that it’s critical that Congress step up and pass the supplemental requests that the president put forward last week.”Kirby did not provide any details on how many Russian troops have been executed for failing to follow orders or any specific examples of units threatened with execution for retreating from Ukrainian fire.The Wagner Group military contractor was reported to have had a practice of executing those who fled. The contract soldiers were pulled out of Ukraine after their leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, mounted an armed rebellion in June. There also have been reports, including from the British Defence Ministry, that the regular Russian military has deployed “barrier troops” that threaten to shoot any deserters.“They are in such desperate need to make some kind of progress, particularly in the Donbas, the Donetsk areas, that they are literally throwing young men into the fight who haven’t been properly trained, haven’t been properly equipped, and certainly are not being properly led,” Kirby said.700,000 tons of grain have left Ukraine via new route since August03:00 , Sam Rkaina Ukraine launched a “humanitarian corridor” for ships bound for African and Asian markets in August to try to circumvent a de facto blockade in the Black Sea after Russia quit the deal that had guaranteed Kyiv’s seaborne exports during the war.Later, a senior agricultural official said the route -which runs along Ukraine‘s southwest Black Sea coast, into Romanian territorial waters and onwards to Turkey, would also be used for grain shipments.About 700,000 tons of grain have left Ukrainian ports via the new route since it began operating in August. Ukraine shipped up to six million tons of grain a month from its Black Sea ports before Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.Kubrakov said 23 ships were loading in the ports of Odesa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi.“A total of 51 vessels used the entrance corridor. 33 vessels exported more than 1.3 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products and other cargo,” he said.Wheat futures pressured by hopes Ukraine would expand grain exports02:00 , Sam Rkaina Wheat futures had been pressured this week by hopes that Ukraine would expand grain exports, as well as rain relief in dry crop belts worldwide.Barva Invest, which specialises in Ukraine‘s agriculture sector, said a de facto suspension had already been in place for two days at the behest of Kyiv’s military, which had cited a threat from increased Russian air force activity.Russian President Vladimir Putin said last week that he had ordered Russian warplanes armed with Kinzhal missiles to patrol the Black Sea.British maritime security company Ambrey said in a report that the Ukrainian Seaport Authority issued a communique late on Wednesday, saying: “There would be no vessel movement along the corridor for entry and exit on 26th of October, 2023.”The suspension was prompted by Russian Air Force operations in the region, it said.“On October 25th, Ambrey informed its clients that the Russian Air Force had dropped at least four objects, likely acoustic and/or magnetic sea mines, into the Ukrainian grain corridor transit area near Snake Island, Ukraine,” it said.Ukraine says its Black Sea grain corridor is working01:00 , Sam Rkaina Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov denied on Thursday reports by Ukrainian and British firms that the new Black Sea export corridor had been suspended.“The information regarding the cancellation or unscheduled stoppage of the temporary #Ukrainian\_corridor for the movement of civilian vessels from and to the ports of the Big Odesa (region) is false,” Kubrakov said on X, formerly Twitter.“All available routes established by the Ukrainian Navy are valid and being used by civilian vessels.”The Kyiv-based Barva Invest consultancy, British security firm Ambrey and a specialised outlet, Ukrainian Ports, reported that Ukraine had suspended use of the corridor due to a possible threat from Russian warplanes and sea mines.Ukraine has been using the corridor to try to revive its seaborne exports without Russian approval, defying threats from Moscow which quit a U.N.-brokered deal in July that had allowed some food exports to flow despite the war.“We would like to inform you of a temporary suspension of vessel traffic to and from (the ports). The current ban is in force on Oct. 26, but it is possible that it will be extended,” the consultancy said on the Telegram messaging app.Chicago wheat futures, a global price benchmark, turned higher on the news to recover from an earlier two-week low. They later traded up about 1%.Sanctioned Russian billionaire Mikhail Fridman loses High Court battle over upkeep of mansionThursday 26 October 2023 23:59 , Sam Rkaina Sanctioned Russian-[*Israeli*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israeli) billionaire Mikhail Fridman has lost a [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) challenge that would have allowed him extra funds to pay for the upkeep of his mansion.The Ukrainian-born businessman took legal action after the Treasury’s Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (Ofsi) denied permission for £30,000 monthly payments to cover the running costs of Athlone House, a multimillion-pound Victorian property in [*Highgate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/highgate) , north London.Mr Fridman’s lawyers argued the decisions were unlawful, saying the 168-year-old property that he bought in 2016, and houses a £44 million art collection, faces “risks of neglect”.Ofsi said it refused spending requests that would enable Mr Fridman to enjoy his pre-sanctions “lifestyle” and that it rejected payments to Athlone House Limited (AHL), a company maintaining the property, because its sole director, Nigina Zairova, is also subject to sanctions.[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/sanctioned-russian-billionaire-mikhail-fridman-b2436505.html) Ukraine awaits brutal winter with world attention focused on Middle EastThursday 26 October 2023 23:00 , Sam Rkaina With the world’s attention fixed on the Middle East, officials in Ukraine say they are facing a new threat: crude Russian drones that appear to be launched with the sole intention of exhausting Ukrainian rockets fired to shoot them down.According to Ukrainian national television, the small drones carry reflectors to ensure they are detected, sometimes taking pictures to identify the sites of anti-aircraft radars and missile systems. Built from cheap components readily available online, each drone is estimated to cost around $1,500, less than each of the sometimes multiple rockets fired to bring them down.Russian television pundits have reacted to the unexpected Oct. 7 Hamas assault against Israel with barely concealed glee, predicting conflict in the Middle East will dramatically reduce Western support for Kyiv.Many Ukrainian commentators offer the same analysis, worrying in particular that outrage at mounting Palestinian casualties in Gaza and at the Hamas attacks will devastate already fragile support for Ukraine among poorer “Global South” nations and divert military aid the Kyiv government badly needs.Earlier this month, Russia announced its defence spending for 2024 would be almost $110 billion, three times the level before its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine and almost 30% of government spending.Ukraine intends to spend around $40 billion on defence next year, roughly half the government budget and 20% of the country’s entire economic output but it is also counting on tens of billions more in foreign military aid, as long as Western donors are still willing to provide it.Russia scrambles fighter jet to escort Norwegian patrol plane over Barents SeaThursday 26 October 2023 22:00 , Sam Rkaina Russia sent up a MIG-31 fighter jet on Thursday to escort a Norwegian Poseidon patrol plane over the Barents Sea, state news agency RIA quoted the Russian defence ministry as saying.There was no violation of the air border by the Norwegian patrol plane, the ministry said.It was the latest of a series of recent incidents in which Russia sent fighter planes to intercept US, Norwegian or British military aircraft that it says came close to entering Russian airspace.The incidents come at a time of high tension between Russia and NATO, which is arming Ukraine to defend against Russia’s invasion.Russia recruits prisoners for Ukraine war as Putin replicates WagnerThursday 26 October 2023 21:00 , Sam Rkaina[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has taken the wheel from [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) as the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) has recruited up to 100,000 [*prisoners*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prisoners) to fight in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). The practice was a trademark move of the [*late mercenary boss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-wagner-prigozhin-plane-crash-hand-grenade-b2425082.html) [*Yevgeny Prigozhin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yevgeny-prigozhin) , who filled his group’s ranks with [*convicted criminals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-pavel-prigozhin-putin-russia-ukraine-b2422174.html). The army unit, commonly known as [*Storm-Z*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-war-ukraine-storm-z-b2423103.html) , is reportedly seen as a disposable force in [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s[*“special military operation”.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-nuclear-weapons-drones-putin-b2436217.html) It comes as the Russian prison population has dropped from an estimated 420,000 to around 266,000, according to deputy minister Vsevolod Vukolov, who disclosed the figures earlier this month.Russian state-controlled media reported that Storm-Z squads exist, that they took part in intense battles and some of their members received medals for bravery, but it has not disclosed how they are formed, or the losses they take.While the Russian defence ministry has never acknowledged creating Storm-Z units, the first reports of their existence emerged in April when the [*Institute for the Study of War*](https://www.understandingwar.org/) cited what it said appeared to be a leaked Russian military report on the formation of the squads.A Russia without Putin? Be careful what you wish for...Thursday 26 October 2023 20:10 , Mary DejevskyAs if there were not enough [*uncertainty in the world at the moment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-nuclear-weapons-drones-putin-b2436217.html) , the week opened with new [*speculation about the health of Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-death-health-russia-president-kremlin-b2436468.html). The Russian president, who recently turned 71, was said to have suffered a stroke at his residence outside Moscow and to be in intensive care or, at the very least, under the beady eye of his doctors.Such rumours, it should be said, come around periodically, and in recent months and years, Putin has been reported as suffering from a whole range of chronic or terminal illnesses, from Parkinson’s disease to various types of cancer. As in this case, reports may be adorned with [*graphic accounts of the supposed emergency*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-health-update-massive-heart-attack-b2435507.html) – a fall, spilt food, or convulsions.[*Click here for the full view.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-health-successor-b2436599.html) US claims Russia is executing soldiers who do not follow ordersThursday 26 October 2023 19:18 , Sam Rkaina The United States has information that the Russian military is executing soldiers who do not follow orders related to the war with Ukraine, the White House said on Thursday.“We have information that the Russian military has been actually executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders,” White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters. “We also have information that Russian commanders are threatening to execute entire units if they seek to retreat from Ukrainian artillery fire.Tanaiste Martin says he was not blindsided by ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** planThursday 26 October 2023 18:20 , Sam Rkaina Government figures have claimed that reports of a row in the Irish cabinet are “exaggerated” but admitted that the country’s system to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** needed to change.The three coalition leaders have said that Ireland’s offering to people fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine would need reassessment as tens of thousands more arrivals are expected next year.At Cabinet this week, a proposal was discussed that would place a three-month limit on the period the state would be obliged to provide accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.In response to a question about whether he was blindsided on Tuesday by the proposal, Tanaiste Micheal Martin said that discussions had been held at Cabinet previously and informally between ministers.“No, in fairness, there’s been ongoing discussion about this, before the Cabinet meeting, and there will be further discussions about this,” Mr Martin said.“I mean, issues get discussed and teased out at Cabinet, and at Cabinet subcommittee level, and informally between ministers.“So I think it’s a bit exaggerated to say there was a row.”US announces additional $150 million for UkraineThursday 26 October 2023 17:49 , Sam Rkaina The United States on Thursday announced additional security assistance for Ukraine amid the Russian invasion valued at $150 million, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the Pentagon has said.The latest U.S. assistance includes additional munitions for national advanced surface-to-air missile systems, stinger anti-aircraft missiles, and additional ammunition for high mobility artillery rocket systems, the Pentagon said in a statement.The assistance also included Javelin anti-armor systems, over two million rounds of small arms ammunition and cold weather gear.Ukrainian holds ‘productive’ talks with FranceThursday 26 October 2023 16:30 , Alexander Butler Ukraine has held “productive” talks with France’s armed forces minister, Ukrainian defence minister Rustem Umerov said.“Held productive talks with Minister of the Armed Forces of France. Discussed the priority need: artillery and air defense systems.“We must be fully prepared for this winter to protect our people, cities and infrastructure. Grateful to Minister Lecornu for his readiness to support us,” Mr Rumerov said.Held productive talks with Minister of the Armed Forces of France [*@SebLecornu*](https://twitter.com/SebLecornu?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Discussed the priority needs: artillery and air defense systems. We must be fully prepared for this winter to protect our people, cities, and infrastructure. Grateful to Minister Lecornu for his…— Rustem Umerov (@rustem\_umerov) [*October 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/rustem_umerov/status/1717553473892290865?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Sixteen-year-old boy killed by Russian shelling, Ukraine saysThursday 26 October 2023 15:42 , Alexander Butler A 16-year-old boy has been killed in the Russian shelling of Pozhnia, Ukraine, according to the country’s interior minister.The boy was on the porch of his house at the time of the shelling that damaged several homes, according to minister Ihor Klymenko.“This is another attack on civilians. And Russia will definitely bear responsibility for it,” Mr Klymenko said on Telegram.Over 500 Ukrainian children have been killed and 1,139 wounded since the start of Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, according to the government’s database.Russia recruiting Cuban mercenaries, reports suggestThursday 26 October 2023 13:54 , Alexander Butler Russia is “massively” recruiting Cuban mercenaries to fight in its war against Ukraine, according to Kyiv’s special forces.The Cuban fighters are reported to be fighting around Bakhmut and Kupiansk and are scattered among existing Russian units.Ukraine’s National Resistance Center, which was set up by the country’s special forces, said a cyber group hacked the emails of a Russian military official and discovered almost 200 Cubans had been recruited.I’m proud of my relationship with Putin -Hungary’s OrbanThursday 26 October 2023 13:30 , Matt Mathers Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban said on Thursday that he was "proud" of his contacts with Russian president Vladimir Putin, whom he met in China this month despite European Union efforts to isolate Moscow for waging a war against Ukraine.Orban spoke on arriving to a summit of the EU’s 27 national leaders in Brussels. He drew criticism for his talks with Putin, which had been organised with great pomp."We would like to do everything to have peace. Therefore we keep open all the communication lines to the Russians, otherwise there will be no chance for peace. This is a strategy, we are proud of it," Orban told reporters."We are the only ones to speak on behalf and in favour of peace, which would be in the interest of everybody in Europe."Russia scrambles fighter jet to escort Norwegian patrol plane over Barents Sea -RIAThursday 26 October 2023 13:11 , Matt Mathers Russia sent up a MIG-31 fighter jet on Thursday to escort a Norwegian Poseidon patrol plane over the Barents Sea, state news agency RIA quoted the Russian defence ministry as saying.There was no violation of the air border by the Norwegian patrol plane, the ministry said.It was the latest of a series of recent incidents in which Russia sent fighter planes to intercept US, Norwegian or British military aircraft that it says came close to entering Russian airspace.The incidents come at a time of high tension between Russia and NATO, which is arming Ukraine to defend against Russia’s invasion.Slovakia halts military aid to UkraineThursday 26 October 2023 11:50 , Alexander Butler Slovakia’s new populist prime minister Robert Fico has said he is ending military aid to Ukraine.Mr Fico said he would “no longer supply weapons to Ukraine” but would continue to send humanitarian aid.“I will support zero military aid to Ukraine … An immediate halt to military operations is the best solution we have for Ukraine. The EU should change from an arms supplier to a peacemaker,” he said.Russia to build ties with North Korea in all areas, Kremlin saysThursday 26 October 2023 10:38 , Alexander Butler Russia will build ties with North Korea in all areas, the Kremlin said.It comes after the UK Ministry of Defence said North Korea is on course to become one of Russia’s “most significant foreign arms suppliers” alongside Iran and Belarus.The MoD added it was “almost certain” that recent North Korean munitions shipments had now reached depots in western Russia.North Korea on course to be ‘significant supplier’ of arms to Russia, MoD saysThursday 26 October 2023 09:37 , Alexander Butler North Korea is on course to become one of Russia’s “most significant foreign arms suppliers” alongside Iran and Belarus, the UK Ministry of Defence said.The MoD added it was “almost certain” that recent North Korean munitions shipments had now reached depots in western Russia.“If North Korea sustains the recent scale and pace of military-related shipments (more than 1,000 containers over the last several weeks), it will be on course to become one of Russia’s most significant foreign arms suppliers, alongside Iran and Belarus,” it said on X, formerly Twitter.Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 26 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/XtDEBWEdcc*](https://t.co/XtDEBWEdcc) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/lVCkzVawFK*](https://t.co/lVCkzVawFK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1717442824927363583?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Hungary says it won’t support EU budget proposal over Ukraine funds

Hungary cannot support the European Union’s proposed modification of the EU budget, Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s chief of staff has said.

He said that giving funds to Ukraine from the budget for four years was unacceptable. Mr Orban is widely considered one of Vladimir Putin’s only allies in the EU.

On Wednesday, Slovakia’s president on Wednesday appointed a new coalition government led by pro-Russian leader Robert Fico, in a move widely seen to weaken the EU’s unified approach to Russia.

‘Anger’ at supply of North Korean weapons to Putin

South Korea, Japan and the US have strongly condemned the supply of arms and military equipment by North Korea to Russia, saying they have confirmed “several” deliveries.

“The Republic of Korea, United States, and Japan strongly condemn the provision of military equipment and munitions by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to the Russian Federation for use against the government and people of Ukraine,” the statement issued by foreign ministers of the three countries said.

“Such weapons deliveries, several of which we now confirm have been completed, will significantly increase the human toll of Russia’s war of aggression.”

Study finds ‘deepfakes’ from Ukraine undermining trust in conflict footage

Researchers at University College Cork (UCC) have conducted a study which is the first of its kind to find evidence of [*online conspiracy theories*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-president-mike-johnson-election-subversion-b2436015.html%22%20title=%22Biden%20unconcerned%20over%20House%20Speaker%20Mike%20Johnson’s%20election%20subversion%20record) which incorporate deepfakes. ‘Deepfakes’ are artificially manipulated audio-visual material.

The Russia-Ukraine war presented as the first real-life example of[*deepfakes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/study-ukraine-vladimir-putin-russia-twitter-b2436014.html%22%20title=%22Study%20finds%20‘deepfakes’%20from%20Ukraine%20war%20undermining%20trust%20in%20conflict%20footage) being used in warfare.

The researchers highlight examples of deepfake videos during this war including the use of video game footage as evidence of the urban myth fighter pilot “The Ghost of Kyiv”, and a deepfake of Russian president Vladimir Putin, showing the Russian president announcing peace with Ukraine.

The study found deepfakes often undermined users’ trust in the footage they were receiving from the conflict to the point where they lost trust in any footage viewed.

As well as the threat coming from the fake content itself, researchers found genuine media contact was being labelled as deepfakes.

(PA)

Russian troop losses at an all-time high according to report

The Kyiv Post has reported that [*Russian troop losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/joe-biden-ap-white-house-federal-emergency-management-agency-washington-b2436049.html%22%20title=%22White%20House%20wants%20more%20than%20$23%20billion%20from%20Congress%20to%20respond%20to%20natural%20disasters) are at an all-time high according to a new report on Wednesday.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine publishes full information on casualties and deaths following military actions.

The publication reported: “Ragnar Gudmundsson, an Iceland-based analyst tracking losses of personnel and equipment on both sides of the Russo-Ukraine War since the early days of [*Russia’s February 2022*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/israel-bill-kit-malthouse-government-west-bank-b2436025.html%22%20title=%22Government%20defeats%20bid%20to%20remove%20Israel%20‘carve-out’%20from%20boycott%20ban%20legislation) full-scale invasion, in a Wednesday situation update reported Russian service personnel dead hit a probable wartime record of more than 1,400 killed in combat in a single day on 20th October, and have averaged 900 men a day killed in combat from 10-20 October, a time window coinciding almost exactly with the launch of major Russian army attacks in the Avdiivka sector.”

US elects House Speaker sceptical of Ukraine support

Mike Johnson, a staunch conservative from Louisiana has been unanimously elected [*House speaker*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/new-speaker-of-house-vote-emmer-gop-b2435571.html%22%20title=%22Trump-backed%20Mike%20Johnson%20elected%20House%20speaker%20after%2022%20days%20-live) with broad GOP support on Wednesday. The more conservative but lesser known congressman who has backing from Donald Trump, initially supported Ukraine, sharing his support on[*X, formerly known as Twitter.*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/desantis-trump-biden-2024-teleprompter-b2436051.html%22%20title=%22Ron%20DeSantis%20trolls%20Trump%20and%20compares%20him%20to%20Biden%20over%20teleprompter%20use)

However, in May last year he was one of only 57 members of the House to vote against $40 billion of aid to Ukraine.

He released a statement saying: “‘We should not be sending another $40 billion abroad when our own border is in chaos, American mothers are struggling to find baby formula, gas prices are at record highs, and American families are struggling to make ends meet, without sufficient oversight over where the money will go.”

Since the statement, he has consistently voted against aid to Ukraine.

Russian strike on Kherson Oblast town kills child

Ukrainian Governor Oleksandr Prokudin has reported that a [*Russian stirke*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-united-states-moscow-sergei-shoigu-b2435967.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20forces%20simulate%20nuclear%20strike%20as%20upper%20house%20rescinds%20ratification%20of%20test-ban%20treaty) on Kherson Oblast’s town of Beryslav on Wednesday killed a 13 year old boy.

On his Telegram channel he wrote: “In the evening, the occupiers opened fire against a residential building in the city, as a result of the strike, a 13-year-old boy died.”

Governor Prokudin did not provide further details on potential damage caused by the attack or on the weaponry used by Russian forces.

Ukraine’s SSO reports $25 million damage to Russian equipment

The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces (SSO) report they have inflicted over $25 million damage [*to Russian equipment i*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-united-states-moscow-sergei-shoigu-b2435967.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20forces%20simulate%20nuclear%20strike%20as%20upper%20house%20rescinds%20ratification%20of%20test-ban%20treaty) n one week. In a message on their Telegram channel, they reported the destruction of heavy equipment including the Zoopark-1 surveillance and fire control radar complex, a prized possession for Russians.

Other equipment included a critical battlefield artillery fire coordination complex that directed Russian artillery and taregetd locations of [*Ukrainian surface-to-surface*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/joe-biden-ap-white-house-federal-emergency-management-agency-washington-b2436049.html%22%20title=%22White%20House%20wants%20more%20than%20$23%20billion%20from%20Congress%20to%20respond%20to%20natural%20disasters) and surface-to-air fire.

Kyiv confirms creation of battalion of Russians who want to fight against Putin

A spokesperson from [*Ukrainian intelligence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues) told Bloomberg that a “Siberian battalion” was being made up of entirely Russian citizens in support of Ukraine.

The group is made up of dozens of Russians and [*ethnic minorities from Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/study-ukraine-vladimir-putin-russia-twitter-b2436014.html%22%20title=%22Study%20finds%20‘deepfakes’%20from%20Ukraine%20war%20undermining%20trust%20in%20conflict%20footage) who travelled through third countries to join the Ukrainian army.

Andriy Yusov, a representative of the Defense Ministry’s Main Intelligence Directorate (HUR) said Yusov said it was only the beginning and Ukraine would continue to recruit Russian citizens to similar battalions.

Welsh Parliament recognises Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainian people

On Wednesday the [*Welsh parliament r*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/gaza-palestine-israel-sunak-truss-bankers-b2435912.html%22%20title=%22An%20eye%20for%20an%20eye%20and%20a%20tooth%20for%20a%20tooth%20will%20never%20bring%20peace%20to%20anyone) ecognised the 1932-1933 famine as a genocide against the Ukrainian people under Stalin and the Soviet government.

The Embassy of Ukraine [*said on X, formerly known as Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues) : “We are grateful to the Senedd for recognizing the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as genocide committed against Ukrainians. It’s a significant milestone in restoring historical justice and raising awareness about the millions of innocent victims”

The University of Minnesota says between 3.5 million and 7 million Ukrainians died during the genocide.

Qatar calls out ‘double standard’ in international community on Ukraine versus Gaza

Speaking in Doha to Sky News, the Foreign Minister of Qatar, Abdulrahman al-Thani, questioned why the cutting off of food and [*water in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues) was seen as a war crime but [*not in Gaza.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-un-palestine-hamas-b2436006.html%22%20title=%22UN%20says%20Gaza%20fuel%20delivery%20needed%20now%20or%20support%20could%20stop%20–%20as%20Palestinians%20say%20healthcare%20has%20‘collapsed’)

“The children being killed in this war is exceeding the number killed in the other war between Ukraine and Russia, and yet we haven’t seen the same reaction.”

Russia shoots down two Ukraine missiles provided by US

Russian military have reported they shot down two US-made missiles in a “special military operation. The ATACMS long-range missiles were given to [*Ukraine by the US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-ap-pentagon-taiwan-israel-b2435486.html%22%20title=%22China%20said%20the%20US%20is%20a%20disruptor%20of%20peace%20in%20response%20to%20Pentagon%20report%20on%20China’s%20military%20buildup) with Russia stating it was the first downing of its kind.

Reuters were unable to confirm the incident and there has been no response from Kyiv or Washington. Last week, Ukraine reported success using the missiles inflicting heavy damage on two Russian airfields.

President Vladmir Putin said that the US was making a mistake by entering deeper into their conflict with Ukraine and said that the ATACMS missiles would not change the battlefield situation.

Zelensky: Russian drone strike in Khmelnitskyi region was likely targeting nuclear power station

A Russian drone strike that hit near a nuclear power station in Khmelnitskyi on Wednesday was likely targeting the station according to [*Ukraine’s President Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues).

In his nightly address, he said the action was evidence stricter sanctions were needed against Russia.

Zelensky said every Russian strike, "especially those daring enough to target nuclear power stations and other critical facilities, serves as an argument that pressure on the terrorist state is insufficient."

Russian missiles produced using imported components from EU countries

A report by Russian investigative news outlet, The Insider, has revealed that Russian Kh-47M2 Khinzal missiles are being produced using components imported from all across the EU.

Since the start of the full-scale invasion most of Russia’s defence productions has fallen under sanctions. However, company records show that equipment is still being imported via intermediaries in Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, and the U.K.

A single Khinzal missile costs the Russian state $10 million according to the publication.

Taioseach of Ireland denies claims of a Cabinet row over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

Leo Varadakar, the [*Taioseach of Ireland,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/james-cleverly-european-scrutiny-committee-israel-gaza-commons-b2435918.html%22%20title=%22Cancellation%20from%20Foreign%20Secretary%20earns%20ticking%20off%20from%20committee%20chair) has downplayed claims of a Cabinet row over the accomodation of refugees.

The Irish Government is looking at moving from the current open-ended arrangements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** amid concerns the state will have no accommodation left for new Ukrainian arrivals next year.

When pressed to confirm the tensions, Varadkar said that “the rows in Government are much exaggerated”, but the wider issue was a “serious one”.

Mr Varadkar said he was very “proud” of Ireland’s efforts to house around 100,000 Ukrainians since the war broke out, with 20,000 international protection applicants arriving from elsewhere in the world during the same period.

Powerful explosions near Ukraine nuclear power plants

Powerful blasts near the area of Ukraine‘s Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant damaged windows at the site overnight, but did not affect the plant’s operations or its connection to the grid, the UN nuclear watchdog said on Wednesday.

The explosions temporarily cut power to some off-site radiation monitoring stations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) added.

Officials say twenty people were wounded in the attacks.

Russian Defence Minister discusses test strikes with President Putin on state TV

Russia has rehearsed the delivery of a retaliatory nuclear strike according to a Kremlin statement on Wednesday.

State TV showed Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and President Putin discussing the test strikes.

“Practical launches of ballistic and cruise missiles took place during the training,” the statement said. The statement also said a Yars intercontinental ballistic missile had been fired [*from a test site in Russia’s far east*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues) , that a nuclear-powered submarine had launched a ballistic missile from the Barents Sea, and that Tu-95MS long-range bombers had test-fired air-launched cruise missiles.

The country recently revoked its ratification of a landmark nuclear testing treaty, bringing it in line with the US’s position in what some have called a stand-off with the West during its war with Ukraine.

Russia tests its ability to deliver massive retaliatory nuclear strike

[*Russia’s Defence Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counter-offensive-putin-health-b2435545.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20turns%20to%20new%20weapon%20for%20winter%20attacks%20as%20bombing%20of%20Avdiivka%20continues) Sergei Shoigu said on state TV on Wednesday that the country had tested its ability to deliver a massive retaliatory nuclear strike. The Minister confirmed that the country had begun training for the possible event.

President Zelensky thanks Australia for new military aid package

Australia’s Ministry of Defence announced a new military aid package on Wednesday. The shipment is worth approximately $20 million AUD and includes de-mining equipment, portable x-ray machines, a 3D metal printer, and counter-drone systems.

President Zelensky said on X, formerly known as Twitter: “I am grateful to [*@AlboMP*](https://twitter.com/AlboMP) for Australia’s new package of military aid. Antidrone weaponry, demining equipment, and other assistance are of utmost importance for our warriors and all of our people. We greatly appreciate Australia’s resolute support in Ukraine’s fight for freedom.”

The Australian Ministry of Defence confirmed this took the country’s overall assistance to Ukraine past $910 million.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Why was my grandson stopped from using his ID to vote – and I wasn’t?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685G-G251-DY4H-K3K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 5, 2023 Friday 5:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 906 words

**Byline:** Letters

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

My grandson called me around lunchtime on 4 May, this is unusual, he calls Christmas and birthdays.

He told me he was turned away from the [*polling station*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polling-station) , he had his photo ID But it was on his student card and this is apparently not an acceptable form of identity.

The introduction of photo ID feels to me to be an obvious ploy to stop people voting, mainly the poor and the younger generation who are the ones most likely to not have the required ID.

I would also say they are probably the most likely to vote against the current government.

Tony B

Axminster

Foreign aid budget blunders

I am writing to express my deep concern about the decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, otherwise known as the foreign aid budget.

ODA is crucial in addressing global poverty, which affects millions of people around the world. It provides resources to support sustainable development and poverty reduction in developing countries, helping to improve access to basic services, strengthen governance, promote economic growth, and support humanitarian efforts.

However, the recent decision by the Conservative government to reduce the UK’s ODA budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) is deeply concerning. This cut will have a devastating impact on the world’s poorest people and undermine the progress made in reducing global poverty. It is also in direct contradiction to the UK’s commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition to cutting the foreign aid budget, Rishi Sunak has been criticised for letting the Home Office and other domestic departments use the money, and stretching the rules on what can be counted as aid. In 2022, the Centre for Global Development predicted that over half of the UK’s foreign aid budget would be spent domestically, much of which has gone towards housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Therefore, the notion that 0.5 per cent of GNI is spent on foreign aid is quickly becoming meaningless.

As a nation, we have a responsibility to help those in need, regardless of their location. Organisations such as The Borgen Project, which are dedicated to minimising global poverty, are fighting to prevent this from happening further. I therefore urge you to contact your leaders in support of the ODA and increasing funding to those living in extreme poverty. The problem of global poverty is huge, but every call, email and letter can make a difference.

Emily Moudiotis

London

Monarchy matters

Judith Daniels (letters, 5 May) is right to conclude that a hereditary head of state with limited powers is the best available mechanism for providing the stability and continuity that is so essential in a parliamentary democracy.

Those opposing the monarchy have yet to propose a better alternative. An election for the position is an appalling prospect. What would be the electorate? What would be the interval between elections? How would candidates be selected?

Similarly, an appointment by a committee of the Great and the Good begs the question of how the committee members themselves would be appointed. We should hang on to a system which has worked for centuries and does no harm.

John Wilkin

Bury St Edmunds

Choose a life partner wisely

Simon Kelner’s article on divorce is quite accurate, and painful reading. My husband and I quietly celebrated our fiftieth anniversary this April; I am one of the few women from my university year who is still married to the same man. I can certainly claim no special merit.

Meanwhile, we are coming to terms with our daughter’s divorce, which she did not want or deserve. My advice to men thinking of getting married is to make your choice with care, and stick to it.

(Dr) Merryn Williams

Oxford

Holyrood held to account at last

A committee of former ministers, senior civil servants and special advisers has, remarkably frankly, described Scottish government decision-making as “rushed, unclear and unstructured”.

I think many of us could have inferred that from what we have seen of poorly drafted legislation which has been rushed through Holyrood. The verdict is that the perceived need for speed has been paramount, and not for the better, while “even clear financial rules… were not always implemented fully… because sometimes it was seen as bureaucratic or as optional”.

Government by ministerial announcement has overridden careful policy development, and the opinions of the first minister and her deputy predominated. The committee’s report is a lengthy and sorry commentary on the deficiencies of government in Scotland under the SNP.

The lack of business and commercial expertise, and the fact that “civil servants didn’t always know to seek specific expertise” is a damning comment on the system at Holyrood, which very clearly is not fit for purpose and requires to be overhauled.

Jill Stephenson

Edinburgh

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Department of Justice refuses to publish UK migrant deal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXG-KTK1-JBNF-W330-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 30, 2024 Tuesday 8:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1242 words

**Byline:** By Cillian Sherlock

**Highlight:** The existence of an ‘operational arrangement’ at the centre of the UK-Ireland diplomatic row has been acknowledged by both sides.

**Body**

The Irish [*Department of Justice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-of-justice) has refused to publish an operational arrangement which it says provides for returning asylum seekers to the UK.

It comes amid a developing row between Ireland and the UK after the Irish justice minister said there was a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland from across the [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) border.

After it was suggested the increase could be driven by migrants fearing the UK’s Rwanda plan, UK Prime Minister [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) said that showed the plan’s effect.

The policy aims to send asylum seekers to the east African nation to deter others from crossing the English Channel.

Irish premier Simon Harris said on Sunday that Ireland will not “provide a loophole” for other countries’ migration “challenges”, while Mr Sunak said it was “not interested” in any returns deal if the EU does not allow the UK to deport asylum seekers who had crossed the English Channel to France.

The existence of an “operational arrangement” at the centre of the UK-Ireland diplomatic row has been acknowledged by both sides, but Downing Street has cast doubt on whether it contains any legal obligations.

A No 10 spokesman said: “There’s an existing understanding and operational procedure that is long standing with the [*Irish government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish-government).

“It’s obviously consistent with the [*Common Travel Area*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/common-travel-area) , but there is no legal obligation to accept the return of asylum seekers who enter and cross the Common Travel Area.

“My understanding is no asylum seekers have ever been returned to the UK under these existing arrangements. And as the Prime Minister set out yesterday, we’re not going to accept returns from the EU via Ireland at a time when the EU doesn’t accept returns back to France.”

The Irish Justice Department said the written deal with the UK Home Office was agreed in November 2020 but is not publicly available.

It said the deal provides for reciprocal returns of asylum seekers who are deemed “inadmissible” and helps to protect against abuse of the Common Travel Area.

However, it refused to publish the deal: “We do not provide operational details of immigration procedures so as to avoid any impact on the effectiveness of such operations.”

On Tuesday, the Irish Government approved emergency legislation from the Minister of Justice Helen McEntee to allow the UK to be designated as a safe country to enable asylum seekers to be transferred back there.

It comes after a High Court ruling in March deemed that the legal basis for designating the UK as a safe country for the return of asylum seekers was unsound under EU law.

Mr Harris said the justice minister has acted swiftly to address this High Court ruling.

Asked about agreements with the UK, she said the reciprocal arrangement is to ensure that “neither of our countries are a place for people to evade or obstruct” the immigration controls and processes of the other.

“To combat any abuse of the CTA, it is essential that we have mechanisms in place to return people to the UK where the UK is deemed to be the appropriate country to process any application for protection,” the minister said.

“It hasn’t been operational owing to a High Court judgment which identified a legal issue which had a bearing on the operation of that arrangement.

“The legislative changes that I will bring to the Houses in the coming weeks will ensure that the arrangement can be operationalised.”

The Irish Government has been accused of displaying “incredible incompetence” over migration issues by the leader of opposition party, Sinn Fein.

Party leader Mary Lou McDonald told the Irish parliament: “At a time when we need calm and an assured response, we get panic. At a time when we need competence and clear communication, we get contradiction.

“This has been a feature confirming the widespread view that your Government is not on top of issues relating to migration, that nobody competent is in charge.

The incompetence is off the charts!The government's chaotic approach to immigration hits another level.Confusion and contradiction within government – Justice Minister Helen McEntee says one thing and Tánaiste Micheál Martin says another.Confusion and contradiction between… [*pic.twitter.com/542qjk3g5y*](https://t.co/542qjk3g5y) — Mary Lou McDonald (@MaryLouMcDonald) [*April 30, 2024*](https://twitter.com/MaryLouMcDonald/status/1785315530984808781?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Scrambling around to turn hotels, B&Bs, office blocks into Direct Provision centres or having tents line the length of Mount Street in Dublin are not the hallmarks of a well-managed system.”

She added: “Your government says that you have an agreement with Britain, the British government saying that you do not. Which is it? If you do have such an agreement, has the Irish state made use of this agreement?

“You’ve actually managed to spread this confusion now to between two governments, about an agreement which exists or does not exist. Which is it?”

Mr Harris denied there was any confusion, saying there is a Common Travel Area between the United Kingdom and Ireland.

“As you know, better than most I would imagine, that is a really important Common Travel Area,” Mr Harris added.

“It’s something we value and as you also know, that when Britain made the decision to leave the European Union there was an agreement put in place, one that indeed has been confirmed by the British Government today in relation to an operating agreement for migrants, for refugees to be returned in both directions.

“I have no intention whatsoever of this country being dragged into politics in Britain, I’m very well aware of politics in Britain, they can have their migration policy, and they can do what they wish in relation to that.

“We have ours and ours is a rules-based firm migration system that endeavours to provide assistance to people in humanitarian need, but also one that has to make it clear to people that if they don’t have a right to be here, that they need to be asked and leave more quickly.”

Mr Harris added: “We also have every right when countries enter agreements, that those agreements are honoured. This is a country that honours our agreements and I’ve said very clearly that the British Government has acknowledged that there are operational arrangements in place. I welcome that fact.

“I’m very clear that those operational agreements are in place under the Common Travel Area. And I’m very clear that we’re going to legislate to have absolute clarity so that it can work. But I’m also really clear that it’s only one of a number of things we need to do.”

Labour leader Ivana Bacik said the Government’s immigration plan has “failed”.

“The clearest evidence of that failure is just around the corner. Hundreds of people sleeping in tents and makeshift shelters in desperately unsanitary conditions on Mount Street,” she added.

There has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland in recent years, with up to 16,000 new arrivals projected to arrive every year, up from between 3,000-5,000 between 2015-2019.

As Ireland struggles to boost housing supply after falling behind during the economic crash, the influx has put more pressure on the State to house people as their asylum claim is processed.

The Irish government has implemented a number of migration policies in recent weeks, including paring back the offering to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are automatically granted asylum.

A makeshift camp has sprung up at the International Protection Office in Dublin city as more than 1,700 asylum seekers have been left without an offer of accommodation from Ireland.

**Load-Date:** April 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[*British citizens and officials receive honours for response to war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:676R-9MC1-DY4H-K228-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 31, 2022 Saturday 12:36 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 743 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Speare-Cole

**Highlight:** Several diplomats at the Kyiv and Moscow embassies have been made OBEs.

**Body**

[*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) diplomats, doctors and a grassroots fundraiser have been recognised in the [*New Year Honours*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-year-honours) list for their response to the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Melinda Simmons, the ambassador in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , and Deborah Bronnert, ambassador in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , have received damehoods for their services to foreign policy, including work supporting Ukraine and countering Russia’s aggression since the invasion in February.

We will continue to work together to support them just as we continue to be inspired by their incredible resilience

Melinda Simmons

Ms Simmons called it a “huge honour”, adding: “I am proud of everyone I have worked with and everything we have done to support Ukrainians’ unwavering determination to live free, especially over the last year.

“We will continue to work together to support them just as we continue to be inspired by their incredible resilience.”

Ms Bronnert said she was “hugely privileged” to receive the recognition, adding that the year had been “bleak” and “scarred by the awful invasion of Ukraine and its terrible consequences”.

“Like all of us, I have been inspired by the bravery of the Ukrainians and my colleagues in Ukraine,” she said.

“I also want to pay tribute to colleagues past and present in Russia and indeed the many, many Russians who want and hope for a better future.”

Three other diplomats at the Kyiv and Moscow embassies – Kate Davenport, Sarah Docherty and Nicolas Harrocks – have also been made OBEs for services to British foreign policy.

Rachel Kessler, an independent consultant working with the Foreign Office on sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine, has also been made an OBE, as has Fergus Drake, chief executive for the non-profit Crown Agents, for his work helping to deliver medical supplies and equipment to the country.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Kent, a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, and Dr Paul Ransom, an emergency medicine consultant – who both worked on the ground in Ukraine – were also made OBEs.

Meanwhile, a nanny from Cambridgeshire has been awarded a British Empire Medal after she gathered six containers full of essentials from her local community for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland and raised £190,000 for refugees in Moldova.

Louenna Hood, told the PA news agency she was “completely stunned” and “absolutely over the moon”, calling the award “a massive, massive honour”.

She also thanked the people who helped her along the way, saying: “I started the campaign but I would never have been able to do it without the community behind me.

“Everybody that I asked a favour of, every person said yes. So it’s for everybody, really.”

Ms Hood, who has been a nanny for 20 years, said that a few days after the war broke out in Ukraine, she spoke to a friend in Poland who told her Ukrainian families were arriving in their city with nothing.

“It really just broke my heart to think that people were being told to leave their homes,” she said.

“The thought of having to pack up your home with your children with simply what you can carry is inconceivable.

“So offering some aid and comfort in those first few weeks was really important.”

Ms Hood said she put a post on Instagram on a Sunday evening asking friends and followers to donate essentials, and by the next day her home was full.

“It completely snowballed,” she said, adding that she had no prior experience of working with donations and fundraising.

It was all down to my friends, family, the community, who just all got completely behind it which is why it took off the way it did

Louenna Hood

“I initially thought about sending a few boxes, that turned into a small van, that turned into a container, and then we ended up with six containers.

“So I had absolutely no experience whatsoever, and it was all down to my friends, family, the community, who just all got completely behind it which is why it took off the way it did.”

Ms Hood said she also raised £190,000 from people donating money, and travelled to the border in Moldova to make sure the money went “directly where it was needed”.

“We have still got really amazing contacts for when we went over to Moldova and especially with the Ukrainian embassy, so they keep in touch and if they need specific help we will be there to help them,” she said.

Ms Hood said the initial momentum for donations has “dwindled” over the months, saying: “My message is: just because you don’t necessarily see it on the news every day it’s not that it’s still not happening.

“So it’s very much still happening at this moment.”

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office delays split girl, 12, from rest of family*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:660D-F4G1-JCS0-D1R6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 23, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 693 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

A 12-year-old girl has been split from the rest of her family for years as the coronavirus pandemic, and now a lengthy Home Office delay, is preventing her from joining them in the UK. Amina Fadiga is living in Guinea, west Africa, with her elderly grandmother, who is increasingly unwell and incapable of looking after her, as her parents wait desperately for a decision on a visa for her to join them and their other three children at their home in Birmingham.

The family first applied for an EU Family Permit in February 2020 and the visa was granted within two weeks, but Covid travel restrictions meant that Amina couldn't travel before the visa expired. Her father, Mohamed Fadiga, who lives with his wife, Aicha Cisse, and their other children - aged five, one and four months - requested a concession from the Home Office to enable her to travel after the expiry date, but this was refused. He made a fresh application for Amina in February 2021, but 17 months later there has been no decision.

Earlier this month, the Home Office informed Mr Fadiga, after he made multiple requests for an update, that the application "cannot be located" and that Amina would need to "submit a fresh application". The application number and details on the submission of confirmation in February 2021 and those in the recent Home Office email - both seen by The Independent - are identical, so it is not clear why the department is not able to trace the application 17 months on.

Making a new application will add months to the already lengthy delay. In the meantime, Amina's grandmother, 77, is becoming increasingly frail, to the point that she requires a carer to visit the house every day, and Mr Fadiga, 38, is worried for his daughter's welfare.

"How is she going to stay there if my mum can't look after her? My biggest fear is there won't be anyone to care for her. We can look after her here - she needs to be here," he said. "She wants to be with her siblings, to be with her parents. I have to call all the time to know what she's doing, to check that she is OK. Now the Home Office is telling us to apply for the third time. I'm fed up."

Mr Fadiga moved to the UK in 2012 and first worked as a cleaner and then as a chef in Nando's, where he still works. Ms Cisse, 42, joined him a year later and works as a housekeeper in a hotel. They left Amina with her grandmother, who was happy to care for her, so that they could both work.

In 2019 the grandmother's health started to deteriorate. They decided that Amina should join them and started the application process in early 2020, but are still waiting with no indication as to how long it will take. "I'm sad, I'm confused, I can't sleep. The Home Office isn't giving any answers. What is difficult about this case? She got the visa quickly the first time," said Mr Fadiga. "They told me Ukrainian cases are the priority. Our case was put in before the Ukrainian crisis. We are humans too."

The case comes amid mounting concerns about growing delays in the visa processing and decision-making system, with the standard timeframe for many applications, including business, tourist, student and family reunion visas, having doubled in the past year.

The Home Office has said that the current processing delays are the result of the war in Ukraine, saying it has led to the department experiencing "unprecedented demand" and that it is currently prioritising applications from ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The service standard for family visas - which include family reunion applications for minors - was increased from 12 weeks to 24 weeks in May 2020.

Yasar Razaq, the family's immigration lawyer, said: "An application which should have taken up to 21 days has ended up taking 520 days and counting. This has deprived my client of his family rights. We urge the Home Office to consider the devastating effects delays have upon family life and decide fast."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Each case is considered as quickly as possible and on its individual merits but processing times can vary depending on the volume and complexity of applications. We are in touch with the applicant and have provided advice on next steps."

**Load-Date:** July 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office prolongs split of girl from rest of family*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:660D-F4G1-JCS0-D1T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 23, 2022 Saturday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 14

**Length:** 693 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

A 12-year-old girl has been split from the rest of her family for years as the coronavirus pandemic, and now a lengthy Home Office delay, is preventing her from joining them in the UK. Amina Fadiga is living in Guinea, west Africa, with her elderly grandmother, who is increasingly unwell and incapable of looking after her, as her parents wait desperately for a decision on a visa for her to join them and their other three children at their home in Birmingham.

The family first applied for an EU Family Permit in February 2020 and the visa was granted within two weeks, but Covid travel restrictions meant that Amina couldn't travel before the visa expired. Her father, Mohamed Fadiga, who lives with his wife, Aicha Cisse, and their other children - aged five, one and four months - requested a concession from the Home Office to enable her to travel after the expiry date, but this was refused. He made a fresh application for Amina in February 2021, but 17 months later there has been no decision.

Earlier this month, the Home Office informed Mr Fadiga, after he made multiple requests for an update, that the application "cannot be located" and that Amina would need to "submit a fresh application". The application number and details on the submission of confirmation in February 2021 and those in the recent Home Office email - both seen by The Independent - are identical, so it is not clear why the department is not able to trace the application 17 months on.

Making a new application will add months to the already lengthy delay. In the meantime, Amina's grandmother, 77, is becoming increasingly frail, to the point that she requires a carer to visit the house every day, and Mr Fadiga, 38, is worried for his daughter's welfare.

"How is she going to stay there if my mum can't look after her? My biggest fear is there won't be anyone to care for her. We can look after her here - she needs to be here," he said. "She wants to be with her siblings, to be with her parents. I have to call all the time to know what she's doing, to check that she is OK. Now the Home Office is telling us to apply for the third time. I'm fed up."

Mr Fadiga moved to the UK in 2012 and first worked as a cleaner and then as a chef in Nando's, where he still works. Ms Cisse, 42, joined him a year later and works as a housekeeper in a hotel. They left Amina with her grandmother, who was happy to care for her, so that they could both work.

In 2019 the grandmother's health started to deteriorate. They decided that Amina should join them and started the application process in early 2020, but are still waiting with no indication as to how long it will take. "I'm sad, I'm confused, I can't sleep. The Home Office isn't giving any answers. What is difficult about this case? She got the visa quickly the first time," said Mr Fadiga. "They told me Ukrainian cases are the priority. Our case was put in before the Ukrainian crisis. We are humans too."

The case comes amid mounting concerns about growing delays in the visa processing and decision-making system, with the standard timeframe for many applications, including business, tourist, student and family reunion visas, having doubled in the past year.

The Home Office has said that the current processing delays are the result of the war in Ukraine, saying it has led to the department experiencing "unprecedented demand" and that it is currently prioritising applications from ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The service standard for family visas - which include family reunion applications for minors - was increased from 12 weeks to 24 weeks in May 2020.

Yasar Razaq, the family's immigration lawyer, said: "An application which should have taken up to 21 days has ended up taking 520 days and counting. This has deprived my client of his family rights. We urge the Home Office to consider the devastating effects delays have upon family life and decide fast."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Each case is considered as quickly as possible and on its individual merits but processing times can vary depending on the volume and complexity of applications. We are in touch with the applicant and have provided advice on next steps."

**Load-Date:** July 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Girl, 12, split from rest of family for years due to Home Office delay*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6608-NHY1-DY4H-K4JJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 22, 2022 Friday 4:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 692 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** After months of chasing the department, Mohamed Fadiga told his daughter’s application ‘cannot be located’

**Body**

A 12-year-old girl has been split from the rest of her [*family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/family) for years as the coronavirus pandemic, and now a lengthy [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) delay, is preventing her from joining them in the UK.

Amina Fadiga is living in Guinea, West Africa, with her elderly grandmother, who is increasingly unwell and incapable of looking after her, as her parents wait desperately for a decision on a [*visa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visa) for her to join them and their other three children at their home in Birmingham.

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Making a new application will add months to the already lengthy delay.

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“How is she going to stay there if my mum can’t look after her? My biggest fear is there won’t be anyone to care for her. We can look after her here – she needs to be here,” he said.

“She wants to be with her siblings, to be with her parents. I have to call all the time to know what she’s doing, to check that she is okay.

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“I’m sad, I’m confused, I can’t sleep. The Home Office isn’t giving any answers. What is difficult about this case? She got the visa quickly the first time,” said Mr Fadiga.

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The service standard for family visas – which include family reunion applications for minors – was [*increased from 12 weeks to 24 weeks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-refugees-visas-waiting-time-ukraine-uk-b2077384.html) in May 2020.

Yasar Razaq, the family’s immigration lawyer, said: “An application which should have taken up to 21 days has ended up taking 520 days and counting. This has deprived my client of his family rights.

“We urge the Home Office to consider the devastating effects delays have upon family life and decide fast.”

A Home Office spokesperson said: “Each case is considered as quickly as possible and on its individual merits but processing times can vary depending on the volume and complexity of applications.

“We are in touch with the applicant and have provided advice on next steps.”

**Load-Date:** July 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Varadkar hails US world leadership at meeting with Biden*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680S-KVH1-JBNF-W3S9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2023 Thursday 1:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 802 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** Irish premier Leo Varadkar hailed the importance of US and European leadership as he met with President Joe Biden in Dublin.

**Body**

[*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) hailed the importance of US and European leadership, as he met with President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin).

The Taoiseach, meeting Mr Biden at Farmleigh House in Phoenix Park, praised American leadership since the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year.

Mr Varadkar said he wanted to “thank you and your administration and your country’s leadership when it comes to Ukraine because I never thought in my lifetime that we’d see a war of this nature happening in Europe again”.

He added: “Democracy and liberty and the things that we believe in are on retreat, or in retreat, in large parts of the world, and if it wasn’t for American leadership, and if it wasn’t for America and Europe working together, I don’t know what kind of world we’d live in.”

Mr Biden, who also met with the Irish leader in Washington on St Patrick’s Day, praised Irish values and the country’s acceptance of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as he spoke of a “stronger and stronger relationship” between the US and Ireland.

The pair are set to discuss efforts to restore powersharing in Northern Ireland, with Mr Varadkar thanking Mr Biden for US support for the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr Biden told Mr Varadkar it had been great to see him in Washington last month, and said: “I think there really is an opportunity to make serious progress, not just because of the accord that was signed 25 years ago, but in terms of the way Ireland is moving, the way it is taking its place in the world, working on helping countries around the world that are dealing with starvation, the way you’ve – I know it’s not easy – welcomed Ukrainians here and the leadership you’ve shown.”

Earlier, in the grounds of the Irish president’s official residence in Dublin, Mr Biden had reiterated his hopes for the return of politicians to Stormont as he rang the symbolic peace bell.

Speaking to Mr Varadkar, Mr Biden appeared to reference the progress made in securing the Windsor Framework – the deal between the EU and UK to amend the Northern Ireland Protocol – as he spoke of co-operation between the Taoiseach and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as “very valuable as well”.

The US president, who will address the Irish Parliament later on Thursday as part of a day filled with ceremonies and formal honours, was greeted at Aras an Uachtarain by [*Michael D Higgins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-d-higgins) as he continued his four-day visit to the island of Ireland.

Mr Biden, who stopped to speak to reporters after ringing the peace bell four times, said: “I hope that the government begins to function as it used to in terms of functioning as a representative body in the north.

“I think that’s necessary and that’s for you all to decide, not for me to decide.”

The peace bell was installed in 2008 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr Biden, who visited Belfast on Wednesday as part of a trip to mark the 25th anniversary of the peace accord, referenced former US senator George Mitchell, who chaired the negotiations which led to the agreement.

He said: “I’m very proud of my colleague George Mitchell. He did a fine job. He said 300 days of failure, one day of success. We have got to build on that one day.”

Mr Biden is expected to later set out a “shared vision” for the future of US-Irish relations when he addresses both Houses of the Oireachtas.

He received a ceremonial welcome to Aras an Uachtarain, with his motorcade cheered by onlookers as it passed into the vast Phoenix Park.

It was Mr Biden’s third visit to the residence, but his first as president.

A military band played the American national anthem as Mr Biden stood outside the grand residence with his right hand on his heart.

After listening to the Irish national anthem, the president inspected a guard of honour before being introduced to Irish dignitaries including Irish Defence Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sean Clancy and head of the Irish police, Garda Commissioner Drew Harris.

But Mr Biden was peppered with questions from reporters as he stood in the grounds of the Irish president’s house, including on a high-profile national security leak and his feelings on being back in Ireland.

The world leader said it “feels great” to be home, adding: “I know it sounds silly.”

The visit finished with Mr Biden and Mr Varadkar together meeting some young GAA players.

Mr Biden will be accompanied to the Irish parliament by Marie Heaney, the widow of his favourite poet, Seamus Heaney.

Nine members of the US Congress, one senator as well as Mr Biden’s sister Valerie and son Hunter will attend the event, as well as former Irish president Mary McAleese, two former taoisigh, Bertie Ahern and Enda Kenny, Northern Ireland political leaders and Larysa Gerasko, ambassador of Ukraine to Ireland.

Mr Biden will attend a banquet in his honour at Dublin Castle hosted by Mr Varadkar in the evening.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*UK Clowns travel to Ukrainian refugee centres to play and perform for children*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673M-6NG1-JBNF-W0NJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 16, 2022 Friday 3:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 760 words

**Byline:** Chris Scott

**Highlight:** Clowns Without Borders UK are travelling to Ukrainian refugee centres in Europe to provide ’emotional first aid’ for children this Christmas.

**Body**

The [*CEO*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ceo) of a children’s charity that has sent 19 clowns to [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to provide “emotional first aid” to young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** said the work is about telling children: “I see you, and I care what’s happening to you.”

Clowns Without Borders UK sends clowns into war and disaster zones to provide “critical emotional first-aid through laughter and play,” by delivering performances, providing workshops, and training local clowns.

The clowns, who have operated in conflict zones such as the Lebanese-[*Israeli*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israeli) border and the Turkey-Syrian border, were deployed as part of Project Laughter, a mission that has supported 1,850 Ukrainian refugee children since September 2022.

“We’re so lucky because, basically, the work is about human connection,” Samantha Holdsworth, Chief Clown and CEO of Clowns Without Borders UK, told the PA news agency.

“The question we get is why clowns, why isn’t it something else?

“The point is that you get to say to a little child, through play, I see you, and I care about what’s happening to you.”

Ms Holdsworth said it is not a case of just turning up, but that Clowns Without Borders works with smaller charities, grassroots organisations, big [*NGOs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngos) and “everything in between” to distribute the clowns.

“They will ask, ‘Can the clowns come?’ (and) very, very rarely do we say no,” she explained.

“Then we try and figure out how to do it.”

The charity has visited refugee centres in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) and Moldova, where the victims of the Ukraine-Russia conflict are being housed in temporary shelters.

“We’ll go into a refugee shelter and be normal people, but playful, and do a show,” Ms Holdworth explained.

“Through the show, the children get to know the clowns and get to know that the clowns are okay. They’re grown-ups, but they’re not really grown-ups – so they get to know us as friends.

“After the show, there’s no disconnect, and that’s when we do more different activities… So that might be making bubbles, or doing magic and juggling.”

Ms Holdsworth said what inspires her about the process is that the children “are thinking about other people.”

“One little boy in Moldova, after the show we’re making paper planes and he hadn’t made one before and he says, ‘I’m going to name this after my sister, because she’s not with us anymore,'” she said.

“And he was just there with his mom, I don’t know when it was or what had happened.

“That’s the point of our trauma-sensitive approach, he can share what he wants to share whenever he wants share it.”

“Another little boy drew a picture of the clowns and told us he was going to send it back to his dad and grandad who were back in Ukraine to cheer them up.”

Project Laughter has been funded by Plan International, a humanitarian organisation working to advance children’s rights and equality for girls.

Ms Holdsworth said training local artists in humanitarian clowning is an important part of Project Laughter.

“Local artists have performance experience, but it’d be very surprising if they have experience in humanitarian clowning,” she said.

“Humanitarian clowning is really about being trauma-sensitive and understanding the environment you’re going into… It’s very complex.

“The training is about supporting local artists in how best to respond in a way that’s best suited and appropriate to children who have just, in some cases literally days before, witnessed death or are carrying all of their worldly belongings in a small bag… That’s very difficult.”

Humanitarian clowning is really about being trauma-sensitive and understanding the environment you're going into... It's very complex

Samantha Holdsworth, Chief Clown

According to a report by Save The Children UK, an estimated 3 million of the war’s child refugees will be spending Christmas away from Ukraine and 1,000 children are expected to arrive in the UK without their parents following changes in Government policy.

Global Humanitarian Director for Plan International Dr Unni Krishnan said: “Wars, conflicts and disasters often leave lasting impacts on young minds… Play, fun, art, and theatre help children heal in humanitarian crises.

“The big idea behind this collaborative initiative is to allow children to express themselves.”

Ms Holdworth added: “In a disaster, people very understandably, need to get shelter and water very quickly.”

“But for children, play is so critical for the longer term.

“Those moments of light you get when you’re with little people fully engaged, they will tell you phenomenal things… (They are) so kind and so caring.”

To find out more about Clowns Without Borders, visit [*https://clownswithoutborders.org.uk*](https://clownswithoutborders.org.uk).

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: How do we solve the problems of Brexit? This might be the answer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673K-6WW1-JBNF-W2YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 16, 2022 Friday 9:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 814 words

**Byline:** Sunder Katwala

**Highlight:** BEYOND BREXIT: In our series looking at life after Brexit, Sunder Katwala reminds us that immigration was at the heart of the choice to leave for many. Where do voters stand on it now?

**Body**

[*Immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/immigration) was a central feature in the choice for [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit). Without the loss of public confidence in how successive governments, both Labour and Conservative, had handled the scale and pace of migration from the EU after 2004, it is unlikely that there would have been a narrow 52-48 vote to leave.

Many different arguments were made to sell Brexit to the slim majority who voted for it. Many hoped to see immigration fall significantly; while Priti Patel argued there would be more [*non-EU visas to “save the curry houses”.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/don-t-blame-the-eu-for-the-demise-of-curry-houses-blame-the-conservatives-a7040471.html) The claim that Turkey was about to join the EU was pitched aggressively at those who feared rising migration.

The legacy of that decision has been a surprising one. [*Immigration to Britain has increased*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-immigration-uk-eu-migrants-b2232272.html) , rather than reduced. Attitudes towards immigration [*have become more positive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/immigration-attitudes-labour-tory-voting-b2231644.html) , though the heated and [*polarised political and media debate lags behind.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/migration-figures-record-high-economy-brexit-b2232384.html)

Brexit led to significant changes in immigration policy, with the end of EU free movement and a new points-based system. [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) placed much less emphasis on cutting numbers, ditching Theresa May’s target to reduce [*net migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/autumn-statement-migration-brexit-sunak-b2228681.html). So non-EU migration rose, due to government policy choices, to make it easier for international students to stay after graduating, to attract doctors and nurses to the NHS and to offer a new visa route to Hong Kongers.

Immigration has remained high because of those policy choices. [*It was exceptionally high this year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-migrations-uk-eu-figures-b2232091.html) , with net migration hitting half a million, partly due to the large inflow of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Nobody could claim this was a case of a government foisting high immigration on an unwilling public. Rather, tens of thousands of individual Britons who wanted to host Ukrainians in their homes [*had to battle the bureaucracy to secure a visa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-homes-london-warsaw-ealing-b2048719.html).

The high numbers are a political headache for the government with its own voters. Six out of 10 Conservatives would like overall numbers to come down – but do not favour reduced migration for the NHS, for students or for care workers. They would also let more fruit pickers come here to work.

Two-thirds of Labour voters would not reduce overall levels of immigration. The Labour Party does not believe in an overall net migration target. Rather than entering an auction to reduce the numbers, it should focus on how to manage migration fairly, balancing domestic training and migration to fill skills gaps; ensuring fair funding for public services when population changes; and taking a positive approach to promoting citizenship and integration.

There is a much more heated immigration debate about asylum. Dangerous journeys across the Channel are nobody’s idea of a safe or well-managed asylum system. Yet the public and political debate is polarised between [*advocates of tough measures*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/asylum-channel-suella-braverman-refugees-b2239299.html%22%20title=%22‘Unworkable’%20asylum%20plans%20backed%20by%20Suella%20Braverman%20condemned%20as%20‘completely%20out%20of%20step%20with%20British%20values’) , hoping to deter anybody claiming asylum in Britain, and those who want to see a compassionate asylum system. Most of the public don’t want such a binary choice – believing that a competent government could deliver an asylum system that is orderly, fair and humane.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Doing so presents challenges to all sides of the political arguments. Yet those who see border control as the litmus test of post-Brexit sovereignty cannot deliver this in reality without negotiating with other sovereign states, [*such as France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/uk-france-deal-migration-braverman-brexit-b2224587.html) and Belgium. Governments that want migration via legal routes will struggle to make trafficking unviable if those routes do not exist.

Overall attitudes towards Brexit have shifted. Changes of mind have been less important than generational shifts in the electorate. Four-fifths of adults who were too young to vote in 2016 think Brexit was a mistake. Labour in opposition [*remains deeply cautious about the idea of softening Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/keir-starmer-brexit-leave-labour-b2238882.html%22%20title=%22Keir%20Starmer%20agrees%20with%20Leave%20voters’%20‘basic%20case’%20for%20Brexit%20despite%20backing%20Remain). That reflects electoral geography, with liberal voters more clustered in urban and university seats than the red wall marginals.

Most Labour voters would like a softer Brexit, but the leadership has ruled out reopening the issue of the single market and free movement, keeping the new post-Brexit points system.

So Brexit has not produced the fall in immigration that some hoped for and others feared. This presents a dilemma for liberal pro-migration opponents of Brexit. Some may see a tactical advantage in highlighting Nigel Farage’s sense of “betrayal” that the numbers did not come down.

But there may be a more strategic case for welcoming the broadening of consensus on [*the positive contribution*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/jeremy-corbyn-keir-starmer-immigration-b2230730.html) that migration can make to Britain – lowering one of the barriers to the UK rebuilding closer relationships with its European neighbours from outside the single market and, perhaps one day, within it again.

Sunder Katwala is the director of British Future

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What Farage's immigration plan would do to Britain; All the parties are promising curbs but the Reform UK leader insists that he would cut net migration to zero. James Moore on how this would hit the economy during a labour shortage*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6X-DCG1-JCS0-D012-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

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First Edition

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**Section:** THE NEW REVIEW; Pg. 27

**Length:** 1492 words

**Byline:** JAMES MOORE

**Body**

Could Britain cope with Nigel Farage's "net zero" migration without an economic meltdown? Privately, employers are running scared, not just of Farage but of the promises made by Labour and the Tories, both desperate to neutralise the threat posed by the Reform party leader.

They are well aware that Britain needs migrant workers to cope with the labour shortages that bedevil its economy. Official figures show that the number of job vacancies in the UK outstripped the number of unemployed people available to fill them as recently as the summer of 2022. An improving economy could easily deliver a repeat of that. UK business relies on immigration to keep the wheels of commerce turning. But by how much?

Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, says it is hard to quantify the costs and benefits because "different types of immigration have very different economic impacts, and the economic impact isn't always the decisive factor when making policy decisions".

"***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are not expected to have a net positive impact and that is not why they were admitted," she says. "For some categories, like work visas, the economic impacts are the main consideration. One of the challenges here is that there is no single metric to help policymakers decide which workers to admit."

However, she adds: "Given the recent increases in salary thresholds in the private sector to £38,700 [for visas], the large majority of private-sector workers would now be expected to make a net positive contribution to public finances, for example. This implies that further restrictions beyond this point would likely have a negative fiscal impact."

Immigration also has an outsized impact on certain important economic sectors. Take hospitality. Trade body UK Hospitality is keen to stress that 75 per cent of the industry's workers hail from the UK. But that means 25 per cent come from overseas. In London, that number is much higher.

Will MPs be as keen to talk about migration curbs if there are no baristas to serve them their coffee? Or pull pints in the House of Commons' many (taxpayer) subsidised bars?

Kate Nicholls, the boss of UK Hospitality, says: "While we recognise the need to control migration, this debate cannot be arbitrary and divorced from economic reality. There needs to be a serious debate about a pragmatic and stable employment plan that balances investment in skills and training, including reform of the apprenticeship levy, with sensible access to work visas."

Construction is another industry that has had to call upon overseas workers to cope with labour and skills shortages, which have been made worse by an ageing British workforce and EU staff returning home.

"Putting arbitrary limits on skilled immigration on key roles before a plan for upskilling beds in could stifle economic growth. To that end it is unhelpful to take a broad brush approach to migrant workers given the way it impacts a number of sectors," says Liz Drummond from the Construction Industry Council.

These are the uncomfortable realities policymakers beating the anti-immigration drum will face if and when they take power.

The latest migration figures show that net migration - the difference between the numbers of people arriving in the UK and those leaving - stood at 685,000 in the year to December 2023. That was a 10 per cent fall on the same figures the year before, but are still at historically high levels.

At the last election, net migration was around a third of current levels - and the Tories pledged they would cut it from that number.

In this campaign, both Labour and the Conservatives have said they want to bring down migration but neither has committed to a figure. Only Farage has said he wants net migration to be brought down to zero, with the number of visas for new arrivals affected by the numbers choosing to leave the country.

Matthew Percival, future of work and skills director at the CBI, says it is time for "a more honest conversation about immigration", recognising that demand for immigrant labour is a symptom of shortages.

"Further restricting visas won't deliver growth or public services," he says. "Demand for immigration can be reduced by investment in technology, innovation and skills, and by action to help more people return to work. Businesses want to see all parties at this election put forward credible plans to ease labour shortages and support growth, starting with how they will boost public and private investment."

Where should those plans focus, bearing in mind that most of the main parties agree that the UK desperately needs economic growth and that labour shortages (as Fell says) will only impede it.

One way of reducing the demand for overseas labour would be to improve the productivity of the existing workforce. In terms of the G7 group of the world's biggest economies, UK plc is ranked in the middle of the productivity pack, behind the US, Germany and France but ahead of Italy, Canada and Japan.

In 2022 the average UK worker produced roughly 16 per cent less per hour than their German or American peers. So there is clearly room for improvement. However, there are no indications of that changing anytime soon. A House of Commons briefing paper published last month warned that productivity growth has slowed from its 2 per cent trend level in recent years.

Changing this would require heavy investment in skills and training, which all the business leaders I spoke to (including the many who felt immigration was too much of a hot potato for them to touch) would support.

Telecoms billionaire John Caudwell, formerly a big donor to the Conservatives under Boris Johnson, blasted the Tories' record on investment in a recent Financial Times interview while calling on Labour to be "bold" when it came to investment. The party will need to be, if Keir Starmer is to realise his stated ambition to reduce immigration without damaging the economy.

Another way to reduce labour shortages would be to better utilise the domestic labour force and get more people classed as "economically inactive" into work. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that economic inactivity is running at record levels. Those tarred with this unflattering designation include students, carers, retired people and those incapacitated through health conditions and/or disabilities (also running at record levels).

Prime minister Rishi Sunak recently railed against what he called Britain's "sick note culture", even though UK rates of absence are actually lower than in the US or Germany. His ally Mel Stride, at the Department for Work and Pensions, has sought to expand the "fit note" programme and says he wants to see more disabled people working.

The trouble is, says disability charity Scope, the labour market is not a friendly place for them. Director of strategy James Taylor says disabled people often face exclusion from the workplace. Employers are often to blame.

"The most common reasons include employer attitudes, lack of flexibility and inadequate support. As a result, the disability employment gap has stubbornly remained at around 30 percentage points for over a decade," he says.

He also criticised the current welfare system for "forcing disabled people who are too unwell to work into unsuitable jobs by threatening to cut their benefits".

Tony Wilson, director at the Institute for Employment Studies, also criticised the coercive approach and described the labour market as "ailing" in a recent blog post. He urged government to "build a system that is focused on helping more people find better work, on what you can do not what you must do, and on building meaningful partnerships."

But there is little sign of that at present. Even if it changes, and Britain suddenly enjoys a leap in productivity, the need for some level of immigration will remain, particularly in sectors such as the NHS and social care.

However willing, disabled people aren't going to be suitable to work as carers. They are more likely to need them. Nor are people who have taken early retirement likely to be keen to take up this sort of work. NHS workers, meanwhile, require extensive training.

It is worth noting that when Mishal Husain put Farage under pressure in a BBC interview - something few broadcasters have been willing or able to do - the net zero target wobbled a bit.

But Farage's presence means Labour and the Tories are likely to have to continue to talk about the issue, probably without any reference to the economic impacts of any promises they make.

Unfortunately, as Unison's general secretary Christina McAnea has said: "Until there are sufficient homegrown health and care workers, who are paid enough to keep them in their jobs, the UK is reliant on the overseas staff who choose to come here. Any slowdown is bad news."

An incoming government of whatever stripe will have to deal with that hard reality once the rhetoric of the general election campaign is over.

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Giant puppet tours England to mark World Refugee Week*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65R4-WMV1-JBNF-W074-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 19, 2022 Sunday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:** Ellie Iorizzo

**Highlight:** Little Amal represents millions of displaced refugee children separated from their families.

**Body**

A giant puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee has embarked on a tour of [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) , visiting landmark destinations to take part in World Refugee Week.

Little Amal, designed to highlight the plight of child refugees, became an international symbol of human rights after she journeyed from the Turkish-Syrian border to [*Manchester*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/manchester) last July.

On Sunday, the 3.5m puppet began her New Steps New Friends tour, visiting 10 towns and cities across England to share her resilient and hopeful message: “Don’t forget about us.”

Artistic director Amir Nazir told the PA news agency: “The whole project stems from the idea that refugees are thought of as a problem, when actually they’re not, they’re potential.

“By walking with Amal through cities and through communities, creating a big art spectacle and creating big moments where the community can gather and think of itself and how it receives others, proves the case that refugees shouldn’t be regarded as a burden.

“The awareness to the plight of refugees is always crucial.”

Beginning her tour in Manchester, Amal will go on to visit Bradford, Leeds and journey to the Liverpool docks, as well as meeting the communities in Birmingham, Cheltenham and Bristol’s historic [*Old City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/old-city) and Harbour.

She will return to the Southbank Centre in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) and visit Stonehenge before finishing her journey on the beach in Folkestone in Kent – where she first arrived as a refugee a year ago.

Mr Nazir said: “For me, it was really important that she goes back to the beach of Folkestone that received her beautifully. The community was unbelievable in its welcome and its warmth the day we arrived to the UK.

“I felt that it’s important that she finishes there as a moment where she stands with the sea and says, ‘I’m starting a new chapter in my life.’

“It was very important for us to go to different places, try and do a different route so she meets different parts of the country.”

In May, Amal landed in Poland, bringing aid relief packages for Ukrainian refugee children and their families.

Mr Nazir said: “We just came back from Ukraine and the way the world is treating the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is heart-warming.

“At last, the world has risen to the plate and shown that when we want, we can come together, we can host big numbers of people, the economies do not collapse, the world doesn’t stop, the world keeps spinning on its axis.

Times and locations announced for Little Amal's [*#NewStepsNewFriends*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/NewStepsNewFriends?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) tour! Scroll and to learn when and where you can meet Amal ‍️ [*pic.twitter.com/Z2lhN9cRYa*](https://t.co/Z2lhN9cRYa) — Little Amal (The Walk) (@walkwithamal) [*June 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/walkwithamal/status/1536358287951769607?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“That proves that if we want we can and I encourage us to want for everyone and not just certain types of people.”

Amal’s week-long walk in England comes as lawyers attempt to block Government plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Talking about the Little Amal project in relation to the deportation flights, Mr Nazir said: “We hit another moral low with something like the flights to Rwanda, but without getting polemical or political, this project is about awareness.

“It’s about telling a story of one child, giving a very strong visibility to hundreds of thousands of children like her that are walking around Earth lost, unloved and uncared.

“We want to touch hearts, because that’s more important than politics and that’s why she’s walking.”

Last summer, Little Amal travelled almost 5,000 miles across Turkey and Europe “in search of her mother” before settling in Manchester.

Mr Nazir added: “When we set out to do this crazy project of walking from the border of Syria to Manchester, people asked me, ‘Do you think it will make a difference?’

“My answer is the same: if we changed one person, it’s worth four-and-a-half months of walking.

“We create art, we don’t create measurable impact, but we know that as we were walking, entire cities came to welcome her; entire cities were moved by her story.

“A lot of people from the refugee community would come up and say this is a moment of healing for them because their story is being celebrated.

“I know we changed some hearts, because we met them.

“I set out to tell one story of a young girl who’s lost in this world looking for her mum, going through adventures, hardship and moments of great beauty and great warmth day by day.”

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hundreds join protest against migration Bill outside Parliament*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67W6-8CD1-DY4H-K01H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2023 Monday 8:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 830 words

**Byline:** Gwyn Wright

**Highlight:** The demonstration was organised by the campaign group Stand Up To Racism.

**Body**

Hundreds of people gathered outside the House of Commons on Monday evening to protest against the Government’s Illegal Migration [*Bill*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bill).

The demonstration, organised by the campaign group Stand Up To Racism, took place in [*Parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) Square as MPs debated the legislation inside the chamber.

Former Labour leader [*Jeremy Corbyn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-corbyn) MP spoke to protesters alongside four members of the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

The real politics in this country is on our streets and in our communities. That’s why I joined anti-racist campaigners tonight to oppose the Tories’ attack on refugees.The labour movement exists to stand up for the marginalised — I will keep fighting for a more caring world. [*pic.twitter.com/R87g08Ylw2*](https://t.co/R87g08Ylw2) — Jeremy Corbyn (@jeremycorbyn) [*March 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/jeremycorbyn/status/1640442156815884304?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Representatives of trade unions including the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) – which represents civil servants including Border Force workers – Unite, Unison and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association addressed demonstrators alongside representatives of charity Care4Calais, the Jewish Socialist Group and the Stop the War Coalition.In between speeches protesters chanted “Say it loud, say it clear, refugees are welcome here!” and “Brick by brick, wall by wall, racist borders have to fall”.Banners handed out by the Socialist Workers Party read “open the borders, no deportations” while Stand Up To Racism banners said “Braverman out now”.Speakers spoke in favour of an amendment to the proposed legislation which would create safe routes for people to seek asylum in the UK.Some speakers appeared to express support for fully open borders while others claimed racism was a factor in the Government’s decision to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and send others from the Middle East, Asia and Africa to Rwanda.Mr Corbyn told demonstrators the Bill “is illegal, will imprison children, will deport people to Rwanda, will imprison people who have sought a place of safety”.Protesting now outside Parliament with [*@pcs\_union*](https://twitter.com/pcs_union?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@Care4Calais*](https://twitter.com/Care4Calais?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@AntiRacismDay*](https://twitter.com/AntiRacismDay?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) as MPs debate the [*#illegalimmigrationbill*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/illegalimmigrationbill?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/breccHN2VB*](https://t.co/breccHN2VB) — Trade Union Coordinating Group (@TUCGinfo) [*March 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/TUCGinfo/status/1640402681696075790?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He added that it will be hugely expensive and do little more than create “salacious headlines” claiming migrants and refugees are an “invading army”.

Beth Winter MP, who represents Cynon Valley in South Wales, said the UK “should welcome every single human being who comes to our shores”.

Bell Riberio-Addy, who represents Streatham, said France is not always a “safe country” for people arriving in small boats to return to.

She told demonstrators: “I went to Calais a few months ago and I can tell you Calais is anything but safe. Barbed wire fences, guards who destroy people’s tents every single night, people who move people along as though they were animals.”

She also said the UK accepts fewer refugees than other European countries and that Home Secretary Suella Braverman cannot name a single legal route for asylum seekers to enter the UK when she claims they exist.

[*Dawn Butler*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dawn-butler) , who represents Brent Central, said the Government wants to “lock up” pregnant women and children with the new law.

[*Richard Burgon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-burgon) , who sits for Leeds East, said he had never seen a Bill “so vile, so sick, so disgusting, so immoral, so depraved” before Parliament in his lifetime.

PCS deputy president Martin Cavanagh said the Government was “sending people to their deaths” with its earlier “pushback” policy on Channel boats, adding: “It was racist, it was abhorrent and it was murder.”

He said he is “very proud” of the way union members working for Border Force responded to that policy.

He added they “didn’t just sit there and accept it, they didn’t just say, ‘we’ve got to implement this, it’s nothing to do with us’ – they were clear they were not going to implement that, they were not going to take it”.

Stand Up To Racism co-convenor Wayman Bennett told the PA news agency before the protest: “We are shocked and concerned the Government is talking about breaking international law.

“This is normally reserved for international pariahs, not the original signers of the Convention (on Human Rights).

It is not illegal to claim asylum, it is a right to claim asylum

Wayman Bennett

“There are no safe and legal ways of claiming asylum for the vast majority of refugees and we know this because the majority of people who ask for refugee status have received it even if they have come on boats.

“It is not illegal to claim asylum, it is a right to claim asylum.”

Pete Firmin, 73, travelled from Kilburn in north-west London to Westminster to attend the demonstration.

He said: “The proposal to send everybody to Rwanda without processing any claims at all is just inhuman.

“The protest will achieve very little, unfortunately, because the Government has a large majority, but it is important to show our opposition.

“For the Labour Party to oppose it solely on the basis of not thinking it will work is not good enough.”

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Home news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WH-5VJ1-F072-40MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 29, 2023 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 14

**Length:** 896 words

**Body**

TV presenter defeats tax office over £4.9m claims

Gary Lineker has won his £4.9m tax battle with HMRC. The Match Of The Day host was told by the taxman he should have been classed as an employee of the BBC and BT Sport for his presenting duties, rather than as a freelancer. The tax authorities pursued him for £4.9m it claimed should have been paid on income received between 2013 and 2018. It comes as part of legislation known as IR35, designed to clamp down on tax avoidance by so-called disguised employees, who charge for their services via limited companies.

Throughout proceedings the presenter, 62, insisted all taxes were paid on the income via a partnership set up in 2012 with his ex-wife Danielle Bux. Tribunal judge John Brooks found the IR35 legislation did not apply because there were direct contracts between the presenter and both the BBC and BT Sport. The tribunal found that while Gary Lineker Media (GLM), which he set up with his then-wife in 2012, was a partnership to which IR35 legislation applies, the appeal was still dismissed in full because contracts existed. HMRC has 56 days to appeal.

Lineker was recently embroiled in a row with the BBC after he was briefly taken off air from Match of the Day over his comments comparing the language used to launch a new government asylum seeker policy with 1930s Germany. Lineker has hosted Match of the Day since 1999 and earned about £1.35m in 2020-21, making him the BBC's highest-paid star. His is employed as a freelance presenter by the corporation.

Woman takes Camelot to High Court over £1m prize

A woman is embroiled in a High Court fight with Camelot over whether she is entitled to a National Lottery prize of £10 or £1m. Joan Parker-Grennan had played online after buying an Instant Win Game ticket on 25 August 2015. Lawyers yesterday told Mr Justice Jay the premise of the game was that if a number in the "your numbers" section of the screen matched one in the winning numbers section, the two matching numbers would turn white, indicating that the player had won the prize "designated by those matching numbers".

Camelot says that "at the point" Ms Parker-Grennan bought her ticket, its computer system predetermined her prize to be £10. But the judge was told that between 25 and 26 August 2015, there had been a "technical issue" which could result in "different graphical animations" being displayed on some players' screens. Two numbers with a designated prize of £10 were highlighted on Ms Parker-Grennan's screen with a message saying: "Congratulations, you have won £10." But the judge heard that two other matching numbers - with a designated prize of £1m - also appeared as a result of the technical issue.

Barrister Philip Hinks, leading Camelot's legal team, argued that the operator was only liable to pay the "outcome of the ticket as predetermined" by Camelot's computer system. He said that was £10, not £1m. "It is inappropriate for [the] claim to be determined summarily."

Government spends third of aid budget on asylum seekers in UK

The government spent £3.5bn of aid money on supporting refugees and asylum seekers already in the UK last year - one third of Britain's entire annual budget - while allowing hotel costs to "soar", a watchdog has found. The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) said the Home Office's "failure to tackle the asylum processing backlog and competition for scarce accommodation" was taking money away from programmes abroad. International development funding was also used to support Afghan and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** brought to the UK on bespoke schemes. A report said that because the aid budget is capped at 0.5 per cent of GDP, rocketing spending inside the UK meant that the Foreign Office "had to pause all but essential aid and was unable to plan" in 2022.

Terror attack in Northern Ireland 'highly likely', says MI5

The terror threat level in Northern Ireland has been raised to "severe" following an uptick in activity by dissident republicans determined to use "politically motivated violence". MI5 increased the threat from substantial to severe, which means it deems an attack to be highly likely. The intelligence service, which makes assessments independent of ministers, urged the public to remain vigilant but "not be alarmed".

Report highlights bullying at major NHS trust

Patients could be at risk due to "entrenched" cultural problems at one of the largest NHS trusts in the country, including a "corrosive" culture and "cronyism at every level", a report has found. A safety review into University Hospital's Birmingham Foundation Trust warned leaders the trust needs to address "persistent" cultural problems through their hospitals, including "a fear of retribution" if concerns were raised. The independent review, commissioned following high-profile media reports of a "toxic culture" at the trust, made 17 recommendations made for further action, including leaders to carry out a further review of deaths within its blood cancer services.

Jonathan Brotherton, chief executive at UHB, said: "Patients can continue to be confident that the care and treatment provided at our hospitals is safe. We are pleased that Prof Bewick's overall view 'is that the Trust is a safe place to receive care'. We fully accept his recommendations and welcome the additional assurance that has been asked for through further independent oversight."

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Thousands more refugees facing homelessness after government eviction rule changes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693V-PDD1-DY4H-K18D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 6, 2023 Wednesday 4:13 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 944 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** 140 organisations, including Red Cross, Crisis and Shelter, write to Michael Gove and Suella Braverman

**Body**

Thousands more [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) are facing [*homelessness*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homelessness) because of government delays in issuing ID documents.

Refugees who are granted asylum are typically given 28 days by the Home Office to find somewhere new to live, set up a bank account, and find a job or apply for universal credit, before they are kicked out of their government-funded hotel accommodation.

But that has now been reduced to as little as seven days because the government is delaying giving asylum seekers the documents they need to secure housing and apply for welfare.

Some 140 organisations, including the British Red Cross, Shelter and Crisis, have written an open letter to home secretary [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) and levelling up secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) saying the changes are placing huge pressure on the voluntary sector as more people present as [*homeless*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homeless).

Charity Refugees at Home, which finds rooms for asylum seekers in family homes, said one refugee they helped had been forced to sleep on the street outside the hotel they were evicted from. Another Sudanese refugee had to resort to sleeping at an airport.

Refugees at Home said the number of non-***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** referred to the charity in August was three times higher than the previous year -213 compared to 72 in August 2022.

And Hope at Home, a charity that supports slavery victims, has seen referrals triple since July 2023, with rates now five times higher than the same period in 2022.

They are calling for refugees to receive all the documentation they need to start building a life in the UK before the 28-day notice period begins and for the period to be extended to 56 days.

More than 2,000 asylum cases are reportedly being processed each week, meaning many thousands are likely already impacted by the government’s decision to slash the eviction times.

The clock used to start ticking once identity cards -which allow people to apply for a bank account or benefits -were issued. But since the beginning of August, the notice period now starts from the moment asylum seekers receive their successful grant letter, charities say.

Due to delays of up to two weeks between receiving the grant and getting the ID, asylum seekers are well into the 28-day period before they can even start asking for help. Refugees only receive their eviction notice, giving them seven days to leave the hotel, after they get their ID.

This is often the only evidence a local authority will accept as proof of imminent homelessness and so many find themselves with only a week to find somewhere to live.

In one case that Refugees at Home was asked to support, Reet, a 41-year-old woman from Ethiopia, was forced to sleep in a doorway outside the hotel she was evicted from because she had nowhere to turn. She had been waiting for her asylum decision since 2020 but could not find anywhere to live once she was granted asylum.

One young man from Sudan was evicted before he could register for benefits and had to sleep at a UK airport before they could find him a host.

The charity is still searching for hosts for another refugee from South Sudan, Faheem, who is desperate for accommodation in Essex -the only place he knows in the UK and where he has a support network.

NACCOM, a network of organisations tackling destitution in the UK, said it has accommodated at least 864 refugee adults in 2022-23. This is 33 per cent more than in 2021-22 and 54 per cent more than 2020-21.

Jared Hodgson, CEO at Hope at Home, said: “Out of the 16 people referred to us in August 2023, six of these men had been given notice to quit and only seven days to find alternative accommodation. All of these men are now most likely either sofa surfing or facing street homelessness, as we have been unable to place them due to very limited host availability.”

Salma Ravat, CEO of One Roof Leicester, said: “Normally, on average we receive one [referral] a week, in the past 2-3 weeks we have received 10 requests for accommodation for single men who have received a positive decision. Unfortunately, as we are currently full, we have been unable to offer accommodation to any of these individuals.”

Steve Smith, CEO of refugee charity Care4Calais, said a surge in asylum grants has overloaded a system that was already struggling to cope. He said: “Being granted refugee status should be a happy moment. Instead, hundreds, if not thousands, of refugees are facing homelessness and destitution. Refugees are telling us they are being forced to buy tents and sleep rough in the streets.”

Carly Whyborn, executive director at Refugees at Home, said it was struggling to deal with the “disastrous consequences of the Home Office’s changes to its move-on process”, while Enver Solomon, CEO of the Refugee Council, said the was “punishing vulnerable refugees for its own gross mismanagement”.

Bridget Young, from the NACCOM, said: “Giving people as little as seven days’ notice will create stress and anxiety, and force them to make crisis decisions, with many people having no option but to seek homelessness assistance, or to rough sleep if they are unable to access emergency support.”

Cllr Shaun Davies, chair of the Local Government Association, said councils were facing “combined pressures” from different asylum and refugee schemes. He added that urgent solutions were needed to address the housing shortage.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The pressure on the asylum system has continued to grow, with hotel accommodation costing an unacceptable £6m a day.

“We encourage individuals to make their onward plans as soon as possible after receiving their decision, whether that is leaving the UK following a refusal, or taking steps to integrate in the UK following a grant.”

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*In asylum dispute, Austrian mayor takes down migrant tents*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66VY-YNC1-JBNF-W2CD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 15, 2022 Tuesday 8:49 AM GMT

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**Length:** 752 words

**Byline:** Philipp Jenne and Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** In a standoff over the rising number of asylum-seekers in Austria, the mayor of a small village has defied the federal government and ordered that tents housing migrants be dismantled

**Body**

In a standoff over the rising number of asylum-seekers in Austria, the mayor of a small village has defied the federal government and ordered tents housing the migrants to be dismantled.

After a weeks-long conflict, St. Georgen Mayor Ferdinand Aigner had more than a dozen tents removed that were set up in his village last month. Workers started taking down the 17 white tents Monday after the mayor ruled they were unsafe, “inhumane” and wouldn’t survive the next storm.

“It’s very clear, this method of just putting up tents — I’m still convinced it’s the most stupid solution — putting up these tents in municipalities which are already doing enough — I won't allow that,” Aigner told The Associated Press. He claimed some residents were feeling threatened by the presence of asylum-seekers, many of whom are young men.

The Austrian government has repeatedly criticized the village's resistance toward housing asylum-seekers in tents, saying that most Austrian regions, including the state of Upper Austria where St. Georgen is based, did not fulfill their required quotas of taking in asylum-seekers.

Across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , the number of people applying for international protection has reached highs not seen since well over 1 million people sought refuge on the continent seven years ago. That has placed strains on national asylum systems, especially when it comes to housing.

In [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , officials in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) have turned a former airport into a temporary refugee shelter for up to 3,600 migrants as regular shelters became overcrowded.

In Austria, even the U.N. refugee agency got involved, urging the federal government and St. Georgen to find a compromise so the migrants will not end up homeless during the winter cold.

“Despite all the challenges Austria is currently facing due to the high number of asylum applications, it would be a concession of failure for Austria if people, many of whom had to flee war and terror, were to end up on the streets," said Christoph Pinter, the head of UNHCR Austria.

The UNHCR noted that many communities in Austria have already taken in people seeking protection, and that only about 5,000 more places were needed.

“If every municipality would take a heart and create a few places, the problem would quickly be solved,” Pinter said.

However, Aigner doesn't see it this way.

“It’s just too many,” he said, referring to the number of the asylum-seekers his village is supposed to shelter.

Austria's Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said the tents make young asylum-seekers less threatening, not more.

“Our task is to prevent young men who have practically no chance of asylum from sitting around in front of schools, in front of kindergartens, in our main squares, in village squares, in train stations," Karner said, according to Austrian daily Der Standard.

It was not immediately clear how Austria's federal government would react to the dismantling of the tents, but as of late Monday, the interior ministry had not filed an appeal in court to keep the tents in place. The more than 100 asylum-seekers living in the tents were distributed to other shelters.

More than 70,000 people applied for asylum in Austria between January and September. In comparison, only around 40,000 people applied for asylum in all of 2021.

Austria is also hosting more than 85,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled Russia's brutal war.

Many recent asylum-seekers come from countries like India, Syria, Afghanistan or from northern [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) but most do not intend to stay in Austria. Often these migrants, who have been trekking up the Balkan route, pay human traffickers thousands of euros (dollars) trying to reach countries like Germany, Spain or Italy in hopes of finding work.

Since they are legally not allowed to pass through Austria, they apply for asylum if they get detained to avoid immediate deportation. Often they continue their journey west after a couple of days in the Austrian asylum system, seeking to reach their desired destinations.

According to the UNHCR, this means that despite rising asylum numbers, the actual number of asylum applicants in Austria is “only just about the level of last year."

A young asylum-seeker from Somalia, interviewed Monday in St. Georgen, said he was getting increasingly desperate about his situation.

“I don’t know how I can live in Europe,” 27-year-old Bashir Hassan Jabart said. “Everywhere you go, they return you back.”

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Kirsten Grieshaber reported from Berlin.

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Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories about global migration at [*https://apnews.com/hub/migration*](https://apnews.com/hub/migration)

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Art sessions at Ukrainian orphanage are 'healing from the inside'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65GC-2WM1-JBNF-W0CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 18, 2022 Wednesday 8:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 693 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** Volunteer Lily Smirnova said the children are 'so bright and laughing' after painting sessions.

**Body**

A volunteer leading art classes at an orphanage set up to help young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has said the sessions with the children are "healing them from the inside".

Lily Smirnova, a 33-year-old from the [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) region, has worked in marketing for more then 10 years but recently began visiting an orphanage in western Ukraine several times a week.

Ms Smirnova estimates 120 children aged two to six are staying at the orphanage, the exact location of which she would not reveal for security reasons, and there are preparations to welcome more.

The group is made up of refugees from orphanages across Ukraine, with many having fled from Eastern Ukrainian areas such as [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol) as Russian attacks worsened.

Ms Smirnova brings with her paint, brushes and other art supplies which she has noticed have "inspired" the children.

"This creativity and freedom, the mix of the two, I believe is helpful for these specific kids especially that (have) suffered a lot," Ms Smirnova told the PA news agency.

"They fled from their territories in their usual location ... they experienced bombing nearby and being in a shelter.

"Mostly the goal of this project is to get them out of that negative feeling.

"I really believe that this freedom and creativity is something that is really healing them from the inside ... you are forgetting about everything that is happening in the real world."

Ms Smirnova said she could see a difference in the children's demeanour before and after the sessions.

"We had a kid who had the choice to pick a colour and he picked black - his paintings were black, he painted his face with black. He's from Mariupol," she explained.

"But at the end of the day, he looked at himself in the mirror and (said), 'No, no, no, this is not the colour I want. I want something bright, maybe like the sun.'

"At the beginning of the sessions, kids are very closed... There are not many smiles, they are very serious kids.

"(But they) open themselves, they are engaged in something and they are really open to this."

At the beginning of the sessions, kids are very closed (but they) open themselves.

Lily Smirnova

The children are free to draw and paint whatever they like during the sessions with Ms Smirnova - including her, which they do often.

"I love every part of it, from the beginning to the end of the session," she said.

"At the end of the session, I'm a little bit sad that it finishes - I really like how the kids are drawing something and then they are proud, they show me their picture and say "this is my picture, this is what I drew. I want to do more".

"Being with kids, sharing my feelings with them and giving them the love - I really like to hug them and appreciate the small moments.

"They like to kiss, they like to hug, they like to say 'I love you' and they like to hear it as well. I'm a giver, I give them these emotions and love from the inside and in return I get a lot."

Ms Smirnova added that while the painting sessions are "chaotic" it is also an opportunity for other teachers to rest.

"They have a rest and then they can come back to kids more energised," she said.

"But definitely what we do see at the beginning and the end of the session is that they are different kids, they are so bright and laughing after the sessions."

While not using any "specific methodologies," she said it is important that their creativity is honoured and applauded.

[*#war*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/war?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Day 74Happy Mother's Day to every mummy on the planetToday I spent a day with these amazing kids-orphans and of course my lovely family.Guess how many times kids called me 'mummy'?Best presents[*#freeUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/freeUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#artforgood*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/artforgood?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Ukrainianorphans*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukrainianorphans?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/BrSm9yJulk*](https://t.co/BrSm9yJulk) - Lily Smirnova (@Lilya\_Smirnova) [*May 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Lilya_Smirnova/status/1523379044154281986?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"They can paint their faces, they like it very much, they like to paint me too," she said.

"And when they do something, they really honour it and they are proud that they created something.

"We have this minute of proud to advocate and give some applause that they created something: this is their painting and their art."

Ms Smirnova is documenting her experience of the war through her [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) account, @Lilya\_Smirnova, and hopes to continue her work at the orphanage.

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hope, horror, as Ukrainian war refugees exceed 6 million*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FB-WS51-JBNF-W18V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 13, 2022 Friday 6:06 PM GMT

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**Length:** 666 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Expectant mother Galina Kubiak says she misses home but has fallen in love with Romania, the neighboring country where she fled with her two small children to escape the war in Ukraine

**Body**

Expectant mother Galina Kubiak says she misses her home in Ukraine but has fallen in love with Romania, the neighboring country where she fled with her two small children to escape the war.

"Sometimes we go to the store, and they find out we're Ukrainians and people give the kids milk or cookies, or sometimes they just give hugs," the 35-year-old who now lives in Romania's northern city of Cluj-Napoca said Friday. "I'm so surprised in a good way (by) the kindness of people."

Since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded on Feb. 24, more than 6 million people have fled Ukraine, the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) refugee agency announced Thursday. Russia's war - which it insists on calling a "special military operation" - has prompted one of the worst humanitarian crises in Europe since World War II.

Poland has absorbed the majority of refugees - more than 3.2 million - while more than 900,000 went to Romania. Many others have fled to other neighboring countries like Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova.

Like many of the millions of refugees, mostly women and children, who have fled the war, Kubiak's journey so far has been a mixture of hope and horror. Her family hails from a village just a few kilometers from Bucha outside Kyiv, the now-infamous site of alleged war crimes by Russian forces.

"My brother was helping to bury people," she told The Associated Press. "People were dead on the streets and people were just taking them and making holes in the ground and burying people - it's hard to see, it's very hard to see."

Vlad Gheorghe, a Romanian member of the European Parliament who runs a Facebook group in Romania called United for Ukraine that pools resources for refugees, says refugees' needs have shifted since the start of the crisis. They now require permanent solutions for employment, schooling, and healthcare.

"We were not prepared for this type of crisis in the EU - and we should have been," he told the AP in an email Friday. "Also, there is a continuous need for financial support and donations for food, hygiene products (and) clothing."

"The refugee crisis does not end even if peace comes right now," he said, adding that many refugees won't have a home to return to due to the destruction of war, but that he has been impressed with the continued level of support from civic society throughout the crisis.

Others on the frontline of refugee support, however, say the situation is taking a toll.

"We love what we do, but obviously tiredness is creeping in," said Laura Mihali, who leads the Christian nongovernmental organization Youth For Mission, which provides housing and food for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - including Kubiak - in Cluj-Napoca.

"Three weeks ago we found out that one of the families is from Bucha, their son-in-law was killed and is buried in one of the big holes there in the city," she said. "I think the psychological tiredness is affecting us more than the physical."

Information technology worker Uliana Kaliuzhna, from Ukraine's northeast city of Kharkiv, says she feels lucky that she can continue her work online in Cluj-Napoca, and continues to pay tax at home "to support my country."

Kaliuzhna rents her flat with the salary that she still draws.

"It's not easy to pay for everything," she said. "But volunteer centers help a lot with food and clothes - sometimes we visit them and get help."

The [*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) also said Thursday that more than 1.6 million refugees have returned to Ukraine, either permanently or temporarily. But it added that cross-border movements might not indicate "sustainable" returns.

Kubiak, who is heavily pregnant, stresses that she wants to return home when the war is over and reunite with her loved ones.

"We all have a dream that we can all come back and live in peace and help rebuild," she says, her voice quivering with emotion, "and renew our country."

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Gramesc reported from Cluj-Napoca, Romania; McGrath reported from Sighisoara, Romania, and Jamey Keaten from Berlin, Germany.

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Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ticketmaster reassures Eurovision fans after tickets sell out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PX-BGY1-DY4H-K126-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2023 Tuesday 5:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** TECH; Version:1

**Length:** 786 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** Those who managed to secure tickets celebrated on social media while others commiserated.

**Body**

[*Ticketmaster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ticketmaster) has reassured Eurovision fans that sales were “unaffected” after tickets to the grand final sold out in just over half an hour.

Fans reported technical issues as they tried to secure passes to the nine different live shows on Tuesday.

Some were met with a “500 – Internal Server Error” message when they attempted to click through to find tickets.

Others reported being ejected from the virtual queue after receiving a message saying their session had expired “due to inactivity”.

A Ticketmaster spokesperson said: “The Ticketmaster site did not crash today – rather a very small number of fans experienced issues accessing the queue.

“Ticket sales were unaffected, and thousands of fans secured their seats for the Eurovision Song Contest, which is now sold out.”

At 12.36pm the official Eurovision account tweeted that all tickets to the grand final had sold out, and tickets to the remaining shows had gone by 1.32pm.

A spokeswoman for the [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) said: “As expected, demand for Eurovision Song Contest tickets was extremely high and tickets for all nine shows sold out in 90 minutes.

“Congratulations to those who secured their seats to Liverpool Arena in May.

“We are now looking forward to putting on a brilliant show for our global TV audience and those watching on BBC One and BBC iPlayer in the UK.”

It is thought this is the first time tickets to all nine live Eurovision shows have sold out on the first day.

All [*#Eurovision2023*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision2023?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) shows including previews are now SOLD OUT.Demand was super high but don’t forget we have 3 amazing TV shows planned for this year's Contest & lots of Eurovision activities and parties around Liverpool during the event!— Eurovision Song Contest (@Eurovision) [*March 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Eurovision/status/1633098382855094273?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The international singing competition will take place at the 11,000-capacity Liverpool Arena later this year, culminating in the grand final on May 13.The event is being held in the city after the UK was chosen to host the competition on behalf of war-torn 2022 winner Ukraine.Tickets for the semi-final shows are priced from £30 to £290, with the cost increasing to between £80 and £380 for the grand final shows.Those who managed to secure tickets celebrated on social media while others commiserated online.Alexandra Kilcran, 27, a content designer from north London, was among those who managed to secure a ticket to the jury grand final.She told the PA news agency she would be attending by herself and her experience getting a ticket had been “fairly straightforward and easy”.I never thought I would see it in the UK with how bad our luck has been in the competition. I can tick it off my bucket listMegan Spencer, from LeicesterShe said: “I got tickets for the jury grand final and took about 20 minutes. I’m shocked I got anything at all! Delighted, I’ve always wanted to go.“My best friend [*James*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james) passed away last year and we were both obsessed with it so it’ll be strange going without him. I’ll have a drink for him when I get there.”She said she got standing “for the atmosphere and so I can mingle”.Megan Spencer, 27, from Leicester, spent £82 on her standing ticket to the second semi-final.The social media assistant, who will stay in nearby Southport and catch the train to save money, said she screamed when she secured the ticket.She told PA: “I’ve been a massive Eurovision fan since I was young, it’s like my second Christmas each year. I never thought I would see it in the UK with how bad our luck has been in the competition. I can tick it off my bucket list.”Eurovision is set to air on the BBC and will be hosted by singer and Britain’s Got Talent judge [*Alesha Dixon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alesha-dixon) , Ted Lasso actress [*Hannah Waddingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hannah-waddingham) and Ukrainian singer Julia Sanina, as well as returning favourite, comedian and talk show host Graham Norton.Congrats if you got tickets! If not don’t worry, the Euro Village is gonna be amazing. [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is gonna take over the whole city. See you soon Liverpool…. All aboard.. (2018 ref for you die hards). [*pic.twitter.com/IzLZKEFc5y*](https://t.co/IzLZKEFc5y) — R Y L A N (@Rylan) [*March 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Rylan/status/1633088093510090752?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

After the sale Rylan Clark, who also features on the presenting line-up, tweeted: “Congrats if you got tickets! If not don’t worry, the Euro Village is gonna be amazing. #Eurovision is gonna take over the whole city.

“See you soon Liverpool…. All aboard.. (2018 ref for you die hards).”

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in the UK through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme will be able to apply for cheaper tickets.

It was previously announced that the UK Government will make around 3,000 tickets available for those who were forced to flee their home country when Russian troops invaded last year.

The subsidised tickets will cost £20.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Hancock is housing refugees from Ukraine - and, yes, he is keen to tell us all about it*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CS-PRM1-F072-426F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 6, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 34

**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** TOM PECK

**Body**

Fans of Matt Hancock, of which there may theoretically be some, were left disappointed two months ago when the big man's big comeback, via a business podcast hosted by the newest entrepreneur on Dragons' Den, was overshadowed by Vladimir Putin's suspiciously timed invasion of Ukraine.

But, on the vanishingly small off-chance these fans exist, they needn't have worried. Their hero would never be one to not turn a crisis into an opportunity (which is the sort of thing people say on business podcasts, when they're not instead having to talk about snogging one of their staff on CCTV), and he has now managed to turn the war in Ukraine to his advantage.

It is not entirely clear whether a single fleeing Ukrainian had made it to the Polish border before Matt Hancock began writing a seemingly never ending succession of newspaper articles about his desperation to host a Ukrainian family.

On one such occasion, I may myself have written an article on the subject, in which I may have asked the question, in the headline, as to whether these people had not already suffered enough. And on that occasion, I may then also have been contacted by Matt Hancock's "team", who felt it all to be very unfair, that he was "doing a decent thing" and that he was damned if he did, and damned if he didn't.

Politeness appears to have prevented me from pointing out that one option worth considering would be simply to apply to host the family in question without any accompanying newspaper articles or TV appearances, thus rendering him exactly as damned and undamned as the other 500,000 or so people in the country who had managed to do just that.

Still, never mind. Because here we are, just a few weeks later, and somehow Matt Hancock has managed to find himself among the lucky ones whose application to host a Ukrainian family has somehow made it through the Home Office's systems. And readers of this week's Spectator magazine are even luckier, gifted as they have been with yet another full-page article, all about life in the Hancock household which now has fully seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their four dogs living in it.

Team Hancock can have no complaints about the headline this time. "It takes courage to be vulnerable," it states. The readers, on the other hand, may not be disappointed but possibly bemused when they discover, roughly three-fifths of the way through, that the courage and vulnerability in question refers not to the courage required to run for your life in the middle of relentless Russian shelling, but rather the courage of Matt Hancock, to travel to the Royal Palace in Stockholm and give a talk alongside various princesses from various countries.

(The subject of said talk was Hancock's own dyslexia, a noble topic on which he now finds time to campaign, and with considerable success. He has, he said, managed to build support "across the spectrum" including from the current education secretary, 54-year-old Nadhim Zahawi, the former CEO of YouGov and owner of a personal property empire thought to be worth north of £100m. "One day he'll go far," notes Matt.)

Look, none of this, per se, is Matt Hancock's fault. It's not his fault he was the last nice guy standing when politics went to the dark side. It's not his fault that his relentless optimism and even more relentless relaunches have come to resemble the attempts of Rob Brydon's divorced cab driver character, Keith, from the outstanding sitcom Marion & Geoff, who will only ever look on the bright side of everything as his life falls apart around him.

In one particular scene, Keith produces his collection of audio cassettes that he's recorded himself, of solo trips to Chessington and Longleat Safari Park, to post to his children on the basis that they'd probably like to go there. "In this age of digital technology," he says, "it's almost like I'm on a computer game with them or something. I'm like a virtual dad, and with virtual dad, they can switch me off if they want to."

And he's right, they can. But when it comes to Matt Hancock, the British public appear to be finding it much more difficult, despite having made their feelings on the subject more than abundantly clear.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Braverman migrant-tagging plan 'just another gimmick'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6924-R041-JCS0-D098-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2023 Tuesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 935 words

**Byline:** ARCHIE MITCHELL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Suella Braverman has been criticised over plans to fit migrants with ankle tags, with Labour branding the idea "just another gimmick". Home Office officials are reportedly considering it as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding.

The Illegal Migration Act places a duty on the government to detain and remove those arriving in the UK illegally, either to Rwanda or another "safe" third country. However, as spaces in Home Office accommodation are in short supply, officials have been tasked with a "deep dive" into alternatives, according to reports.

While the preferred solution is to increase the number of detention places, electronic tagging has been mooted, as has cutting off financial allowances to someone who fails to report regularly to the Home Office. UK charity Refugee Council criticised the idea, claiming it would see vulnerable people "treated as mere objects".

Chief executive Enver Solomon said: "It's treating people as mere objects rather than vulnerable men, women and children in search of safety who should always be treated withcompassion and humanity, in the same way we welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. This is not who we are as a country nor the Britain we aspire to be."

A refugee who fled Afghanistan said electronically tagging asylum seekers was "completely wrong and unacceptable". Gulwali Passarlay told The Independent the only point of the plans was to "make the public think we are doing something", and accused ministers of being "cruel".

His friend has been forced by the Home Office to wear an ankle tag since arriving in the UK as a refugee, which Mr Passarlay says has taken a significant toll on his mental health. "How would normal people feel if they were electronically tagged just for being who they are?" he said. "We're surveilling the most vulnerable people in our society," he added.

The government's plans emerged days after Home Office figures showed the backlog of asylum cases in the UK has hit a new record high, in a blow to Rishi Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" and cut processing times. A total of 175,457 people were waiting for an initial decision on an asylum application in the UK at the end of June, up 44 per cent from 122,213 a year earlier and the highest figure since records began in 2010. The number of people waiting more than six months for an initial decision stood at 139,961 at the end of June, up 57 per cent year-on-year and another record high.

In a bid to bring down the £6m a day cost of housing asylum seekers in hotels, ministers are trying to move migrants onto the Bibby Stockholm barge in Dorset. But these efforts faced a fresh setback on Sunday as The Fire Brigades Union sent a legal threat to the Home Office accusing ministers of "callous disregard" for the safety of those on board.

Asked about electronic tags for migrants yesterday morning, home secretary Suella Braverman said ministers are considering "a range of options. We have a couple of thousand detention places in our existing removal capacity," she told Sky News.

"We will be working intensively to increase that but it's clear we're exploring a range of options, all options, to ensure that we have that level of control over people so that they can flow through our systems swiftly to enable us to thereafter remove them from the United Kingdom."

But Labour's shadow employment minister Justin Madders described the plans as "just another gimmick". Speaking to Sky News, Mr Madders said: "The only people you tag are criminals. And my understanding is that people who are coming to this country seeking asylum are not criminals. They are usually people fleeing persecution. And if there's a problem with people absconding, this is the first I've heard about it. Clearly the solution to that is actually to get on and process the asylum applications a lot quicker than is happening. I think this is just another gimmick that is not dealing with the root of the problem at all."

Mr Madders also said it is "pathetic" for the government to blame "lefty lawyers" and Labour for failings in its asylum policy. "They ought to own this problem," he said.

Shadow immigration minister Stephen Kinnock said it is "the latest in a long line of gimmicks" thought up by the home secretary. "It's time they put in the hard work to clear their record asylum backlog so we can get people out of expensive hotels," he said.

In June last year, the Home Office launched a 12-month pilot scheme to fit migrants with tags. The tagging pilot allowed the electronic monitoring of asylum seekers who are declared inadmissible after travelling through safe countries and includes those selected for transfer to Rwanda.

The Independent revealed an asylum seeker electronically tagged by the government after being selected for removal to Rwanda was launching a legal challenge against the move. The man said that after being tortured and trafficked in Sudan and Libya he has been treated "like an animal" in the UK. A psychiatric report found that being forced to wear a tag had worsened his mental health, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, and increased the risk of self-harm and suicide.

The Home Office said it is "committed to the removal of foreign criminals and those with no right to be in the UK". A spokesperson said: "That is why we have introduced measures under the Illegal Migration Act, which will ensure those arriving in the UK illegally may be detained and swiftly removed to their country of origin or a safe third country. We are now considering a range of options to reduce the rate of absconding."

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*King and Queen Consort to make first state visits to France and Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67P1-MHT1-JBNF-W3WM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2023 Friday 12:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 841 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** Charles and Camilla will tour France and Germany from Sunday March 26 until Friday March 31.

**Body**

The King and Queen Consort will make their first state visits to [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) and [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , Buckingham Palace has confirmed.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) and Camilla’s six-day trip to Europe later in March will employ the royal family’s “soft diplomacy” to help strengthen the UK’s ties with two of the European Union’s leading nations.

The visit has been in the planning by the UK and host nations for months but its timing is fortuitous as it comes a few weeks after the UK’s relations with Brussels began to ease following the Windsor agreement, the new Brexit deal for Northern Ireland.

The King and his wife will travel to the French capital Paris on March 26 then continue to Berlin in Germany, arriving on March 29 during a trip which a source said was planned in an “extraordinarily positive” atmosphere by all.

Asked about the importance of the state visit to the UK’s bond with Paris and Berlin, a Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office official said the Government was very keen to have a strong and close relationship with the UK’s European neighbours.

Aspects of the trip reflect what are believed to be the wishes of the host countries to mark the historic visits of the UK’s new head of state.

The King will be the first British monarch to give a speech from France’s senate chamber, to senators and national assembly members, and the first UK sovereign to address German politicians from the Bundestag.

Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate will be the backdrop for Charles and Camilla’s official welcome to Germany, the first time the landmark has been used to welcome any visiting head of state.

A source said: “The fact that the programme has so many unique ceremonial elements to it does reflect the fact the strength of the relationship and something of the fact that this is the first state visit of their majesties’ reign.

“The atmosphere in which this has all been planned has been extraordinarily positive.”

A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said the visit was at the request of the British Government following invitations from the French and German presidents.

Outlining the trip, the spokesperson added: “The visit will celebrate the UK’s relationship with France and Germany, marking our shared histories, culture and values.

“It is also a chance to look forwards and show the many ways our countries are working in partnership, whether that be to tackle climate change, respond to the conflict in Ukraine, seize trade and investment opportunities or share the best of our arts and culture.

“As well as speaking to the strength of the United Kingdom’s bilateral relationships with France and Germany, Their Majesties’ visit will include engagements highlighting the importance of sustainability and community – key themes which have been embraced by citizens of all our countries.”

Highlights of the six-day historic tour include Charles and [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) joining their French hosts President [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) and his wife Brigitte Macron for a ceremony of remembrance and wreath laying at the Arc de Triomphe.

The King and The Queen Consort will travel to France and Germany for the first State Visit of the new reign, from 26th March to 31st March 2023.The visit will celebrate Britain’s relationship with France and Germany, marking our shared histories, culture and values.— The Royal Family (@RoyalFamily) [*March 3, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RoyalFamily/status/1631635834834231297?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Afterwards the foursome will be part of a procession down the Champs Elysees towards the Elysee Palace, the French president’s official residence, where they will sit down to talks.

Camilla and Mrs Macron will officially open the new Manet and Degas exhibition at the Musee d’Orsay while Charles gives his address from the senate chamber.

The King and Queen Consort will also visit Bordeaux, centre of the famous wine-growing region and home to many British residents, where they will visit an organic vineyard and Charles will meet emergency workers who tackled wildlife last summer’s wildfires on the outskirts of the city.

The King and Queen Consort will also visit Bordeaux, centre of the famous wine-growing region and home to many British residents, where they will visit an organic vineyard and Charles will meet emergency workers who tackled wildlife last summer’s wildfires on the outskirts of the city.

The German leg of the trip will begin in March 29 with a ceremonial welcome from German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his wife Elke Budenbender at the Brandenburg Gate.

The King will meet a few of the one million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who fled the Russian invasion and were welcomed in Germany.

In Hamburg, joined by the German president and his wife, Charles and Camilla will visit the St Nikolai Memorial, the remains of a church which was destroyed when the Allies bombed Hamburg during the Second World War.

Hamburg was virtually razed to the ground by Operation Gomorrah, a major bombing operation against the city in 1943, described as being unmatched by any other single Allied air attack in Europe during the conflict.

At the site, the King and president will lay wreaths during a short ceremony of remembrance.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson confirms £300m aid to Ukraine in address to country's MPs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C6-H6K1-DY4H-K19J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 1:48 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 754 words

**Byline:** David Lynch

**Highlight:** The Prime Minister echoed Churchill, describing Ukraine's defence against Russia as its 'finest hour'.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has confirmed the UK will send a package of support worth £300 million to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in coming weeks, as he addressed the country's parliament.

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) also echoed the words of Winston Churchill in the videolink address to the Verkhovna Rada, describing Ukraine's resistance against Vladimir Putin's invasion as its "finest hour".

Mr Johnson stood for the Ukrainian national anthem ahead of his speech, and was introduced by the Ukrainian parliament's speaker.

Ukrainian [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) in the chamber could be seen holding a Union Jack and the Ukrainian flag.

President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) spoke after Mr Johnson, describing the UK and Ukraine as now "brothers and sisters".

It is reportedly the first time Mr Zelensky has appeared in the parliament in person since the war began.

Today UK Prime-Minister [*@BorisJohnson*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) addressed to Ukrainian Parliament with the powerful speech and the strong arguments to stand with Ukraine. Our President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) was there. It was the first time he appeared in Parliament in person since the war started. Thanks [*pic.twitter.com/uBCqltynrA*](https://t.co/uBCqltynrA) - Serhiy Leshchenko (@Leshchenkos) [*May 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Leshchenkos/status/1521457919883100161?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Johnson told the parliament: "In the coming weeks, we in the UK will send you Brimstone anti-ship missiles and Stormer anti-aircraft systems.

"We are providing armoured vehicles to evacuate civilians from areas under attack and protect officials - what Volodymyr (Zelensky) mentioned to me in our most recent call - while they maintain critical infrastructure.

"I can announce today from the UK Government a new package of support totalling £300 million, including radars to pinpoint the artillery bombarding your cities, heavy lift drones to supply your forces and thousands of night vision devices.

"We will carry on supplying Ukraine, alongside your other friends, with weapons, funding and humanitarian aid, until we have achieved our long-term goal, which must be so to fortify Ukraine that no-one will ever dare to attack you again."

Downing Street had earlier said the equipment will include electronic warfare equipment, a counter battery radar system, GPS jamming equipment and thousands of night vision devices.

The Prime Minister also told Ukrainian MPs that their country would win the war, and said the conflict had "sowed the seeds of catastrophe" for President Putin.

He added that Ukraine had "exploded the myth of Putin's invincibility" and that Russia's "war machine" had "broken on the immovable object of Ukrainian patriotism".

This is Ukraine's finest hour, that will be remembered and recounted for generations to come

Boris Johnson

Echoing Churchill, the Prime Minister said: "This is Ukraine's finest hour, that will be remembered and recounted for generations to come.

"Your children and grandchildren will say that Ukrainians taught the world that the brute force of an aggressor counts for nothing against the moral force of a people determined to be free.

"They will say that Ukrainians proved by their tenacity and sacrifice that tanks and guns cannot suppress a nation fighting for its independence, and that is why I believe that Ukraine will win."

In 1940, following the fall of France, Mr Churchill sought to rally Britons to resist the Nazis - telling the country that it would be remembered as their "finest hour".

When he addressed the UK Parliament in March, Mr Zelensky evoked another of Mr Churchill's wartime addresses, declaring: "We will fight in the forests, in the fields, on the shores, in the streets."

The latest military support package comes after ministers updated Parliament last week on plans to send sophisticated long-range Brimstone missiles and Stormer air defence vehicles.

In his address, Mr Johnson was also conciliatory about the mistakes Western leaders had made in the past.

He said that Ukraine's allies "must be humble about what happened in 2014", before adding: "We cannot make the same mistake again."

Mr Johnson's address to the Ukrainian parliament is the first by a world leader since the conflict with Russia began.

It comes after the Prime Minister told ITV's Good Morning Britain that the Government could have been faster in helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

When pressed by Susanna Reid about the difficulties refugees had faced, Mr Johnson said: "So far, 86,000 visas have been issued and 27,000 are already here and I want to say, thank you - 27,000 is a lot and it's growing fast and I want to pay tribute to all those who are helping to look after Ukrainians.

"Could we have done it faster? Yes, perhaps we could."

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Braverman migrant-tagging plan 'just another gimmick'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6924-R041-JCS0-D08G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 935 words

**Byline:** ARCHIE MITCHELL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Suella Braverman has been criticised over plans to fit migrants with ankle tags, with Labour branding the idea "just another gimmick". Home Office officials are reportedly considering it as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding.

The Illegal Migration Act places a duty on the government to detain and remove those arriving in the UK illegally, either to Rwanda or another "safe" third country. However, as spaces in Home Office accommodation are in short supply, officials have been tasked with a "deep dive" into alternatives, according to reports.

While the preferred solution is to increase the number of detention places, electronic tagging has been mooted, as has cutting off financial allowances to someone who fails to report regularly to the Home Office. UK charity Refugee Council criticised the idea, claiming it would see vulnerable people "treated as mere objects".

Chief executive Enver Solomon said: "It's treating people as mere objects rather than vulnerable men, women and children in search of safety who should always be treated withcompassion and humanity, in the same way we welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. This is not who we are as a country nor the Britain we aspire to be."

A refugee who fled Afghanistan said electronically tagging asylum seekers was "completely wrong and unacceptable". Gulwali Passarlay told The Independent the only point of the plans was to "make the public think we are doing something", and accused ministers of being "cruel".

His friend has been forced by the Home Office to wear an ankle tag since arriving in the UK as a refugee, which Mr Passarlay says has taken a significant toll on his mental health. "How would normal people feel if they were electronically tagged just for being who they are?" he said. "We're surveilling the most vulnerable people in our society," he added.

The government's plans emerged days after Home Office figures showed the backlog of asylum cases in the UK has hit a new record high, in a blow to Rishi Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats" and cut processing times. A total of 175,457 people were waiting for an initial decision on an asylum application in the UK at the end of June, up 44 per cent from 122,213 a year earlier and the highest figure since records began in 2010. The number of people waiting more than six months for an initial decision stood at 139,961 at the end of June, up 57 per cent year-on-year and another record high.

In a bid to bring down the £6m a day cost of housing asylum seekers in hotels, ministers are trying to move migrants onto the Bibby Stockholm barge in Dorset. But these efforts faced a fresh setback on Sunday as The Fire Brigades Union sent a legal threat to the Home Office accusing ministers of "callous disregard" for the safety of those on board.

Asked about electronic tags for migrants yesterday morning, home secretary Suella Braverman said ministers are considering "a range of options. We have a couple of thousand detention places in our existing removal capacity," she told Sky News.

"We will be working intensively to increase that but it's clear we're exploring a range of options, all options, to ensure that we have that level of control over people so that they can flow through our systems swiftly to enable us to thereafter remove them from the United Kingdom."

But Labour's shadow employment minister Justin Madders described the plans as "just another gimmick". Speaking to Sky News, Mr Madders said: "The only people you tag are criminals. And my understanding is that people who are coming to this country seeking asylum are not criminals. They are usually people fleeing persecution. And if there's a problem with people absconding, this is the first I've heard about it. Clearly the solution to that is actually to get on and process the asylum applications a lot quicker than is happening. I think this is just another gimmick that is not dealing with the root of the problem at all."

Mr Madders also said it is "pathetic" for the government to blame "lefty lawyers" and Labour for failings in its asylum policy. "They ought to own this problem," he said.

Shadow immigration minister Stephen Kinnock said it is "the latest in a long line of gimmicks" thought up by the home secretary. "It's time they put in the hard work to clear their record asylum backlog so we can get people out of expensive hotels," he said.

In June last year, the Home Office launched a 12-month pilot scheme to fit migrants with tags. The tagging pilot allowed the electronic monitoring of asylum seekers who are declared inadmissible after travelling through safe countries and includes those selected for transfer to Rwanda.

The Independent revealed an asylum seeker electronically tagged by the government after being selected for removal to Rwanda was launching a legal challenge against the move. The man said that after being tortured and trafficked in Sudan and Libya he has been treated "like an animal" in the UK. A psychiatric report found that being forced to wear a tag had worsened his mental health, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, and increased the risk of self-harm and suicide.

The Home Office said it is "committed to the removal of foreign criminals and those with no right to be in the UK". A spokesperson said: "That is why we have introduced measures under the Illegal Migration Act, which will ensure those arriving in the UK illegally may be detained and swiftly removed to their country of origin or a safe third country. We are now considering a range of options to reduce the rate of absconding."

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*‘Just a gimmick’: Suella Braverman criticised over plans to tag migrants*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691Y-SPG1-JBNF-W0H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 28, 2023 Monday 8:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 941 words

**Byline:** Archie Mitchell

**Highlight:** Home Office officials are mulling ankle tags as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding

**Body**

[*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) has been criticised over plans to fit migrants with ankle tags, with [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) branding the idea “just another gimmick”.

[*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) officials are reportedly [*considering it as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-electronic-tags-home-office-b2400417.html).

The Illegal Migration Act places a duty on the [*government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to detain and remove those arriving in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) illegally, either to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) or another “safe” third [*country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/country).

However, as spaces in Home Office accommodation are in short supply, officials have been tasked with a “deep dive” into alternatives, according to The Times.

While the preferred solution is to increase the number of detention places, electronic tagging has been mooted, as has cutting off financial allowances to someone who fails to report regularly to the Home Office.

UK charity Refugee Council criticised the idea, claiming it would see vulnerable people “treated as mere objects”.

Chief executive Enver Solomon said: “It’s treating people as mere objects rather than vulnerable men, women and children in search of safety who should always be treated with compassion and humanity, in the same way we welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“This is not who we are as a country nor the Britain we aspire to be.”

And a refugee who fled Afghanistan said electronically tagging asylum seekers was “completely wrong and unacceptable”.

Gulwali Passarlay told The Independent the only point of the plans was to “make the public think we are doing something”, and accused ministers of being “cruel”.

His friend has been forced by the Home Office to wear an ankle tag since arriving in the UK as a refugee, which Mr Passarlay says has taken a significant toll on his mental health.

“How would normal people feel if they were electronically tagged just for being who they are?” he said. “We're surveilling the most vulnerable people in our society,” he added.

The government’s plans emerged days after Home Office figures showed the backlog of asylum cases in the UK has hit a new record high, in a blow to Rishi Sunak’s pledge to “stop the boats” and cut processing times.

A total of 175,457 people were waiting for an initial decision on an asylum application in the UK at the end of June, up 44 per cent from 122,213 a year earlier and the highest figure since records began in 2010.

The number of people waiting more than six months for an initial decision stood at 139,961 at the end of June, up 57 per cent year-on-year and another record high.

In a bid to bring down the £6m a day cost of housing asylum seekers in hotels, ministers are trying to move migrants onto the Bibby Stockholm barge in Dorset.

But these efforts faced a fresh setback on Sunday as The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) sent a legal threat to the Home Office accusing ministers of “callous disregard” for the safety of those on board.

Asked about electronic tags for migrants on Monday morning, home secretary Suella Braverman said ministers are considering “a range of options”.

“We have a couple of thousand detention places in our existing removal capacity,” she told Sky News.

“We will be working intensively to increase that but it’s clear we’re exploring a range of options, all options, to ensure that we have that level of control over people so that they can flow through our systems swiftly to enable us to thereafter remove them from the United Kingdom.”

But Labour’s shadow employment minister Justin Madders described the plans as “just another gimmick”.

Speaking to Sky News, Mr Madders said: “The only people you tag are criminals. And my understanding is that people who are coming to this country seeking asylum are not criminals.

“They are usually people fleeing persecution. And if there’s a problem with people absconding, this is the first I’ve heard about it.

“Clearly the solution to that is actually to get on and process the asylum applications a lot quicker than is happening.

“I think this is just another gimmick that is not dealing with the root of the problem at all.”

Mr Madders also said it is “pathetic” for the government to blame “lefty lawyers” and Labour for failings in its asylum policy.

“They ought to own this problem,” he said.

Shadow immigration minister Stephen Kinnock said it is “the latest in a long line of gimmicks” thought up by the home secretary.

“It’s time they put in the hard work to clear their record asylum backlog so we can get people out of expensive hotels,” he said.

In June last year, [*the Home Office launched a 12-month pilot scheme to fit migrants with tags*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-asylum-seekers-gps-tags-b2201467.html).

The [*tagging pilot allowed the electronic monitoring of asylum seekers who are declared inadmissible*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/refugees-electronic-tag-home-office-boats-b2103622.html) after travelling through safe countries and includes those selected for transfer to Rwanda.

The Independent revealed an asylum seeker electronically tagged by the government after being selected for removal to Rwanda was launching a legal challenge against the move.

The man said that after being tortured and trafficked in Sudan and Libya he has been treated “like an animal” in the UK.

A psychiatric report found that being forced to wear a tag had [*worsened his mental health, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-asylum-seekers-gps-tags-b2201467.html) , and increased the risk of self-harm and suicide.

The Home Office said it is “committed to the removal of foreign criminals and those with no right to be in the UK”.

A spokesman said: “That is why we have introduced measures under the Illegal Migration Act which will ensure those arriving in the UK illegally may be detained and swiftly removed to their country of origin or a safe third country.

“We are now considering a range of options to reduce the rate of absconding.”

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Bibby Stockholm barge is safe amid legal challenge possibility, Braverman says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691Y-M0G1-DY4H-K35T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 28, 2023 Monday 7:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 982 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Home Secretary also declined to rule out reports that the Home Office is considering fitting asylum seekers with electronic tags.

**Body**

[*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) has insisted that the Bibby Stockholm barge is safe after firefighters raised the possibility of legal action over concerns about the safety of those on board.

It comes as the [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) declined to rule out reports the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) is considering fitting asylum seekers arriving in the UK via unauthorised means with electronic tags.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has sent a “pre-action protocol letter” to Ms Braverman outlining its concerns over safety aboard the vessel moored in Dorset’s Portland Port.

This barge has accommodated people in the past -asylum seekers, oil rig workers and barges of this kind have been used to accommodate asylum seekers, for example in Scotland, so I'm very confident that this barge is safe for human habitation

Home Secretary Suella Braverman

The union previously branded the giant barge, initially designed for about 200 people but modified to house 500 migrants, a “potential death trap”.

The first asylum seekers placed on board Bibby Stockholm earlier this month were removed days later after tests revealed Legionella – the bacteria which can cause the potentially fatal Legionnaires’ disease.

The FBU is demanding a response to its legal letter by Thursday.

“Let me be clear that I’m confident barges are safe,” Ms Braverman told BBC Breakfast.

“This barge has accommodated people in the past – asylum seekers, oil rig workers and barges of this kind have been used to accommodate asylum seekers, for example in Scotland, so I’m very confident that this barge is safe for human habitation.

“We followed all of the advice and protocols in anticipation of embarkation.”

She accused the trade union of launching a “political attack” on the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) but was unable to say when asylum seekers would be returning to the barge.

The Fire Brigades Union will always stand up for public safety. If ministers find that fact uncomfortable, so be it

Matt Wrack

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: “We are sounding the alarm over the Bibby Stockholm because it is our duty to do so. Suella Braverman’s comments are a cheap and nasty attempt to undermine this.

“The Fire Brigades Union will always stand up for public safety. If ministers find that fact uncomfortable, so be it.”

The Home Secretary also said ministers were considering all options after The Times said officials are mulling electronic tagging as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding.

The Illegal Migration Act places a legal duty on the Government to detain and remove those arriving in the UK illegally, either to Rwanda or another “safe” third country.

However, as spaces in Home Office accommodation are in short supply, officials have been tasked with a “deep dive” into alternatives, according to the newspaper.

While the preferred solution is to increase the number of detention places, electronic tagging has been mooted, as has cutting off financial allowances to someone who fails to report regularly to the Home Office.

Ms Braverman told Sky News: “We’ve just enacted a landmark piece of legislation in the form of our Illegal Migration Act. That empowers us to detain those who arrive here illegally and thereafter to swiftly remove them to a safe country like Rwanda.”

The Times said officials are considering it as a way to prevent migrants who cannot be housed in limited detention sites from absconding.

She said: “We need to exercise a level of control of people if we’re to remove them from the United Kingdom.

“We are considering a range of options. We have a couple of thousand detention places in our existing removal capacity.

“We will be working intensively to increase that but it’s clear we’re exploring a range of options, all options, to ensure that we have that level of control over people so that they can flow through our systems swiftly to enable us to thereafter remove them from the United Kingdom.”

Refugee Council chief executive Enver Solomon criticised any plan that would involve electronic tagging.

“It’s treating people as mere objects rather than vulnerable men, women and children in search of safety who should always be treated with compassion and humanity in the same way we welcomed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“This is not who we are as a country nor the Britain we aspire to be.”

Home Office data this week showed Channel crossings topped 19,000 for the year so far, despite [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) Rishi Sunak’s pledge that he will “stop the boats”.

The asylum backlog has soared to a record high, with more than 175,000 people waiting for an initial decision on an asylum application at the end of June, with the bill for the taxpayer almost doubling in a year to nearly £4 billion.

Some senior Tories have pushed for the Government to commit to leaving the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) if the Rwanda scheme continues to be blocked.

Ms Braverman stopped short of saying the UK should leave the international court on Monday, telling BBC Radio 4’s Today programme: “My personal views are clear. It’s a politicised court. It’s interventionist.

“It’s treading on the territory of national sovereignty. But no-one’s talking about leaving the ECHR right now.

“We’re working to deliver our plan. We’ve enacted landmark legislation. We are confident in the lawfulness of our agreement with Rwanda.”

Labour hit out at the Government after the latest data on Channel crossings, as the party pointed to 12 consecutive days of small boats arrivals.

Shadow immigration minister Stephen Kinnock said: “Rishi Sunak said he would stop the boats. You can’t believe a word he says. The time for gimmicks is over.

“The Tories need to stop chasing headlines and implement Labour’s plan to tackle the dangerous small boat crossings, by going after the criminal gangs, negotiating a deal with the EU based on returns and family reunion, and clearing the asylum backlog which is costing £6 million a day in emergency hotel bills.”

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian woman 'very excited' to open hairdressing business in London*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6580-KXV1-DY4H-K135-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 18, 2022 Monday 12:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 642 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** Elena Lishchun fled Kyiv the day Russia invaded and said she was 'determined' to find work in the UK.

**Body**

A Ukrainian woman who fled [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) on the day [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded said she is "very excited" to be launching her own hairdressing business in south-east [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london).

Since February 27, Elena Lishchun has been staying with her daughter, Anna Walker, who has lived in the UK for seven years and helped find Ms Lishchun a place to work near her home in Greenwich.

Ms Lishchun, 56, has worked as a hairdresser her "whole life" in Ukraine and said she feels "lucky" to be able to rent a chair at Headcase Barbers in Greenwich Creekside.

"My whole life I've been working as a hairdresser, I love my work and that's the only thing I've ever considered doing," Ms Lishchun told the PA news agency.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Elena Lishchun (@haircut\_by\_elena)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CcSzpqCqxNG/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

"I haven't seen any negative sides of me moving here, everyone's been welcoming and supportive and sharing their support.

"I'm just very determined and focused to find work because I'm used to work ... I'm very excited."

Ms Lishchun, originally from Donetsk, Ukraine, had been living in Kyiv for three and a half years prior to the Russian invasion.

Her daughter, who works in HR and has a child with her British husband, was originally able to house Ms Lishchun through a visitor's visa, which they have now switched to a visa under the Ukraine Family Scheme.

"She never wanted to do anything else, she finds a lot of pleasure in (hairdressing)," Ms Walker, 33, told PA.

"We started to look at where she could rent a chair and set up her own client base and her own business, as opposed to be employed by a salon because mainly because of her language issues.

"Luckily, we were able to find a place that would rent out a chair where she can continue working."

Ms Walker said they found a salon managed by a Ukrainian man who is willing to offer a chair to Ms Lishchun.

Her mother will be starting [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) classes to help grow her clientele as local people have offered courses for free.

I never thought I would need English in my life at this level

Elena Lishchun

"The biggest gap is the English and the understanding of English - that's the only problem I see but I'm going to start classes ... I never thought I would need English in my life at this level," Ms Lishchun said.

"There are local people who offer courses for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for free here in Greenwich and the community has been extremely supportive with everything," Ms Walker added.

Ms Lishchun said she has left behind family, friends, and a one-year-old apartment in Kyiv.

She plans to return to Ukraine as soon as possible and still wanted to work the morning Russia invaded on February 24.

"I actually woke her up in the night because she was sleeping like really tightly and she couldn't hear that the war had started," Ms Walker explained.

"We called her and we said, 'Get your get your things ready, you need to get on the move because the war has started'.

"And she said, 'I need to wake up at seven to go to work. It's a very busy day for me today.'"

Ms Lishchun already has a few bookings with friends and family, but added that many Ukrainians coming to the UK might not be so lucky finding work.

"I'm lucky, but other people might not be as lucky," she said.

"It will be more difficult for them to settle in.

"The situation will be different for people who have family here and people who are coming on the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme."

Ms Walker added she has found it "really, really comforting" for her mother to have access to medication and a GP here in the UK.

"The most important point for me was that she was safe," she said.

"But obviously once she was here, we welcomed a lot that she's able to stay here, she's able to work here, she's able to to get the NHS support as well.

"We have a little bit more of a positive outlook on the future."

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Are personal beliefs something we have to accept in a leader?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67KX-S7N1-DY4H-K4GF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 21, 2023 Tuesday 5:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 960 words

**Byline:** Letters

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

Candidate for the leader of the SNP and first minister, [*Kate Forbes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/snp-nicola-sturgeon-leadership-kate-forbes-b2285722.html) , who is a devout Christian and member of the evangelical Free Church of Scotland, has said she would have voted against the 2014 [*introduction of marriage equality*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/humza-yousaf-nicola-sturgeon-uk-government-first-minister-snp-b2286577.html) in Scotland.

She explains that, despite this, she now respects current legislation.

Forbes is of course entitled to have religiously informed political views, and she was elected quite independently of them. But is the discrepancy between her support for the law as it stands and her actual [*personal beliefs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/kate-forbes-gay-marriage-snp-leadership-race-b2286544.html) something we could accept in a national leader?

Neil Barber

Edinburgh

There appears to be no plan other than tax, tax and more tax

The government appears bereft of any pro-growth ideas, simply sticking to the notion that hiking the [*corporation tax rate to 25 per cent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-corporation-tax-hike-b2285441.html) will make a difference.

The reality is that the [*PM and his cabinet are out of touch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/rishi-sunak-ethics-adviser-nadhim-zahawi-b2268324.html) with what the UK needs to kickstart growth. Increasing taxes has never and will never work. It’s counterintuitive and counterproductive.

One of the potential benefits of [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) – the ability to set our own tax rates – has been squandered, not just by Rishi Sunak but also by Boris Johnson (who had even less commercial instincts than Sunak). Increasing the corporate tax rate sends completely the wrong message – to the country but also internationally.

The government is too scared of how a volte-face may be perceived by the public. Whatever Sunak does, it will be too little, too late – the Tories are toast at the next general election. Bereft of ideas, commercial instinct, and above all spine.

Miles Dean

London

A rules-based society? Yes, but only if it’s pick and mix!

[*Kate Hall’s recent letter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/snp-leadership-nicola-sturgeon-resignation-b2285746.html) highlighted the historically consistent desire within the Conservative Party to deregulate at every opportunity. In effect, their extreme ideology is laid bare. However, she also reminded us that a decent society needs [*protective regulations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-scrap-eu-laws-tories-b2262362.html) in order to function.

If the Brexit vote had been overwhelmingly in favor of leaving the [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) , it would have been easy to argue that the electorate was thoroughly behind the desire to remove EU legislation from our statute books. But unfortunately for the Brexit hardliners, at 52 per cent to 48 per cent, this was not the case.

The desire to hastily and enthusiastically unpick [*hard-won regulations,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sunak-european-human-rights-migrants-b2276204.html) that the UK contributed to whilst a key member of the union, is curious in itself. Who benefits from such actions? It certainly isn’t the ordinary citizen, as so cruelly demonstrated in the horror of the [*Grenfell fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grenfell-fire) , and those tens of thousands now left trapped and[*frightened in unsellable properties.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/grenfell-building-safety-cladding-scandal-b2098405.html)

Nigel Plevin

Somerset

The UK must give more foreign aid to developing countries

The UK’s spend on overseas aid is dwindling under Tory leadership. Development experts from the [*Centre of Global Development have found*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/foreign-aid-budget-rishi-sunak-b2213364.html) that the UK spends less of its [*foreign aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-aid) budget overseas in low-income countries than at home. This comes after the UK spent around £3bn of its aid budget housing refugees in 2022. It makes the UK the only country in the G7 to fund the entirety of the cost of[*housing* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/homes-for-ukraine-renting-housing-crisis-b2194414.html) with its existing aid budget.

We must spend more on those in developing countries facing extreme [*poverty*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poverty). Not only does everyone have the right to a decent and comfortable standard of living, but improving the conditions of the poor is essential to maintaining national security as poverty often leads to conflict and terror which has the capacity to cross borders into the UK. As well as this, boosting the economy of developing countries through foreign aid will expand the global market and boost our own economy.

Investing in eliminating global poverty is in everyone’s best interest.

Priya Thakkar

Address Supplied

The animal welfare lie

Many people, while uncomfortable with the idea of killing animals for food, accept the commonplace assumption that animal welfare legislation looks after the animals’ wellbeing and that the animals lead lives largely free of stress, suffering and pain.

But that assumption is weakening in the face of growing evidence that [*animal welfare legislation is not fit for purpose*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/truss-animal-welfare-red-tape-bonfire-b2206190.html) , that it protects the interests of the stakeholders more than the animals themselves, and that the existing laws and regulations are routinely [*breached or, worse, ignored.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/iceland-budgens-costa-coffee-milk-cows-animal-cruelty-b2256638.html)

On [*factory farms across the globe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/divestment-farming-councils-climate-change-b1995481.html) , pigs and chickens, hens and rabbits, geese and other animals, live out their brief lives in windowless sheds in a crowded and stressful environment, growing at a phenomenal rate that is unnatural and unhealthy. The animals are fed a concoction of drugs, [*including antibiotics,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/antibiotics-farm-animals-covid-pandemic-b1974937.html) to prevent the spread of disease, yet still suffer from a wide range of illnesses. Then, after a short, stressful life, they are cargoed to a factory that will slaughter them mercilessly, before appearing on our shelves in shops and supermarkets across the UK.

How does any of this fit in with good animal welfare practices?

Factory farming by its very nature is the antithesis of good animal welfare practice, and any legislative framework that gives the green light to the [*intensive rearing of farmed animals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/brexit-deal-south-america-rainforests-b1881555.html) is clearly not fit for purpose.

Gerry Boland

Address Supplied

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Religion and politics don't mix for SNP frontrunner*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M2-C1K1-F072-42VD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 22, 2023 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 861 words

**Body**

Kate Forbes, the candidate for the leader of the SNP and first minister, is a devout Christian and member of the evangelical Free Church of Scotland. She has said she would have voted against the 2014 introduction of marriage equality in Scotland. She explains that, despite this, she now respects current legislation.

Forbes is of course entitled to have religiously informed political views, and she was elected quite independently of them. But is the discrepancy between her support for the law as it stands and her actual personal beliefs something we could accept in a national leader?

Neil Barber Edinburgh

<strong>We need tax relief</strong>

The government appears bereft of any pro-growth ideas, simply sticking to the notion that hiking the corporation tax rate to 25 per cent will make a difference. The reality is that the PM and his cabinet are out of touch with what the UK needs to kickstart growth. Increasing taxes has never and will never work. It's counterintuitive and counterproductive.

One of the potential benefits of Brexit - the ability to set our own tax rates - has been squandered, not just by Rishi Sunak but also by Boris Johnson (who had even less commercial instincts than Sunak). Increasing the corporate tax rate sends completely the wrong message - to the country but also internationally.

The government is too scared of how a volte-face may be perceived by the public. Whatever Sunak does, it will be too little, too late - the Tories are toast at the next general election. Bereft of ideas, commercial instinct, and above all spine.

Miles Dean London

<strong>A decent society</strong>

Kate Hall's recent letter (yesterday) highlighted the historically consistent desire within the Conservative Party to deregulate at every opportunity. In effect, their extreme ideology is laid bare. However, she also reminded us that a decent society needs protective regulations in order to function.

If the Brexit vote had been overwhelmingly in favor of leaving the EU, it would have been easy to argue that the electorate was thoroughly behind the desire to remove EU legislation from our statute books. But unfortunately for the Brexit hardliners, at 52 per cent to 48 per cent, this was not the case.

The desire to hastily and enthusiastically unpick hard-won regulations, that the UK contributed to whilst a key member of the union, is curious in itself. Who benefits from such actions? It certainly isn't the ordinary citizen, as so cruelly demonstrated in the horror of the Grenfell fire, and those tens of thousands now left trapped and frightened in unsellable properties.

Nigel Plevin Somerset

<strong>UK shame on foreign aid</strong>

The UK's spend on overseas aid is dwindling under Tory leadership. Development experts from the Centre of Global Development have found that the UK spends less of its foreign aid budget overseas in low-income countries than at home. This comes after the UK spent around £3bn of its aid budget housing refugees in 2022. It makes the UK the only country in the G7 to fund the entirety of the cost of housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with its existing aid budget.

We must spend more on those in developing countries facing extreme poverty. Not only does everyone have the right to a decent and comfortable standard of living, but improving the conditions of the poor is essential to maintaining national security as poverty often leads to conflict and terror which has the capacity to cross borders into the UK. As well as this, boosting the economy of developing countries through foreign aid will expand the global market and boost our own economy.

Investing in eliminating global poverty is in everyone's best interest.

Priya Thakkar Address supplied

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But that assumption is weakening in the face of growing evidence that animal welfare legislation is not fit for purpose, that it protects the interests of the stakeholders more than the animals themselves, and that the existing laws and regulations are routinely breached or, worse, ignored.

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Gerry Boland Address supplied

**Load-Date:** February 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[*British military veteran reportedly killed while fighting in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B5-B401-DY4H-K4HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 5:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 706 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** The Foreign Office has confirmed a British national has died in Ukraine and another is missing.

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) military veteran has reportedly been killed in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) while fighting against Russian forces.

Tributes have been paid to Scott Sibley after the [*Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-office) confirmed a British national had died in Ukraine and another is missing.

The families of both are being supported, a spokesperson said, declining to give names or further details.

Mr Sibley has been named by the BBC and Sky, both of which said he is believed to have been fighting in support of Ukrainian forces.

In a statement, the Foreign Office said: "We can confirm that a British national has been killed in Ukraine and are supporting their family."

On the missing person, the spokesperson said: "We are aware of a British national who is missing in Ukraine and are supporting their family. We are urgently seeking further information."

A fundraising page set up in Mr Sibley's name paid tribute to his "contagious laugh and ability to cheer us up!".

Tributes were also left on the Logistic Support Squadron Facebook page, where a picture was posted alongside the comment: "This week the Sqn has lost a former serving soldier. A man that showed Commando spirit until the end. RIP. Scott Sibley."

A small number of serving British personnel are believed to have gone absent without leave to join the resistance against the Russian invasion, while veterans and Britons without combat experience are thought to have also travelled to Ukraine.

There was initially confusion on the Government's position after Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) , in comments during an interview to the BBC on February 26, said she would "absolutely" support UK nationals who chose to fight for Ukraine.

However, she later rowed back on those comments, insisting she had been "expressing support for the Ukrainian cause" in her remarks, and that there are "better ways" to contribute to the country's defence.

Veterans minister Leo Docherty has previously written to armed forces charities to encourage those tempted to travel to the war zone to turn their efforts to helping the Ukrainian people from the UK.

Meanwhile, the latest Government figures show that around a fifth of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been issued with visas under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have arrived in the UK.

A total of 86,100 visas had been issued as of Wednesday under the Ukraine Family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme, the Government said.

But, as of Monday, just 27,100 Ukrainians had arrived in the UK, according to figures from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office.

Overall, less than a third (31.4%) of those granted visas under both schemes have arrived in the UK.

There are multiple cases where families are unable to travel to the UK because not all family members have received their permission to travel letters or visas.

There has also been widespread concern about the length of time it has taken for visas to be issued to refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

A Government spokeswoman said: "We are processing thousands of visas a day - this shows the changes we made to streamline the service are working and we'll continue to build on this success so we can speed up the process even further."

We've constantly said that Russia should leave Ukraine sovereign territory so that hasn't changed

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace

Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) has said Britain and its allies need to help prise Russian forces out of Ukraine like "a limpet off the rock".

Mr Wallace said the UK would continue to supply weapons to the government in Kyiv and was looking at the options for providing anti-ship missiles.

Mr Wallace told Sky News: "I think it's certainly the case that Putin, having failed in nearly all objectives, may seek to consolidate what he's got, sort of fortify and dig in, as he did in 2014, and just be a sort of cancerous growth within the country of Ukraine and make it very hard for people to move them out of those fortified positions," he said.

"So I think it's really about, if we want this to not happen, we have to help Ukrainians effectively get the limpet off the rock and keep the momentum pushing them back."

In a speech on Wednesday, Ms Truss said the objective should be to drive Russia out of "the whole of Ukraine".

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government defends help for Ukrainians in UK after charity notes gaps in support*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MJ-13M1-JBNF-W12T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2023 Friday 1:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 853 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** The British Red Cross said there are barriers to people securing accommodation which are making life hard for Ukrainian families.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has insisted it is doing all it can to help Ukrainians who have fled to the UK, after a charity criticised gaps in support which it said is making life hard for refugees already facing the emotional impact of the conflict.

Many of those who are supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** through Government schemes are struggling to afford to continue hosting people amid the cost-of-living crisis, the [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) said.

The charity called for hosts to be given more financial support and noted the numbers of Ukrainians facing the risk of homelessness as sponsorship arrangements come to an end.

People across the UK have demonstrated the power of kindness by opening their homes to people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, but there have been various shortcomings in the UK’s response which need to be urgently addressed, finds [*@RedCrossPolicy*](https://twitter.com/RedCrossPolicy?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#UkraineOneYearOn*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineOneYearOn?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/ZOHYJWS62P*](https://t.co/ZOHYJWS62P) — British Red Cross Policy (@RedCrossPolicy) [*February 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RedCrossPolicy/status/1629047871797428227?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The latest official figures show that 4,295 Ukrainian households have needed assistance from councils in the face of homelessness.A Government spokesperson said the fact the UK had welcomed more than 162,000 Ukrainians to safety since the outbreak of the war a year ago demonstrates “the extraordinary generosity of the British public”.They said the visa schemes specially set up for Ukrainian arrivals were “designed to address the various needs of those hoping to seek refuge here”.They added: “In all cases local authorities have a legal duty to ensure no families are left without a roof over their heads.”Gaps in support and barriers to securing accommodation are also making life hard for Ukrainian families, who are already dealing with the emotional impact of the conflictBritish Red CrossThe [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine Scheme sees people sponsored by a UK household for six months, while the Ukraine Family Scheme is for those with family already settled in the UK.Up to February 20, a total of 163,500 people had arrived to the UK under both schemes.There were 47,800 arrivals via the Ukraine Family Scheme and 115,800 via Homes for Ukraine.The Government noted that under the Homes for Ukraine scheme it is giving councils per-person funding, as well as £150 million to support guests into their own homes and £500 million to find housing.It also announced an increase in December in so-called “thank you” payments to sponsors of £500 a month for guests who have been in the country for more than a year.But the Red Cross said that increase could come “too late, and won’t always be enough”.We support hospitals affected by conflict not only with medical supplies, but also with forensic aspects.We donated a refrigerated container to a hospital in [*#Kherson*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Kherson?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) region. Helping to ensure that bodies are treated with dignity is an important part of our role. [*pic.twitter.com/pfcKU2vj6M*](https://t.co/pfcKU2vj6M) — ICRC Ukraine (@ICRC\_ua) [*February 22, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ICRC_ua/status/1628288486217220096?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The charity called on the Government to clarify the details and allocation of the £150 million one-off funding for local authorities so they can address growing housing needs, and to ensure both hosts and displaced Ukrainians under the family scheme are given the same support as those on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

The Red Cross also urged the Government to “immediately increase monthly payments for all hosts in line with the rising cost of living” and to look at schemes supporting Ukrainians with deposits to move into the private rented sector.

[*Mike Adamson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-adamson) , British Red Cross chief executive, said: “One year on since the conflict in Ukraine escalated, many displaced people in the UK are still living with their hosts, finding jobs and settling into life here.

“But many others are struggling. We must ensure the warm welcome shown by thousands of people is recognised and built on, so we don’t see more families facing homelessness on top of trauma.

“We should not have a situation where the type of visa you arrived on determines whether or not your host family receives support. This is putting huge pressure on families in the UK who are doing their best to help, especially with rising bills and food costs.

“Gaps in support and barriers to securing accommodation are also making life hard for Ukrainian families, who are already dealing with the emotional impact of the conflict.”

Acknowledging the successes of the Government’s efforts towards Ukrainians, in helping them to quickly and safely escape and seek protection in the UK, the charity’s report also states that lessons could be learned for future operations.

The charity said it is encouraging policymakers to consider how safe routes could be expanded to other refugees seeking safety.

Mr Adamson said: “While there are problems that need addressing, the UK’s response to the conflict in Ukraine demonstrates what’s possible when we provide safe routes for people in need of protection.

“Notably, no Ukrainians were recorded as crossing the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) according to the most recent data. The UK Government should now take stock to improve the way it responds to refugees fleeing conflict, violence and persecution in other countries too.”

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*In 1945, Britain gave me a home - but would it today?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657Y-7FD1-F072-44F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 18, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 26

**Length:** 687 words

**Byline:** STEVEN FRANK

**Body**

I will never forget the day I arrived in this country as a hungry, frightened nine-year-old. A British RAF pilot had spirited my family to Britain in the back of his fighter plane from Theresienstadt concentration camp, after it was liberated by Allied forces in May 1945.

As we were waiting to be processed at an RAF reception centre, a kind old bobby took pity on my two brothers and me, teaching us our first words of English and slipping us each a sixpence and a smile. I remember it as the first time that a policeman in uniform had ever shown us anything but cruelty.

This small act of kindness was just a taste of the wonderful welcome I would receive from the people of this country in the years to come. Since then, I have become a proud Brit, and raised wonderful children and grandchildren. But the generosity and values that I most admired are today being trampled on.

If the government's new immigration proposals go ahead unchanged, a future version of me - from Ukraine, or fleeing repression elsewhere - is likely to be treated very differently. They will be denied protection, criminalised, and may even be sent to a detention centre in impoverished Rwanda.

As a small boy, I witnessed the march of Nazi jackboots through the cobbled streets of my native Amsterdam. My father joined the Dutch resistance, and, as a respected Jewish lawyer, became involved with hiding Jews and providing false documents to allow them to escape Holland. One morning in 1942, he kissed us all goodbye and headed off to work. I never saw him again.

My family and I were sent to a Nazi transit camp before being crammed into a cattle truck and sent on to Theresienstadt. I still remember the stench of faeces, urine, sweat and fear in that sweltering carriage, and the relief when the doors were thrown open, only to find ourselves in a place worse than we could have imagined. In the camp, we experienced the gnawing pain of hunger and witnessed human suffering on an indescribable scale.

With the scenes on the television news in recent weeks, I cannot help but recall those terrible years. When I see the crowds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, laden with what few possessions they can carry, I remember clinging to my mother as we waited to be deported, not knowing where we were going or what awaited us. When I hear about the barbarity of Russian soldiers towards civilians in Ukrainian towns and villages, I remember the unspeakable cruelty that seized Europe when I was a child in the 1940s.

My heart is warmed by the kindness and compassion shown by people across the UK, where tens of thousands have offered their homes to Ukrainian families. This public generosity has not been matched by the UK government, with the clumsy bureaucratic obstacles that it puts in the way. But that is not the worst thing.

In its current form, the Nationality and Borders Bill means that refugees like me, who are forced to take irregular routes to safety in the UK, will in future face up to four years in prison. The bill, as both the UN and senior British judges have repeatedly pointed out, is in flagrant breach of the Refugee Convention, which Britain helped to shape.

The 1951 Refugee Convention was adopted in the wake of the Holocaust to ensure that never again would those fleeing war, torture or persecution be denied protection for lacking the correct documents. A former Supreme Court justice has rightly dubbed the Nationality and Borders Bill a "grotesque" piece of legislation. The Lords have voted key provisions down, but Boris Johnson seems determined to pay no heed to their concerns.

This government can and must do better, when the Lords amendments come back to the House of Commons on Wednesday. This bill is an affront to the long tradition of providing sanctuary to people in need that has made our country great.

I know from my own experience that those who are given a chance will show only gratitude, as so many did when escaping from the Nazis. The generosity of spirit at that time showed that Britain was great. Tearing up our international commitments does the very opposite.

Steven Frank is a British survivor of the Holocaust

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Writer calls for Ukraine visa to be dropped after spending 11 hours on forms*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-7JW1-DY4H-K082-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 8:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 660 words

**Byline:** Isobel Frodsham

**Highlight:** Jane Finlay, 56, has welcomed four women into her home in Cornwall.

**Body**

A British writer who has welcomed four ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into her home has urged the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to drop the visa process after it took her 11 hours to fill in the forms and nine days to bring the family to the UK.

[*Jane*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jane) Finlay, 56, criticised the Government following difficulties she faced trying to bring over a family of four women from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to the UK on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Ms Finlay said once she applied for the scheme there was "no assistance" from the Government in finding a family to house, so looked on [*Facebook*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/facebook) where she connected with a woman called Nadia.

Nadia, whose last name has not been given for safeguarding reasons, was looking to seek refuge in the UK along with her 16-year-old daughter, her sister-in-law and her 31-year-old niece after Russia launched a war with Ukraine on February 27.

Ms Finlay told the PA news agency: "It became very quickly apparent that the application process [of the family scheme] was the only support we were going to get from the Government.

"It's really cynical on their behalf because there's really generous members of the UK public trying to do something and the Government has done absolutely nothing apart from set this website up where we register.

"I have a degree, three of the family members are graduates, and it still took us 11 hours to fill in the forms.

"They had to provide information such as the father of the 16-year-old had to give written permission that she could leave the country, in English, but he's fighting in Ukraine, so it's a ridiculous thing to ask. Part of the questions seemed cut and pasted from another scheme as they were completely irrelevant, all the information we had to provide we had to give in PDF form, which adds another layer of complexity to people trying to stay online in a war zone.

"I know, anecdotally, this system ended up causing arguments between sponsors and the families coming because it's such a difficult process."

Once the visas were approved, Ms Finlay left her home in [*Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cornwall) and flew to Berlin on March 21. There she travelled to the border in Medyka, Poland, with her friend Pete Jones to collect Nadia and her family.

The group then went to a visa processing centre in Berlin to skip the queues in Poland, as one of the family members had an expired passport and the family was travelling with two chihuahuas which required paperwork, but when they arrived Ms Finlay said the workers had not heard of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

They went to Calais after receiving notice the visas had been approved but did not receive them until the next day.

Ms Finlay said she eventually travelled with the family from Calais to Folkestone on March 31 - nine days after meeting them at the border.

The family has now settled with her and her partner Michael Whitehill in Cornwall.

"I'm still hearing daily of women and children in basements not able to come over because the visas haven't been processed. It's absolutely heart breaking," she said.

"We absolutely believe, it's the only way forward, this Government should waive the visa. So many people here in Cornwall who have voted Conservative all their lives are now they're saying they won't be voting Tory anymore because the Government's response has been shameful."

A Government spokesperson said: "The Homes for Ukraine scheme was set up in record time but we acknowledge progress approving visas has not been good enough. The Home Office has made changes to visa processing - the application form has been streamlined, Ukrainian passport holders can now apply online and do their biometrics checks once in the UK, and greater resource has gone into the system.

"We have partnered with the charity Reset Communities and Refugees to fund and provide a matching service for sponsors and refugees to ensure that matches made are suitable, safe and successful. This service will vet eligibility, assess needs, and provide training for sponsors to ensure they can support the people they host."

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than £225m donated to help Ukrainians on GoFundMe since war began*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M9-2011-JBNF-W08M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 23, 2023 Thursday 8:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 802 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** A year of war has inspired thousands of fundraising efforts for the people of Ukraine.

**Body**

More than £225 million has been donated to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) fundraisers on [*GoFundMe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gofundme) since the country was invaded last year, in one of the greatest “outpourings of generosity” ever seen on the platform.

The fundraising site confirmed to the PA news agency that more than £225,000,000 was contributed from countries around the world since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded Ukraine on February 24 2022, forcing millions to flee their homes.

The thousands of fundraisers on the site included large-scale projects and individual efforts including a convoy of London taxis sent to the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) border and the supply of urgent diabetes medication to a young Ukrainian girl.

GoFundMe’s international vice-president John Coventry said: “The response we saw from around the world in the days and weeks after the invasion was remarkable.

“The outpouring of generosity to the Ukrainian people immediately after the invasion was among the biggest we’ve ever seen on GoFundMe and that has continued throughout the past 12 months.”

Jennifer Drum, from Moynalvey, Co Meath in Ireland, used the platform to raise 5,000 euros so she could reconnect with and offer a home to a man who once stayed with her family when he was just seven years old.

Yaroslav Sydoryshyn, now 32, visited Ireland as a child as part of a long-standing charitable effort that sees children from the area near the Chernobyl nuclear disaster travel to stay with local Irish families.

Mr Sydoryshyn, who had gone on to marry and have three children, sought escape from Ukraine as the war began and Ms Drum, 45, was able to find him.

“Seeing him in the airport was so nice because he hadn’t changed a bit,” Ms Drum, a hairdresser, told PA.

“Yaro is like a brother to me, we had a really good relationship when we were younger.

“And seeing him straight away, I just knew – and he had kept all the photos that (my) mum had given him.”

Ms Drum managed to find Mr Sydorshyn and his wife, Tanya, when her mother found a home address on an old letter from his parents.

After contacting people on Instagram with the same last name, she was soon connected to his wife’s profile as Mr Sydorshyn did not have any social media.

Where they were living in Ukraine had not yet been struck by Russian military action but Ms Drum and her husband, [*Jordan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jordan) , soon got them to Poland in an effort to find a flight from there to Dublin.

Raising more than 5,000 euros – much of it from the local community – Ms Drum was able to set up the Sydorshyns and their three children, aged seven, six and two, in a mobile home behind their own house in Co Meath, where they have lived since May 2022.

“It was just amazing, the money that we did get,” she said.

“And Yaro’s brother was conscripted (into the Ukrainian army).

“So I was saying to Yaro, ‘Maybe send your money over to your family’ and he did that.

“And that was the biggest thing because it was to help the people that they were leaving behind.”

Another person who jumped at the chance to offer his home to Ukrainians was Yorkshire local Iain Butterworth, whose fundraiser was able to go towards setting up a network of around 150 Ukrainians living in and around Scarborough, North Yorkshire.

The marine lawyer, 53, said the £1,000 raised has helped purchase furniture, covered travel costs, and even helped with some dental treatment for the Ukrainian community in his area.

The community is so prominent that a Ukrainian cafe has been opened for Homes for Ukraine sponsees and their hosts to meet up or get advice, and the group regularly comes together for garden parties, church services, and other events.

“For me, it’s great to know that we’ve got this community,” Mr Butterworth told PA.

“But I think my focus has got to be on making sure that it just doesn’t disappear.

“And that they can be proud that they’re in Scarborough… It’s nice to be able to try and highlight as much as we can, but the community is here and is thriving and growing.”

Other successful GoFundMes include London cabbie Matt Westfall’s convoy of black taxis transporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from Poland.

Mr Westfall, from Buckhurst Hill, Essex, raised more than £11,000 to get six black cabs, one car, and one van across to Poland to deliver humanitarian aid to refugee camps set up near the Ukrainian border, and transport refugees trying to reach cities across Europe.

He told PA in March 2022 that there were “no words” to describe the four-day trip.

£5,000 was also raised in June for a young Ukrainian girl, who with her family had escaped war in Ukraine.

John Rice, who is from Northampton but has lived in Slovakia for a decade, opened up his home to the family after they were forced to flee their home in Chernihiv, northern Ukraine.

Mr Rice set up a GoFundMe page to cover the cost of an insulin pump for then-10-year-old Dasha Makarenko, who has type 1 diabetes and urgently needed medication.

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Czechs provide free shooting training for local Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656P-90X1-DY4H-K1WT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 12, 2022 Tuesday 8:44 AM GMT

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**Length:** 678 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Since Russia launched its brutal attack against Ukraine, Ukrainians living across Czech Republic have been arriving in the second largest Czech city of Brno

**Body**

Of the first four shots Olha Dembitska fired from an AK-47 assault rifle in her life, one hit the target.

"It's pretty difficult the first time," the 22-year-old Ukrainian woman acknowledged.

On this occasion, the target was the shape of a human body at a shooting range in the Czech Republic. Next time, it might be for real, in Ukraine, and the target could be one of the Russian troops who have invaded her homeland.

Dembitska is one of at least 130 men and women who have so far undergone free-of-charge training for Ukrainians living in the Czech Republic who want to learn how to fight the aggressor.

"I might return to Ukraine if they need me," she said.

Almost none of the participants had any experience with weapons before war struck their homeland.

Since Russia launched its brutal attack, Ukrainians from all parts of the country and elsewhere have been arriving in the Czech Republic's second-largest city, [*Brno*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brno) , attracted by courses designed to teach them essentials and skills to safely handle lethal rifles while being able to inflict damage on their enemy.

Beside learning to shoot, the courses give them the basics about guns, movement around the battlefield and a lesson in providing first aid, something that can save lives if they're mobilized by their embattled country or decide to return home as volunteers to join the Ukrainian army.

They are all motivated.

"It's horrible," Dembitska said about the situation in her homeland. She gets her news from social media and from phone calls with a friend based in the southern city of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) , seized by Russian troops in the early stages of the invasion.

"She tells me everything. They haven't received humanitarian aid. It's a horror what the Russian soldiers are doing, I'm sick of it."

Michal Ratajsky, the owner of CS Solutions, a security company that offers the training program at its base on the outskirts of Brno, located some 200 kilometers (125 miles) southeast of [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague) , called it "our contribution to the help for Ukrainians."

"We view it as a morale boost we're giving them in this situation, an effort to show we're supporting them and that we will do for them what we can at the given moment," Ratajsky said. "That was our motivation and goal."

A crowdfunding campaign helped secure enough money for the ammunition, while his company provides the rest, including experienced instructors, weapons and the shooting range.

Ratajsky said the brief, three-hour training can't do miracles but should be enough to introduce the Ukrainians to new, unfamiliar skills.

"We know that we don't make soldiers of them in those three hours," he said. "We try to do the maximum for them in the time, with the focus on their safety."

Some of the participants have returned for repeated lessons. Some have come from as far away as [*Vienna*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vienna). in neighboring Austria. Some took the course on their way back to Ukraine from Western Europe, Ratajsky said.

He said the Ukrainians are united by anger about the Russian aggression, and determined to end it.

"They take it seriously and want to do something about it."

He said that because some 80% percent of troop losses in a war like the one in Ukraine are caused by artillery and missiles, a sense of self-preservation and knowledge of first aid might be more useful for survival than shooting.

"We're aware of the limits of what we can get them ready for and make no secret of it," Ratajsky said.

Yehor Nechyporenko, 38, who had traveled some 260 kilometers (160 miles) from the town of Mlada Boleslav to Brno for the second time said he is helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have arrived in the Czech Republic but wants to be ready to go back home to fight.

"It's very useful for me," he said of the training. "I really like it. I need to learn those things because I didn't do military service."

Nechyporenko said he was sure the Russians have no chance of taking the entire country.

"I think the war will be over in a couple of months," he said. "And if we see we're losing, we'll all travel home."

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain abused by gangsters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT1-DFJ1-F072-400R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 14, 2024 Sunday

1ST,2ND Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 98 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government's flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme, <em>The Independent</em> can reveal. People with suspected links to serious or organised crime were among those approved as hosts under the scheme. In one case, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile. Labour MP Alex Davies-Jones, the shadow safeguarding minister, said the findings uncovered by this publication raise serious concerns and called for a "full and proper investigation."

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Michael Gove meets Edinburgh Ukrainian Club members*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6540-BTR1-JBNF-W4BX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 30, 2022 Wednesday 7:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 723 words

**Byline:** Katharine Hay

**Highlight:** The Secretary of State for Housing and Communities said he discussed how to make the Homes for Ukraine scheme 'even better'.

**Body**

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) met members of a Ukrainian community group in Edinburgh to discuss his [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme.

The scheme, designed to allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so, has come under fire since it launched more than two weeks ago for not issuing enough visas.

Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has also warned of the danger of scheme turning into "Tinder for sex traffickers".

But the Secretary of State for Housing and [*Communities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/communities) said he discussed with members of the Edinburgh Ukrainian Club how to make the scheme "even better".

We have been discussing how we can make sure the Homes for Ukraine scheme works even better

Secretary of State Michael Gove

Speaking outside the club on Wednesday, Mr Gove said: "I have just been talking to some wonderful representatives of the Ukrainian community here in Scotland and we have been discussing how we can make sure the Homes for Ukraine scheme works even better.

"There's been an amazing outpouring of generosity on behalf of people in Scotland and across the UK, and this UK-wide scheme is designed to ensure that the generosity and the good-heartedness of the British people is matched with the need of so many in Ukraine and so many in the countries adjacent to Ukraine, to provide people with a safe secure home."

Earlier, the Home Office said just 2,700 visas have been granted to people wanting to come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, despite applications reaching 28,300.

SNP MP Stuart McDonald said the visa figures are "desperately poor" and "highlight the UK Government's disappointing response to the refugee crisis unfolding in Ukraine".

They must now heed the calls and waive requirements for Ukrainians to apply for visas in advance of their arrival in the UK

SNP MP Stuart McDonald

He added: "These figures must be a wake-up call for the UK Government, and they must now heed the calls and waive requirements for Ukrainians to apply for visas in advance of their arrival in the UK, so as to facilitate speedy access to international protection and ensure people can find safety and be able to rebuild their lives."

Many Ukrainians have been "advertising" themselves on social media in a bid to find hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, prompting concerns that the programme could expose vulnerable people to abuse.

Robina Qureshi, director of Positive Action in Housing, a refugee homelessness charity, said the credibility of the Homes for Ukraine scheme is "steadily crumbling" and warned of Ukrainian women, children and young people becoming prime targets on social media for criminal people traffickers.

"The scheme must be stopped in its tracks and sponsorship requirements lifted to avoid endangering the lives of Ukrainian women and children," she said.

Michael Gove's Homes for Ukraine Scheme has driven tens of thousands of people onto Facebook where "sponsors" and refugees search for each other, sharing personal information. But Europol has issued an early notification warning. [*https://t.co/hltHf1p38*](https://t.co/hltHf1p38) - Positive Action in Housing #RebuildingRefugeeLives (@PositiveActionH) [*March 30, 2022*](https://twitter.com/PositiveActionH/status/1509063726284120067?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"Twelve miles across the water, Ireland is working with NGOs, bringing in up to 200,000 people.

"Yet here we have a humanitarian tragedy unfolding and this government has granted visas to only 2,700 people. Women are hiding in basements with children and asking us if the UK will take them in."

She added: "This government has made a complete mockery of the refugee convention. The sincere and genuine goodwill of British people is being poured down the drain.

"It was a deliberate ploy to divert goodwill down a dead end, a ruse to make people think they are helping. We are disgusted and ashamed."

There are two UK schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***: the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, for which anybody with space to house a refugee can apply; and the Ukraine family scheme, for those who already have relatives in the UK.

Some 21,000 visas had been issued under the Ukraine family scheme as of Friday, and a total of 36,300 applications had been submitted, according to provisional data published on the Home Office's website.

The UN refugee agency said four million people have now fled Ukraine since Russia launched its war on February 24.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Borders bill makes UK 'one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world', says Médecins Sans Frontières*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6528-X7R1-DY4H-K0H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 8:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 713 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** International organisation operating in 70 countries brands Commons votes 'shameful'

**Body**

[*Priti Patel'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) s new [*borders*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/borders) and nationality bill will make the UK "one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world", a leading international charity has said.

[*Médecins Sans Frontières*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/medecins-sans-frontieres) (MSF), which employs over 35,000 personnel across 70 countries, branded Commons votes on Tuesday night "shameful" after the Tory MPs ripped out amendments proposed by the House of Lords.

Just four Conservative MPs ultimately voted against the government despite reports of a brewing rebellion over the home secretary's most extreme policies.

The votes come as three million people flee the Russian invasion of Ukraine - joining others seeking sanctuary from authoritarian regimes and war zones across the world. Opposition MPs warned that the bill could criminalise Ukrainians fleeing war and branded the new laws a "traffickers charter".

On Tuesday evening Tory MPs reinserted clauses that will allow the government to send refugees offshore and detain them indefinitely - a policy which aid groups say has caused "terrible suffering" when tried by Australia.

Following the votes the bill will also give the government new powers to punish refugees for how they arrive in the UK. Proposals by peers to give people a safe route to join families in the UK were also ripped out by the Conservatives.

"It's shameful that the government has rejected these moderate, sensible changes, which would have removed some of the cruellest elements of the Nationality and Borders Bill," Sophie McCann, MSF's UK advocacy officer, said.

"In its current form, the bill will enshrine the UK as one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world, at a time when the devastating impact of war and conflict is absolutely evident."

The charity says there is still time to drop the plans and is urging ministers to reconsider the plans, which it says will criminalise people seeking safety.

"The government cannot be serious about this bill - it is unworkable, exorbitantly expensive, and inhumane, targeting some of the most vulnerable people in the world," Ms McCann said.

"There is nothing 'fair' about criminalising, detaining, pushing back and imprisoning refugees in offshore detention centres simply because of how they arrive in the UK.

"Closing off routes to the UK will only push people into the hands of criminal gangs and into more dangerous methods of attempting the journey."

The UK has in recent weeks faced international criticism for its response to the millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion - and is practically the only European country not to implement an open door policy.

Pauline Chetcuti, head of policy at the charity Oxfam, said the bill "flagrantly undermines our obligations under international law".

"The Ukrainian conflict painfully illustrates how innocent civilians everywhere have no choice but to flee conflict, persecution and violence. We need an asylum system that is based on the principle of protection, not punishment," she said.

"This bill flagrantly undermines our obligations under international law to give all those who seek sanctuary a fair hearing. Amendments introduced by the House of Lords that would have rejected the worst elements of this bill - including removing the clauses that punish refugees based on how they arrive to the UK and removing offshore processing - have unfortunately been voted down in the House of Commons today, leaving some of the most harmful parts in place.

"The UK government needs to urgently provide adequate, safe routes for people fleeing violence and bloodshed in Ukraine, Yemen or elsewhere."

Home Office minister Tom Pursglove defended the bill in the Commons on Tuesday, telling MPs: "There can be no doubt about the strength of feeling on these important issues. There could also be no doubt that as a House we stand united in our desire to support vulnerable people in accordance with our long-standing tradition of welcoming those in need of protection.

"We, perhaps, just disagree on how that is best achieved. But it's frustrating, I have to say that often criticism is made, but that isn't matched with a credible alternative."

But Yvette Cooper, Labour's shadow home secretary, said: "At a time when British people have made clear we must help Ukraine, this is truly shameful. Our country is better than this."

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians, Bruins celebrate unity arm-in-arm on the ice*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67HT-PKK1-JBNF-W00V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 11, 2023 Saturday 10:24 PM GMT

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**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** John Wawrow

**Highlight:** Members of the Ukrainian Selects and Boston Junior Bruins hockey teams stood arm-in-arm in a show of unity during the national anthems before their game at the International Peewee tournament in Quebec City

**Body**

The decision to have players from both teams line up arm-in-arm at center ice for the playing of the Ukrainian and [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) ' national anthems was pre-planned in what stood as a symbol of unity and solidarity.

What no one anticipated was the spontaneous celebration that erupted among the 11-and 12-year-olds following the Ukrainian Selects' 3-1 victory at the International Peewee Hockey tournament on Saturday.

Rather than shuffle off the ice, members of the [*Boston*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boston) Junior Bruins happily took part in a victory lap along with the Selects, which ended with the teams gathering again at center ice, where they posed for a picture with one player from each side holding up the ends of a large Ukrainian flag.

“First of all, it’s a message that everybody can be friends and should be friends and live in peace and respect each other,” Ukraine forward Denys Lupandin said in an answer translated by coach Evgheniy Pysarenko. “It doesn’t matter from where you are.”

The bonds that were made and the electric atmosphere of playing in front of some 18,000 fans in Quebec City’s Videotron Centre weren’t lost on Boston goalie James Boccuzzi.

“This was definitely a life-changing moment for me,” Boccuzzi said. “I’ve never experienced anything like it.”

The moments went far beyond fulfilling the message of peace that tournament organizers hoped to send across the world nearly a year after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine began. And it exceeded the vision Pysarenko and Sean Berube had in August, when they began the lengthy process of cobbling together a team of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

“The players reacted like that because they also want to show unity,” said Berube, who spent countless hours and some $20,000 of his own money crisscrossing Europe to gather the players in Romania. “What a day for hockey. What a day for sport.”

The game didn’t lack for drama, either.

With Boccuzzi keeping the swift-skating and play-making Ukrainians at bay on a number of close-in chances, Boston’s Kai Ochi opened the scoring 1:27 into the third period.

The pro-Ukraine — but not anti-Boston — crowd finally got a chance to cheer and chant “Ole, Ole, Ole,” when Yehor Kosenko batted in a bouncing puck to tie the game with 4:48 remaining. Lupandin sneaked a shot in off a faceoff with 2:04 remaining and then sealed the win with an empty-net goal.

Speaking in English, Lupandin said he and his teammates were nervous to open the game upon being welcomed by the large crowd.

“The first moment it was so scary. I look and up and too many people look at me and my team, and first moment it was so hard, first period,” he said. “But second and third period, it was easily for me and maybe for my team. And thank you to the fans who come looking at us.”

A large number of fans arrived three hours before puck drop. White T-shirts spelling out “UKRAINE” were draped over the backs of chairs in one section. In another, a blue-and-yellow version of the Canadian flag was attached to a railing.

In Section 113, Roger Poirier carried a Ukrainian flag while handing out blue-and-white handkerchiefs. Poirier, who is from [*Quebec City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/quebec-city) , has become active in supporting Ukraine in part because he had business there, during which he also met his wife.

Jessica [*Anthony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/anthony) wore a T-shirt with the Ukrainian flag on it and had on matching yellow sweatpants. Though an avid hockey fan, she acknowledged she doesn’t normally attend peewee games.

“I want to express my solidarity with Ukraine,” Anthony said.

The atmosphere was mostly foreign from what the Ukrainian Selects have known for much of the past year. Many of them have resettled with their families as refugees in countries neighboring Ukraine. At least five still live in Ukraine, where rocket-warning sirens in the middle of the night are the norm.

“It’s an honor to participate in this event and everybody in solidarity with us and supporting our country,” Pysarenko said. “Everybody wants peace. These kids want peace mostly probably because you don’t know their stories, but I tell you they have the terrible times and terrible experiences.”

One of those experiences included five players’ trip to the Romanian border to open training camp last month. Twice, they saw rockets fly above them.

That’s something Bruins assistant coach Mike Cashman couldn’t even imagine. He hoped the Ukrainians can enjoy the new memories they’ve made at the tournament.

“I just hope that these kids from Ukraine, they just experienced a thrill of a lifetime like our players did,” Cashman said. “You know, I don’t know what the future holds for them, unfortunately, but today they can remember today and be really excited about the future.”

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) sports: [*https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports*](https://apnews.com/hub/apf-sports) and [*https://twitter.com/AP\_Sports*](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Rishi Sunak says he is supporting the nation during this cost of living crisis - the reality is far different*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652H-77H1-JBNF-W20X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 638 words

**Byline:** James Moore

**Highlight:** Inflation has hit 6.2 per cent and will go higher - but the chancellor hasn't revised spending plans in response. Meanwhile, the squeeze for Britain's poorest goes on, writes James Moore

**Body**

"Is that it," a heckler piped up when the chancellor, [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) , took an unusually long pause for breath as he delivered his [*spring statement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spring-statement).

They could easily have saved that for the end. Faced with an unprecedented squeeze on household incomes - the inflation rate has jumped to 6.2 per cent before Sunak stood up and it is poised to rise again - he offered thin gruel at best.

Tory MPs, in an income bracket able to cope, were given some honey to sweeten their servings. A penny off the basic rate of income tax in future, a year long cut in fuel duty now. Both of those levies have been desired by the party.

Let's take the fuel duty cut first: ask yourself who will benefit most from a reduction in prices at the pumps. The answer, of course, is the wealthy drivers of large cars. The SUVs and the executive saloons that do so much to pollute urban air quality and create snarl ups.

You could argue that removing VAT from solar panels, heat pumps, or insulation will help to counter the environmental of that, a bit. The measure is welcome. But it too primarily benefits people with the money to afford these things.

"We will support people," Sunak said. "We will stand by them." Really? Where is the evidence of that. Sure, increasing the national insurance threshold will reduce the impact of the decision to increase the overall rate when it comes to lower earners. It nets out as a positive for anyone on less than £34,000.

But beyond that, there was very little on offer, particularly for the poorest in society for whom things are rapidly getting very grim indeed. The chancellor sought to buy off his critics by doubling to £1bn the amount of money amiable to local authorities to dispense via the Household Support Fund.

That won't go nearly far enough. Universal Credit and the state pension are only going up by 3.1 per cent this month with inflation expected to hit close to 8 per cent. The impact will be brutal.

How are people already facing with the horrible "heat or eat" dilemma supposed to cope? What are they supposed to do? Pray?

Debt charities have real cause for concern because those people may end up getting into debt. There is already evidence that the number of people borrowing to pay for day to day essentials is rising. This is a deeply disturbing development because it is a recipe for disaster.

Something else that swiftly became apparent after economists had gone over the figures was that Sunak chose not to revise government spending plans in response to rapidly rising inflation. This means that even departments originally slated for above inflation increases are now likely to face a real-term spending cut.

They will face a stark choice: either cut pay for staff or cut frontline services. The most likely result is that both get hit. Who would work in teaching or nursing or, well, you name it, faced with that?

The government's critics often point to the low opinion that it appears to have of the British people. A recent, and oft cited example is its miserable response to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, based on the clearly erroneous assumption that some Britons hate anyone from overseas and are too mean to help them.

It also appears to think that they are stupid; that they will fall in line with Tory MPs and cheer that future income tax cut while they face a [*cost of living crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cost-living-crisis) and a faltering economy. All while the nation's public services are being strip-mined to pay for that cut.

Thinking of the electorate as stupid is a dangerous game for Sunak to be playing. Having done well during the Covid-19 pandemic, his economic stewardship is starting to come under a harsh spotlight. He is rapidly losing his shine.

The chancellor says he is standing behind people - but he is taking their legs out from under them as he does it. They are probably going to notice how cold it is on the floor.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian, Russian refugee dancers find help in Berlin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652G-74T1-JBNF-W4V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 4:15 PM GMT

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**Length:** 686 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Dancers who have fled Ukraine - and Russia - due to the war have found a new temporary home in Berlin's top ballet company, which helps with practice space, housing, even shoes

**Body**

Dancers who have fled Ukraine - and Russia - due to the war have found a new temporary home in Berlin's top ballet company, which helps with practice space, housing, and even shoes.

About 200 dancers in all, including many who are considering fleeing to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , have turned for assistance to the capital's famous State Ballet.

Christiane Theobald, the company's acting artistic director, said Wednesday that it is crucial for those refugees to keep up their regular practice, even if they don't have any public performances right now.

"The important thing is that the daily training can be completed, because training is like brushing your teeth," she told The Associated Press. "And the tragedy is that if you have phases where you can't do that at all, then you can never make up for it."

At the same time, Theobald said she's been contacting other company directors across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to see if she can help find the uprooted dancers new jobs.

"What we need now, of course, are positions in ensembles, and those who are coming ... are mainly classically, highly classically trained dancers," Theobald said.

While there are about 70 dance ensembles in Germany, not all of them are so exclusively focused on classical dance like most of the companies in eastern Europe, but often practice modern dance too. So it will take adaptation by the new dancers to study and get used to the different, western European styles.

On Wednesday morning, more than 30 dancers were practicing their moves at a workout room in Berlin - among them eight refugees, including two Brazilian dancers who had fled from Russia recently.

Many arrive in Berlin without anything and are now getting lots of practical help from the Berlin ensemble - anything from dance shoes to housing.

"You have to imagine, these are people who have left everything behind, they have very little with them. That starts with the pointed shoes," Theobald said.

Because the situation is so dynamic, with many dancers reaching Berlin and then some quickly moving on to other destinations, the company said it was difficult to say how many exactly had received help already.

Those escaping Ukraine include people from all over the world who used to dance at ballet companies there. Those from Russia no longer want to be exposed to President Vladimir Putin's increasingly oppressive regime.

State Ballet's principal dancer Iana Salenko, who is from Ukraine herself but came to Germany in 2005, has also been helping the new arrivals. Through her personal network, she's been trying to get them auditions at ballet companies across Europe, but also has shown them opportunities in other fields of employment such as the opera.

"Of course, it's not me alone - many other principals in Europe are trying to help this group," the 38-year-old said.

More than 3.5 million people have been flooding into Europe escaping the war, and almost everywhere they've been welcomed by an outpouring of help and solidarity.

Germany has registered almost 240,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, although the real numbers are expected to be much higher since they don't need a visa to enter the country and federal police only keep records of refugees arriving by train or bus. Those entering from [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) by car usually are not registered.

Salenko, the principal dancer, has also been sharing the refugees' worries about their families back home in the war. While she and her mother are safe in Berlin, she worries about her father and brothers back in Ukraine and talks to them on a daily basis - just like the dancers who recently fled to Berlin.

Theobald said even though there were dancers from many different nations practicing together in Berlin, including Ukrainians and Russians, there were no tensions within the ensemble as a result of the war.

Salenko, too, stressed that the war did not manage to divide the dancers but instead drew them together as they try to maneuver the horrible situation.

"This situation, I find that it's made us move closer, more together," she said.

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Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin contributed.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian family stranded in Hawaii are given a house for free*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6546-0H61-DY4H-K12X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 4:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 641 words

**Highlight:** Vasyl and Marina Prishchak and their three daughters were on vacation in Oahu in the middle of February when Russia declared war on their home country

**Body**

A Ukrainian family who became stranded in [*Hawaii*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hawaii) when the war broke out during their vacation have been given a new temporary home to live in rent-free on the island.

Vasyl and Marina Prishchak and their three daughters Maria, 16, Sofia, 10, and Kseniia, 5, travelled from their home in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) to Oahu for a long-awaited holiday visiting their friends Borys and Beata Markin in the middle of February.

But, just days into their three-week trip, their dream holiday turned to heartbreak as Russia declared war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and they found themselves watching from afar as their home country came under attack.

More than one month on, with the planned vacation now over, they remain stuck in the US not knowing if their home close to a Ukrainian military base is even still standing or if they will ever be able to return home.

Their cosmetics company has been forced to close and access to their finances has been cut off, according to the Associated Press.

The canoe paddling community has rallied around the family in their time of need, with one local homeowner giving them a cottage to stay rent-free for as long as they need in Kaneohe.

Thousands of dollars have been raised in donations to support the displaced family, with a [*GoFundMe*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-needed-by-visiting-ukrainian-family?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=sms&utm_source=customer) organised by one local reaching more than $33,000 on Thursday.

Meanwhile, others are helping them in other ways, such as supporting them with immigration questions as they apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

In early March, President Joe Biden announced he was granting TPS to Ukrainians fleeing from the war, enabling Ukrainians to stay and work legally in the US for 18 months.

An estimated 75,000 people will be shielded from deportation back to the war zone because of this rule.

The Prishchaks said they are thankful for the outpouring of support they have received from the local community in the US.

Mr Prishchak, who has known Mr Markin for three decades, told AP that "this vacation changed our life".

"We don't know how we return to Ukraine and what we will do, we will begin from zero, from scratch," he said.

He said that he feels guilty being on a beautiful island away from his home while his fellow Ukrainian men are unable to leave the country and are now fighting on the frontline.

"It's a really terrible feeling that eats away at you from inside when you understand that all your close relatives are now in a very complicated situation," he said.

"And there's no way you can help them stop this absolute insanity. It's a feeling that simply eats you up inside, you could say.

"A horrible sensation, an inner guilt that I'm here and not there."

Ms Markin, who has lived with her Ukrainian husband in Hawaii for eight years, said she sees it as "our responsibility to make sure they are okay here" as they "have nowhere to go".

Charlotte Johnson, an Oahu resident who set up the GoFundMe, called on her fellow Americans to "bring hope to their lives by sharing our aloha".

"Sadly, we can't help all the Ukrainians, but we can help this family of five," she wrote on the fundraising page.

"None of us can even imagine going on a vacation only to find the life left no longer exists."

She added: "Even the smallest donation will make a difference. To a country half a world away, these five Ukrainians are our touchpoint.

"Today we can help this Ukrainian family who took a vacation and will never return to the home they knew."

Last week, on the one-month anniversary of the day the war began, Mr Biden unveiled plans to welcome up to 100,000 Ukrainians and other refugees fleeing the country into the US.

He also pledged to provide $1bn in humanitarian assistance to help with the rising humanitarian crisis as more than 4 million refugees have now left their homes in Ukraine.

It's a move that comes after pressure was mounting on the US from European counterparts to do more to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*This is the moment to give the Ukrainians the tools to finish the job*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67H8-5PX1-DY4H-K00G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 9, 2023 Thursday 12:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** EDITORIALS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 818 words

**Byline:** Editorial

**Highlight:** Editorial: As President Zelensky said in his powerful address at Westminster Hall, ‘victory will change the world’

**Body**

It is entirely fitting, as well as a signal honour, that [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) ’s second visit abroad since Russia invaded his country[*should be to the UK.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/planes-ukraine-zelensky-uk-sunak-b2278313.html) America’s financial, technological and military assistance has naturally dwarfed other contributions, but Britain has led in supplying intelligence and weaponry and was one of the first powers to respond to Kyiv’s cries for help when the Russians came rolling over the border.

It would be churlish to deny the role played in that effort by [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) , in particular, and the way, through example, they galvanised the West’s response a year ago and more, when others either dismissed the possibility of Russian aggression, blamed Nato for “poking the Russian bear” or writing off Ukraine’s chances of surviving more than a few weeks. His leadership in that period was one of the few things Mr Johnson may count as an unalloyed success; any personal political capital he extracts from it was and is a price worth paying.

The policy has been continued by Mr Johnson’s successors and enjoyed cross-party and broad national support. Thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been made welcome in British homes, though more can always be done. Most recently, that commitment has been demonstrated once again in the early pledge of Challenger 2 battle tanks, and, now, in the training Ukrainian pilots in modern Western fighter jets. The Challenger tank initiative, with the promise of US Abrams tanks, succeeded in making the German government budge and relax its restrictions on the export of its Leopard tanks.

[*President Zelensky was generous in his thanks for British support*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-zelensky-uk-b2278043.html). But the UK, the West and the free world as whole has much cause to thank President Zelensky and the brave Ukrainian people. The miseries and murders they have suffered in the past year are scarcely comprehensible. Defeated time and again on the battlefield, driven back and humiliated, Vladimir Putin’s forces have turned to indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets and the use of lawless, merciless Wagner Group mercenaries to prevent a total rout. He treats the lives of Russian soldiers, including ethnic minorities, as worthless cannon fodder. Badly-led and poorly equipped, they only have the edge on the Ukrainians in sheer numbers.

Soon, they will seek to make numbers count, and a fresh Russian offensive will come. The Kremlin has been regrouping. There is talk of[*perhaps 500,000 troops being amassed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-military-honour-brijendra-rana-kharkiv-b2277324.html). The Russians have some more modern tanks of their own, the T90s. They will be making more drones. They will continue to target civilian populations. They are proving more adept at evading sanctions and exporting oil: China and India have been too helpful to Moscow.

So, Ukraine will need even more help in the coming months. After London, Mr Zelensky travelled to Paris, where he met with Macron and Scholz. He will then go to Brussels, where he is assured of another warm welcome. Essentially, though Mr Zelensky also needs to focus on an uncertain Berlin. For historic and industrial reasons, Germany has been understandably reluctant to become embroiled in the Ukraine conflict. It has paid a heavier price than most, in inflation and energy sanctions, but in the end Germany has done the right thing.

As the leading European industrial power, it now needs to support the Western effort still further, diplomatically and practically. That means fighter jets – from the UK, the rest of Europe, the US and allies across the globe. That is what Mr Zelensky has travelled West to secure: The inscription on the Ukrainian fighter pilot’s helmet presented to Speaker Hoyle reads “combat aircraft for Ukraine, wings for freedom.” The message is clear.

Air power is the next task, because the usefulness of the vast quantity of munitions, missile systems, artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles depends in part on adequate control of the skies. It is the one area where Ukraine remains at a relative technological disadvantage, and an absolute numerical one. Air power is the final element in the armoury that will be needed to push the Russians out of Ukraine and defeat them.

As President Zelensky said, “victory will change the world”. When this conflict is resolved, Russia can then be rehabilitated, live in peace with this neighbours, rebuild its economy and democratic institutions, and be treated with due respect in the community of nations. When that happens, the whole world will be a safer place – but especially Europe. That is the prize that awaits.

This is a critical moment. One year ago, on the eve of invasion, few would have given the Ukrainians much chance of resisting, let alone actually beating the Russians. Now it is an entirely realistic ambition. This is the moment, to borrow the Churchillian phrase, to give the Ukrainians the tools to finish the job. We cannot allow weakness or hesitation to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[*PM pledges 6,000 missiles to help Ukraine 'turn tide'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652M-4H31-JCS0-D3F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 24, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 743 words

**Byline:** JON STONE IN BRUSSELS

**Body**

Boris Johnson has said Vladimir Putin is "failing" in Ukraine as he unveiled a new military support package for the country's defenders.

Britain is to provide 6,000 new defensive missiles and £25m for the Ukrainian armed forces in a bid to help push back the Russian invasion.

It comes as Mr Johnson is set to meet with Nato leaders at a summit in Brussels today, with the focus of discussions on how to bring an end to the conflict.

Mr Johnson has promised to use the meeting to push for extra support for Ukraine's military. Other issues on the agenda include humanitarian assistance for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and sanctions on Russia.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky is also expected to speak to leaders at the gathering. Mr Johnson also spoke to Mr Zelensky yesterday afternoon ahead of the summit.

Kicking off the meeting yesterday Nato secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance was "concerned" over Russia potentially using chemical weapons in the country. And he said Mr Putin's government "must stop its nuclear sabre-rattling", branding the approach "dangerous and it is irresponsible".

"Russia must understand that it can never win a nuclear war," Mr Stoltenberg added on the eve of the summit - a major gathering which EU officials in Brussels are describing as an "extravaganza".

But Mr Johnson faces an apparent snub as he arrives in the city, facing exclusion from the second part of the gathering of world leaders.

US president Joe Biden has been invited join the 27 EU presidents and prime ministers for a European Council meeting in the same city on the same day, where discussions about the conflict are expected to continue following the Nato summit. But despite reports that Mr Johnson wanted to attend the second meeting, he was not invited and will miss the second part of day's proceedings.

The lack of an invitation raised speculation that the prime minister's comments over the weekend, comparing the war in Ukraine to Brexit, played a role in the snub. Those words sparked fury in Brussels and other EU capitals, with former council president Donald Tusk branding them "offensive" to Ukrainians, British people, and even "common sense".

Officials in Brussels are however downplaying any link between what Mr Johnson said and the lack of an invitation. A senior EU official noted that European Council president Charles Michel had had "a long phone call with Prime Minister Johnson on Monday" and that this took place after Mr Johnson's remarks.

The official said Mr Johnson would have another opportunity to meet EU chiefs at a meeting of G7 leaders. "The feeling was that we invite the president of the United States to the European Council, but we are not repeating the formats that we have had around the day."

Britain was automatically allowed to attend the European Council as a member of the EU, but no longer has a seat on the body, which meets four times a year in the Belgian capital.

Speaking ahead of his attendance at the Nato leg of the gathering, Mr Johnson said: "Vladimir Putin is already failing in Ukraine. The Ukrainian people have shown themselves to be extraordinarily brave and tenacious in defending their homeland, in the face of an unprovoked onslaught.

"But we cannot and will not stand by while Russia grinds Ukraine's towns and cities into dust. The United Kingdom will work with our allies to step up military and economic support to Ukraine, strengthening their defences as they turn the tide in this fight. One month into this crisis, the international community faces a choice. We can keep the flame of freedom alive in Ukraine, or risk it being snuffed out across Europe and the world."

A Downing Street spokesperson confirmed Mr Johnson had spoken to Mr Zelensky and said he was updated on the latest developments on the ground. "The prime minister reiterated his admiration for the bravery of the Ukrainian armed forces and their success in repulsing Russia's onslaught," the spokesperson said. "He said the bombardment of civilian areas, including the siege of Mariupol, is unconscionable and demands a response from the international community.

"The prime minister set out his intention to use [today's] G7 and Nato meetings to increase the pressure on Vladimir Putin's regime and work with partners to substantively increase defensive lethal aid to Ukraine. Leaders would look to address Ukraine's requests and ensure President Zelensky is in the strongest possible position in ongoing peace talks."

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Nobel Peace Prize-winner's paper closes amid Russia pressure*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653J-7691-JBNF-W0YH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 28, 2022 Monday 6:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 701 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russia's leading independent newspaper has suspended operations under pressure from the authorities

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's leading independent newspaper suspended operations Monday after pressure from Russian authorities, a move that comes less than six months after its editor won the [*Nobel Peace Prize*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nobel-peace-prize) for his paper's courageous reporting under difficult circumstances.

The paper, [*Novaya Gazeta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/novaya-gazeta) , said it will remain closed for the duration of what the newspaper referred to in quotations as "the special operation" in Ukraine, the term that Russian authorities insist media must use.

The newspaper was the last major independent media outlet critical of President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's government after others either shut their doors or had their websites blocked since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began on Feb. 24.

The trigger for the shutdown was a second formal warning from the Russian media regulator Roskomnadzor, which has increasingly taken on the role of a censor in recent years, Novaya Gazeta had long had a difficult relationship with the government.

Novaya Gazeta's longtime editor Dmitry Muratov shared the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize with Maria Ressa, a journalist from the Philippines, in October. Muratov said last week he was donating his Nobel medal to be auctioned off to raise funds for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and called for an immediate cease-fire in Ukraine.

Exactly why Novaya Gazeta was warned remains unclear. Roskomnadzor told state news agency Tass that the newspaper had failed to identify an unnamed non-governmental organization as a "foreign agent" in its reporting, as required by Russian law. It didn't specify the report in question.

Novaya Gazeta has trodden a fine line during the war in Ukraine. It initially defied the Russian authorities' restrictions, publishing in Russian and Ukrainian the day after the invasion began. However, it removed much of its war reporting from its website after Russian lawmakers passed a law March 4 threatening jail terms of up to 15 years for information deemed to be "fake" by Russian authorities. That can include any mention of Russian forces harming civilians or suffering losses on the battlefield.

On Sunday, Muratov sent in questions for an interview with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy along with a group of Russian journalists. Roskomnadzor banned the publication of the interview with Zelenskyy in Russia and said the media outlets which took part would be investigated.

"A country without media (the last free "Novaya Gazeta" was closed), without discussion, without political competition, without a full-fledged parliament," Zelenskyy adviser Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter on Monday. "This is the modern (Russian Federation). That is why Russians do not see, hear or realize anything. No matter what language you speak to them."

In its citation, the Norwegian Nobel Committee noted that six of Novaya Gazeta's journalists had been killed. The best known of them was Anna Politkovskaya, who reported on atrocities during the second Chechen War at the start of Putin's first term as Russian president. She was shot dead in her apartment building in 2006. Five men were convicted of involvement in her murder in 2014, but there has never been a ruling on who ordered her killing.

Muratov said that winning the Nobel Prize was "recognition of the memory of our fallen colleagues," including Politkovskaya.

Novaya Gazeta was itself born from the legacy of another Russian Nobel Peace Prize-winner, the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. He won the Peace Prize in 1990 and used part of the award to fund what later became Novaya Gazeta, which launched in 1993.

Putin had a warning for Muratov after his win last year, when asked if the paper could follow other media in being given the dreaded "foreign agent" label by Russian authorities, which must be added to every article a media outlet produces and carries a pejorative connotation.

"If (Muratov) doesn't break Russian law and if he doesn't give a reason to be announced as a foreign agent, then he won't be," Putin said. "But if he hides behind the Nobel Prize like a shield to do something which breaks Russian law, that means he's doing it consciously to attract attention to himself."

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Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories on Russia's war on Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** March 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government must soon make visa and funding decisions for Ukrainians in UK – NAO*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DJ-PVD1-DY4H-K0SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 16, 2023 Monday 11:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1047 words

**Byline:** Aine Fox

**Highlight:** The Homes for Ukraine Scheme launched in March 2022.

**Body**

Ukrainians who fled to the UK from war must be given certainty over their futures including around visa extensions and in the face of rising costs and the risk of homelessness, a report has said.

The National Audit Office (NAO) said the generosity of the public in opening their homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had allowed the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to work quickly to help tens of thousands come to safety since March 2022.

But decisions will need to be taken by ministers about future funding and visas and consideration given to the “threat of homelessness as sponsorships end”, according to the head of the body which scrutinises public spending for Parliament.

[*Gareth Davies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gareth-davies) , comptroller and auditor general of the NAO, said: “The Government worked quickly to help Ukrainians fleeing conflict, enabled by the generosity of the British people who opened their homes.

Homes for Ukraine scheme between March 18 2022 and August 28 2023" data-source="National Audit Office report">

“The Government will soon need to take important decisions about the future of the scheme, including whether to extend visas beyond three years, and whether to extend funding for local authorities and sponsors, which currently finishes before visas expire.

“It will also need to carefully monitor key risks, such as safeguarding, and the threat of homelessness as sponsorships end.”

The NAO report, published on Tuesday, said the Government had “successfully supported 131,000 Ukrainians to come to the UK” under the Homes for Ukraine scheme between March 18 2022 and August 28 2023, “meeting Government’s overall objective of bringing Ukrainians to safety”.

It added: “The generosity of the British public in hosting people from Ukraine meant that the Government’s taskforce was able to establish the scheme quickly, and Government put in place arrangements to manage important risks at the start.”

The latest Government figures show that, as of October 9, arrivals via the scheme, which is also known as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, numbered 134,700.

Because of the uncertainty for Ukrainians in the UK, Government will soon need to make several decisions, including whether to provide thank you payments for the third year of visas, and what additional funding, if any, to provide to local authorities to continue to support the scheme

Gareth Davies, National Audit Office

But the NAO said the scheme’s future is “not yet clear”.

The report said: “Because of the uncertainty for Ukrainians in the UK, Government will soon need to make several decisions, including whether to provide thank you payments for the third year of visas, and what additional funding, if any, to provide to local authorities to continue to support the scheme.

“In making its decision, Government will need to also consider the desire of the Ukrainian government for people to return once it is safe for them to do so. Some Ukrainians now have less than 18 months remaining on their visa, introducing new challenges for individuals and local authorities.

“Government will also need to carefully monitor the scheme’s key risks, such as safeguarding, and particularly the threat of rising homelessness as more sponsorships end.”

By the end of August, the report said local authorities had reported to the Department for Levelling Up, [*Housing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing) and Communities that 4,890 households in England on Homes for Ukraine visas had been homeless or were at risk of being homeless.

This was 8% of the 65,117 households in England using the visas, the NAO said.

Since the start of this year, at any one time, roughly 600 to 800 Ukrainian households have been living in temporary accommodation in England, the report said, although the department does not know how many of these households are on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Today’s NAO investigation shows that more needs to be done to ensure Ukrainians are getting the support they need and prevent rising numbers becoming homeless

Meg Hillier, Public Accounts Committee

“As more sponsorship arrangements come to an end the risk of homelessness is likely to increase,” the report said.

[*Meg Hillier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meg-hillier) , chair of the Public Accounts Committee, said: “The British public’s support allowed the Government to temporarily support 131,000 Ukrainians seeking refuge from war since March 2022.

“However, today’s NAO investigation shows that more needs to be done to ensure Ukrainians are getting the support they need and prevent rising numbers becoming homeless. Government should also decide quickly on visa extensions to give Ukrainians the certainty they deserve over their futures.”

The Local Government Association, which represents councils, said it has a “huge concern“ around funding and “serious concerns around the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless”.

Its senior vice-chairman, Kevin Bentley, said: “We want to work with Government to review and confirm funding to ensure all families are helped to find permanent homes, jobs and schools and how best to support new and existing sponsors to open up their homes.

“This is alongside the need for urgent and joint solutions to pressing housing needs, given the growing demand from across all the schemes that welcome new arrivals to the UK, as well as broader increases in homelessness and housing pressures locally.”

Earlier this month a survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggested more than two-thirds of current hosts under the Homes for Ukraine scheme said the rising cost of living is affecting their ability to provide support for those they have taken in.

Ukrainians who fled the war to seek refuge in the UK are also facing difficulties affording costs, as they try to move into private rented accommodation, the findings suggested.

So-called thank you payments to hosts were £350 a month during the first 12 months but were increased to £500 once the guest has been in the UK for 12 months, in a move by the Government aimed at helping sponsors who can host for longer periods.

A Government spokesperson welcomed the NAO’s “recognition” of efforts to support Ukrainians and said ministers are “grateful to the extraordinary generosity of sponsors across the UK, as well as the hard work of local councils, volunteers and charities”.

They added: “We will provide an update on the future of the scheme well before the first visas expire.”

**Load-Date:** October 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*The West can hand Ukraine the tools to finish the job*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67H8-RMV1-F072-4060-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 9, 2023 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 2

**Length:** 834 words

**Byline:** EDITORIAL

**Body**

It is entirely fitting, as well as a signal honour, that Volodymyr Zelensky's second visit abroad since Russia invaded his country should be to the UK. America's financial, technological and military assistance has naturally dwarfed other contributions, but Britain has led in supplying intelligence and weaponry and was one of the first powers to respond to Kyiv's cries for help when the Russians came rolling over the border.

It would be churlish to deny the role played in that effort by Boris Johnson and Ben Wallace, the defence secretary, in particular, and the way, through example, they galvanised the West's response a year ago and more, when others either dismissed the possibility of Russian aggression, blamed Nato for "poking the Russian bear" or wrote off Ukraine's chances of surviving more than a few weeks. His leadership in that period was one of the few things Mr Johnson may count as an unalloyed success; any personal political capital he extracted from it was and is a price worth paying.

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President Zelensky was generous in his thanks for British support. But the UK, the West and the free world as a whole have as much cause to thank Mr Zelensky and the brave Ukrainian people. The miseries and murders they have suffered in the past year are scarcely comprehensible. Defeated time and again on the battlefield, driven back and humiliated, Vladimir Putin's forces have turned to indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets and the use of the lawless Wagner Group mercenaries to prevent a total rout. He treats the lives of Russian soldiers, including ethnic minorities, as worthless cannon fodder. Badly led and poorly equipped, they only have the edge on the Ukrainians in sheer numbers.

Soon, they will seek to make numbers count, and a fresh Russian offensive will come. The Kremlin has been regrouping. There is talk of perhaps 500,000 troops being amassed. The Russians have some more modern tanks of their own, the T-90s. They will be making more drones. They will continue to target civilian populations. They are proving more adept at evading sanctions and exporting oil: China and India have been too helpful to Moscow.

So, Ukraine will need even more help in the coming months. Yesterday evening Mr Zelensky travelled from London to Paris to meet with French president Emmanuel Macron and German chancellor Olaf Scholz. Later he will travel to Brussels, where he is assured of another warm welcome. Essentially, though, Mr Zelensky needs to focus on an uncertain Berlin. For historic and industrial reasons, Germany has been understandably reluctant to become embroiled in the Ukraine conflict. It has paid a heavier price than most, in inflation and energy sanctions, but in the end Germany has done the right thing.

As the leading European industrial power, it now needs to support the Western effort still further, diplomatically and practically. That means fighter jets - from the UK, the rest of Europe, the US and allies across the globe. That is what Mr Zelensky has travelled West to secure: the inscription on the Ukrainian fighter pilot's helmet presented to Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle reads: "We have freedom. Give us wings to protect it." The message is clear.

Air power is the next step, because the usefulness of the vast quantity of munitions, missile systems, artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles depends in part on adequate control of the skies. It is the one area where Ukraine remains at a relative technological disadvantage, and an absolute numerical one. Air power is the final element in the armoury that will be needed to push the Russians out of Ukraine and defeat them.

As President Zelensky said, "victory will change the world". When this conflict is resolved, Russia can then be rehabilitated, live in peace with its neighbours, rebuild its economy and democratic institutions, and be treated with due respect in the community of nations. When that happens, the whole world will be a safer place - but especially Europe. That is the prize that awaits.

This is a critical moment. One year ago, on the eve of invasion, few would have given the Ukrainians much chance of resisting, let alone actually beating the Russians. Now it is an entirely realistic ambition. This is the moment, to borrow the Churchillian phrase, to give the Ukrainians the tools to finish the job. We cannot allow weakness or hesitation to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Rejoining the EU would be a return to sanity*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650B-0F91-JBNF-W169-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 1:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 821 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

It was with delight that I read [*Jon Stone's article*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/lib-dems-uk-eu-single-market-b2034013.html) on the Liberal Democrat's roadmap to rejoin the European single market. Oh, happy days. Why the UK left the [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) is beyond me - probably through some skullduggery on behalf of the Conservative Party and Brexiteers. But to read that there are still sane people, even though they are politicians, in our midst was encouraging.

Britain has lost lots since leaving the EU: our standing in the world, trade with the EU, easy access to security data, free movement of people across borders and various health and welfare standards for people and animals. Britain has gained nothing by leaving the EU; self-government and immigration benefits have not materialised.

It's refreshing to hear that we may once again be a member of the largest trading group in the world, with the safeguarding of people's human rights in all countries involved in the "club". We have lost so much that there is bound to be a reaction. Hopefully, this is the start of the return to sanity.

Keith Poole

Basingstoke

Reasons for rejoining

Why rejoin the EU? Trade is important but not, I believe, a major reason for rejoining.

There would be more cooperation with neighbours - united we stand. The time that needs to be taken to redraft laws and regulations would be better used in other ways. There would be less paperwork with European and Northern Irish trade.

In the EU, it would not be so easy for a government to take actions that ultimately lead to a loss of freedom. As the old adage goes: "Better inside the tent pissing out, than outside pissing in."

Rob Alliott

Cambridge

Second and third homes

I sincerely hope our MPs will lead the way by housing ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) in their second (and, in some cases, third) homes.

Nigel Groom

Witham, Essex

Unisex toilets

It seems to me that every time there is an argument about who is actually a woman (or a man, for that matter), the issue of safe toilets is brought up.

Might I suggest that the answer is simply to have unisex toilets like those that exist in other countries? The downside of course is that we men would have to join the long queues for the cubicles. But maybe if that were to happen, something might be done to increase the provision of adequate facilities for all.

G Forward

Stirling

The west cannot win this war

I read [*Kim Sengupta's article*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-ukraine-russia-kyiv-war-b2034569.html) with great interest. I am concerned that civilian lives are being placed at unnecessary risk in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to satisfy the egos of political leaders and Nato nations.

By arming Ukrainians and encouraging them to fight to the bitter end without directly intervening, we in the west are complicit in permitting their mass murder.

President Biden correctly stated that a Third World War must be prevented. Perhaps it is time the west encouraged Ukrainian politicians to strongly consider the Russian terms to a cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of its forces, even if it means significant political compromises for Ukraine, including a temporary halt to Nato admission and granting limited autonomy to the Donbas region.

The west cannot win this particular battle, but its principles and resourcefulness can win the geopolitical war against autocracies in the long term, without making a mass grave in Ukraine inevitable.

Dr Priyad Ariyaratnam

Sheffield

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

We should be doing more

In Whitehall today, a single individual who appeared to be a self-proclaimed evangelist was blasting out music on a portable speaker at the gates of Downing Street.

On the opposite side of the road, a group of Ukrainian supporters with families there were assembling to highlight what is happening in their country.

At the start of the assembly, the organiser whose parents are in Kyiv told the group she wanted to play the Ukrainian national anthem. But she had been told that playing music was not allowed. The group proceeded to sing without accompaniment. It was moving and humbling.

But it is a sign, once again, of how out of touch the government and the Metropolitan Police are. It is shameful that we are not doing more to support the people of Ukraine.

Gordon Ronald

Hertfordshire

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine's child refugees pose huge challenge for Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650Y-XC71-JBNF-W3FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 1:38 PM GMT

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**Length:** 726 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Concerns are mounting in countries that have received tens of thousands of Ukrainian children about the huge task of providing them with long-term mental care and schooling

**Body**

Thousands of Ukrainian children who have found shelter in hastily converted housing facilities across central and eastern Europe are struggling to come to terms with their new reality as refugees fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of their country.

According to figures released by UNICEF on Tuesday, children account for about a half of the more than 3 million Ukrainians who have crossed into [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova since the invasion began on Feb. 24.

Countries bordering [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) have provided sanctuary to a seemingly unending flow of refugees. But authorities in those countries are facing the monumental task of providing long-term mental care to traumatized Ukrainian children.

Over the past 20 days an average of 55 children have been fleeing Ukraine every minute and the trend is unlikely to change as Russian forces continue their advance. New arrivals are expected to overwhelm underfunded and poorly managed public schools in tiny Moldova, but also in relatively affluent Poland -the fifth-most populous member state of the European Union -where classes are held in Polish, a language most Ukrainians do not speak.

Psychologists say young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** appear unable to comprehend the longer-term nature of their absence from home and separation from their fathers, forbidden to leave Ukraine in order to fight the war.

Some of the children insist that they are on a short vacation or a school break, said Irina Purcari, a school psychologist in Chisinau who works with Ukrainian children at the biggest refugee center in Moldova's capital.

Upon arriving at the center, "most children are alarmed, reluctant to make contact," Purcari said. "But we take the first steps to win them over and lower their anxiety levels."

Purcari said children speak of their fathers "not in the context of hostilities," possibly as a way create a sense of calm and feel that their life is in order.

For 34 year-old Ukrainian Tamara Bercuta, her first full night's sleep after many weeks happened on Monday when she and her children arrived in Chisinau. She watched her 10 year-old daughter and 4 year-old son draw in a corner of the town's biggest refugee center that has been converted into a play area. Like most other children, her son first reached for crayons in the colors of his country's flag -blue and yellow.

"It is very bad when there is a war, a (mortar) shell hit a roadblock, many people died," Bercuta said, recalling the horrors she and her children had witnessed during their flight from Mykolayiv, the strategic maritime Ukrainian city that witnessed fierce battles for days between Ukrainian and Russian forces.

"At home I was afraid because we were constantly (hiding) in corridors and in the basement," her daughter, Liliya, interjected.

In Poland, which has taken in more than 1.8 million refugees from Ukraine, there are growing concerns about how to integrate those who elected to stay rather to relocate to other countries.

Before Russia's invasion of their country, around 1.5 million Ukrainians lived in Poland. Many of new refugees are expected to remain in Poland as well, where they have friends and relatives.

In a six-story business center in central Warsaw that serves as a home for the most vulnerable refugees, Irina Panasevicz, an Ukraine-born volunteer, said her days consisted of endless calls to area day care facilities and schools to find places for newly arrived children.

"Kids have big problems to adapt in classrooms because classes are conducted in Polish and most children from Ukraine do not speak Polish," Panasevicz said.

Despite them many obstacles they face, Ukrainian children of differed ages mingled and played in a long hallway outside Panasevicz's office in the building they now call home.

For them, what was a normal childhood a few weeks ago has been supplanted by the fear of invading Russian soldiers.

"Russia is making war with Ukraine, we want Russia not to take us," said 7-year-old Bogdan Kolesnik, wiggling nervously on his mother's lap.

"We want to return home, but we do not know when that will be possible," said 14-year-old Juna Berzika as she sat with her mother Svitlana and a group of other women recounting the horror of escaping Ukraine and the fear of what male relatives left behind will face.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pawel Kuczynski in Warsaw, Poland, contributed to this report

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Measures to stop oligarchs bullying critics 'too little, too late', says Labour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-J441-DY4H-K4M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 5:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:** Martina Bet

**Highlight:** Shadow justice secretary Steve Reed was responding to Government proposals to tackle Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.

**Body**

The Government's proposals aimed at stopping Russian oligarchs "abusing" the courts to silence critics are "too little, too late", Labour has said.

In a statement to the [*House of Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/house-of-commons) , Justice Secretary [*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) outlined measures to tackle Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (Slapps), as he warned that those with "blood on their hands" would no longer be free to "hide in the shadows".

Vowing to "stand up for those shining a light on corruption and cronyism", Mr Raab announced the launch of a consultation on the plans - which could include updating defamation laws to strengthen the public interest defence available to protect those who publish private information from being sued if it is done for the public good.

Keir Starmer called on the Government to fast-track legislation to curb these abuses two weeks ago at the start of Putin's invasion, but the Conservatives dragged their feet -just like they did with sanctions and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** 6/8- Steve Reed (@SteveReedMP) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/SteveReedMP/status/1504482157066014725?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Shadow justice secretary [*Steve Reed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/steve-reed) said the measures marked a "welcome shift" by the Government but argued they were "too little, too late".Mr Reed also accused the [*Conservatives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conservatives) of "siding with Putin's oligarchs against British journalists and campaigners" in the past.Mr Reed said: "These measures, welcome though they are, are too little, too late."Labour called on the Government to fix this problem way back in January. My honourable friend the member for Hammersmith and Fulham demanded clearer guidance for judges, tougher regulation of law firms and legislation to control costs so astronomical that no-one can afford to stand up to Putin's bullying billionaires."My right honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition demanded legislation two years ago. The Conservatives' track record is, frankly, problematic. They ignored the [*Leveson Inquiry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leveson-inquiry) when it called for low-cost litigation for claimants and defendants in media cases."Instead, they sided with Putin's oligarchs against British journalists and campaigners, until it was far too late." The Justice Secretary criticised Mr Reed for resorting to the "usual partisan political points".He added: "I think the House can rise above the honourable gentleman's partisan approach."He says too little, too late. In fact, in January when he said the Labour Party called for this, the ministers in the Ministry of Justice had already made clear that we were actively working on proposals and, indeed, I had made it clear in the House in February."In his speech, Mr Raab told the Commons how the war in Ukraine highlighted the "urgency of tackling what is a recent but nonetheless growing problem".Mr Raab noted the "same kleptocrats availing themselves of Slapps are often found bankrolling President Putin's war machine."He said: "It is wrong that unscrupulous individuals and corporations are able to exploit our laws and our courts, this jurisdiction, with claims designed to muzzle respected journalists, academics, campaigners in order explicitly to stop them shining a light on corruption and links to organised crime. If you think about it for a moment, it is the modern-day struggle between David and Goliath."This should have been announced to the House first. [*https://t.co/zmsuVBBWrl*](https://t.co/zmsuVBBWrl) - Chris Bryant (@RhonddaBryant) [*March 17, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RhonddaBryant/status/1504414655241990147?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Labour former minister Chris Bryant said the people of Britain had never known the truth about Russian money because "journalists, broadcasters, sometimes politicians and government have been too frightened".

The MP for Rhondda said: "This is all really good stuff and I'm delighted that we are moving in the right direction. I always wanted to go faster. He (Dominic Raab) can be very slow in delivering what he knows that I want him to deliver.

"The real trouble that we have had in this country is that the people of Britain have never known the truth about Russian money. Because journalists, broadcasters, sometimes politicians and government have been too frightened to go to court because they know that the pockets on the other side are so deep, that they are terrified that they will either lose their own home or they will lose their business, or the Government will lose millions of pounds on behalf of the British taxpayer."

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Why put a pop-up centre in Lille and what next for Ukrainians in Calais?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-8SK1-JBNF-W2PN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 8:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 714 words

**Byline:** Ryan Hooper

**Highlight:** Some of the key questions answered on the Ukrainian situation in the north of France, as thousands try to make it to the UK.

**Body**

The UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has promised a visa pop-up centre in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) to help process the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** looking to seek sanctuary in Britain.

Here are some of the key questions:

- What is the Ukrainian refugee situation in France?

Hundreds of people have escaped Ukraine since the Russian invasion and made it to [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) seeking to come to the UK.

On Wednesday morning, the Government said 760 visas had been granted, with 22,000 applications "on their way through".

A pop-up visa application centre is due to open in [*Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lille) , while another has already opened in Paris.

- Why is a visa even necessary?

Countries in the European Union have said Ukrainians fleeing war in their homeland can stay for up to three years.

But because it is no longer in the bloc, the UK has its own system for granting people entry, called the Ukraine family scheme visa.

This allows people to join an immediate or extended family member in the UK, providing that this relative has British nationality, indefinite leave to remain, settled status or proof of permanent residence.

- So what's the delay?

Around 140 Ukrainians are currently holed up at a youth hostel in Calais, while scores of other families are staying at provided accommodation elsewhere or are paying for private accommodation in northern France.

They are effectively in two positions - some have submitted their paperwork and are waiting for the green light to travel, hence being in Calais where access to the UK is relatively straightforward, while others are one stage back, waiting for an appointment.

The Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announced in the Commons on Tuesday that a pop-up visa application centre would be set up in Lille, some 70 or so miles away, to help with the backlog, while Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) offered the military's support in an attempt to speed things up.

But there are concerns, too, about making sure the process is completed correctly, with Home Office minister Kevin Foster telling MPs on Tuesday that Calais had seen people arriving with fake documents, and also referenced the 2018 Salisbury poisonings, in which two alleged Russian agents entered the UK on fake passports.

- So why not have the pop-up centre in Calais?

The situation is a tricky one. Politically, there is reported concern about the port's reputation during the migrant crisis as an unauthorised departure point for people trying to get into the UK illegally, either by boat across a narrow point of the English Channel, or by stowing onto lorries.

The French government has also sought to reduce the number of people without a home temporarily settling in Calais, particularly since the so-called Jungle camp was pulled down.

So setting up the visa processing centre away from Calais may reduce the number of people travelling there, and be less attractive to people-smuggling gangs looking to exploit vulnerable refugees, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said on Wednesday.

The only real assistance for Ukrainians in Calais is a welcome desk - a makeshift advice centre - at Calais ferry port staffed by a handful of UK Government officials. It does not process applications.

Lille itself is around 70 miles away. The train journey between the two can take as little as half an hour, but from the Frethun terminal on the outskirts of Calais. The Ville terminal is much closer to the centre of Calais where many Ukrainians are staying, but takes up to 90 minutes to get to Lille.

Train travel fees for this reason have been waived.

- What next?

This is the question many are asking. At present, the UK Government has not stated precisely where or when the visa application centre will open up, meaning many refugees are not sure yet whether to travel.

Reports have emerged of people being told to wait in excess of a week to even get an appointment slot at other facilities.

Getting an appointment and handing over the paperwork does not mean the end is in sight, either.

Ukrainians have said they have endured days on end with no confirmation of their visa application status, despite repeated phone calls and emails to various state departments.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Ukrainian family making a home with an 87-year-old Irishwoman*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651C-NXX1-JBNF-W1XT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 12:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 672 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The family travelled from badly-hit Kharkiv to Lviv, and then onto Poland, before making it to Ireland.

**Body**

Irishwoman Phyllis McDonagh is, according to an apron that hangs in her kitchen, the "World's Greatest Hostess".

So when refugees began fleeing war-torn Ukraine, she was always going to help.

Sitting around the large wooden table in the 87-year-old's [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) home are Viktoria Kasianenko, 39, who was driven with her four-year-old daughter Barbara Yevlakhova and step-daughter Anna Yevlakhova, 32, to join her husband Yury, 58, in Dublin.

The five-day journey, which saw them travel from badly-hit [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) to [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) and then onto [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , has become all too familiar in recent weeks as more than 7,000 refugees from embattled Ukraine arrive in the Republic of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland).

Viktoria, Barbara and Anna came to Dublin to join Yury, a watchmaker who has worked for Mrs McDonagh's son in the city centre since last September.

We are very grateful to the family for hosting us now in Ireland. We can feel the support from everyone, from all the family members

Viktoria Kasianenko

But, in doing so, family and friends - including Viktoria's father - have been left behind.

"From the first days, the bombs were falling and we heard the shooting," Viktoria told PA news agency.

Like thousands of others, the trio were forced to hide in basements as soon as sirens blared to announce incoming Russian shelling.

"We were like this for a few days," she said through a translator.

"One morning, we woke up and we decided... we were in the basement and we decided we cannot do it anymore."

The three went to a train station to escape but found it "completely full".

Viktoria said: "We didn't manage to get on the train, and then we decided we're going to sleep on the train station and just to find any way to get out of there."

From Poland, a Scottish woman criss-crossing the continent to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** drove them all the way to Ireland.

While they are now safe, Viktoria and Anna struggle to describe the fear they have for their country.

"First of all, of course we are happy that they are now in a safe place. And we are very grateful to the family for hosting us now in Ireland. We can feel the support from everyone, from all the family members," Viktoria said.

"We are sad and there's no words can explain how we feel because we left absolutely everything there.

"Nobody knows what to expect and when we going be able to move back.

"Of course, it's the first and the main wish to go back to Ukraine and to see our family and friends and relatives. But nobody knows what to expect."

Barbara, who is not yet in school, is adjusting to her new surroundings.

She messed around with the keys of Mrs McDonagh's piano while her mother talked.

Viktoria thinks the youngster has become a decade older since the war began on February 24.

"She understands everything and she watches the news. She understands what it going on and why we left," she said.

The family are grateful to Ireland for the help and say the Government is doing all it can.

While Anna and Viktoria say they want to work and somewhere to live, the next few weeks are full of uncertainty.

"In the near future, we would like to be able to rent our own apartments so we will not be sitting on the neck of people," Viktoria says.

The plan is to create a "normal life" in Ireland - and to be ready to return to Ukraine whenever it is safe.

For Mrs McDonagh, she is in no rush to see her guests leave.

The family speak no English and Mrs McDonagh no Ukrainian, so they communicate using an app.

The Dubliner has six children, 17 grandchildren and in years gone by hosted French and Spanish students.

Born in 1935, she has now seen two wars in Europe.

But to her, there is nothing difficult about taking in a family - even at her age.

"It's grand," she says.

"The way I think of it, if my children were over there, wouldn't you love somebody to mind them?"

Mrs McDonagh is proud to be Irish - and prouder still of the country's response to the crisis.

"I love our Taoiseach (Micheal Martin) and (Tanaiste) Leo Varadkar."

"I think we're a charitable country.

"It is a great country. Best country in the world, Ireland."

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Thousands of Ukrainians in the UK are told they cannot bring their families to safety*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-FG51-JCS0-D4MY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 13, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 717 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Thousands of Ukrainians working in the UK are being treated as "second-class citizens", charities have warned, as they are blocked from bringing their family members fleeing Russia's war. Ministers have been accused of refusing Ukrainian workers a "basic level of humanity" by excluding them from the government's family visa scheme, designed to enable people escaping the conflict to seek sanctuary with their UK-based relatives.

The scheme, introduced last Friday, requires that the relative sponsoring a Ukrainian refugee must be "settled" in the UK - meaning thousands who are on temporary work visas, as well as students and visitors, are not included. Ukraine's ambassador to London told MPs on Wednesday that he planned to ask the home secretary why this cohort was excluded. The following day Priti Patel told the House of Commons that she was "looking at" the issue, but no change has been announced.

The Independent has launched a petition calling for the UK to lead the international community in helping those who have been displaced by the conflict.

Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, had hoped when Ms Patel announced the scheme that he would be able to bring his younger sister and mother, who have fled from their hometown Kyiv, to the UK where he can support them.

However, because he is on a work visa and not technically "settled" in Britain, he and his family are not eligible under the scheme. Mr Zharikov, who has lived in the UK for six years, told The Independent: "I struggle to see any rationale behind this policy. I'm working here. I could support my sister and mum if they came here. There are other Ukrainians in the UK who may not have the means to support their relatives, but they are still able to bring them here."

Mr Zharikov's sister Anna-Maria is currently staying with friends of his in Amsterdam, while his mother, who left Ukraine after her, leaving her husband to fight, is staying with a friend of a friend in Germany. "The most important thing is that they are safe, but it is disappointing. It seems that my sister and my mum are not welcome here. They're now thinking about staying together in Germany," he added.

"I would send money across, but it would be a more straightforward option for them to come here. I work here, pay taxes here. I paid around £8,000 for my work permit, but it seems I don't get anything back."

A large number of Ukrainians in the UK are on seasonal worker visas, with almost 20,000 issued to Ukrainians in 2021 alone - two-thirds of all of those issued. Charities say this shows that people from the country are the "backbone" of the UK's agricultural sector. Earlier this month, Ms Patel promised to extend their visas until 31 December 2022 - but this leaves them with no right to claim public funds and no ability to bring their loved ones to safety.

Andrei Savitski, a Ukrainian-speaking caseworker at the charity Work Rights Centre, who regularly assists Ukrainian migrants on seasonal worker visas, said: "Migrant workers are the backbone of the UK's agricultural sector, but are treated as second-class citizens. The majority of these visa-holders are Ukrainian. The UK's agricultural sector is reliant on them, but we're refusing them this basic level of humanity."

Around 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have so far arrived in the UK - of more than 20,000 applications submitted. More than 2.5 million have fled the country as Russia continues its advance.

A government spokesperson said: "A new sponsorship route, which will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here, is also being brought forward and all the measures we've put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners. We will keep our support under constant review."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Staff at British embassy in Ukraine not offered refuge in UK, say diplomats*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-0G81-DY4H-K2H6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 6:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 708 words

**Byline:** Kim Sengupta and May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Ministers accused of creating 'Afghanistan part two' after failure to evacuate embassy staff

**Body**

Ukrainians who worked at the British [*embassy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/embassy) in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) are being told they will not get refuge in the UK as they seek to flee the war unless they can fulfil strict entry qualifications, The Independent has been told.

The staff, many of whom have worked at the mission for years, are believed to have been informed that they will only qualify for a visa if they have close relations in the UK.

A number of British [*diplomats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/diplomats) at the embassy, which has moved to Lviv from Kyiv for safety after the start of the war, are said to be deeply unhappy at the way their [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) colleagues are being treated, and have made their feelings clear to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London.

Some British staff have described what is happening as "[*Afghanistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghanistan) part two", and say they are astonished that lessons have not been learned from the failure to evacuate many Afghans entitled to entry to the UK after the Taliban takeover.

They also fear that some of their Ukrainian colleagues may be targets for retribution if they are in areas occupied by Russian forces.

It comes as Russia continues to bombard cities across [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with Kyiv accusing Moscow of breaking a ceasefire agreement on Tuesday by shelling a civilian evacuation route from the besieged city of Mariupol.

UK home secretary Priti Patel announced a migration route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** last week, under which she said tens of thousands of people would be able to come to Britain - but the scheme excludes those without family in the UK.

Staff at the British embassy in Ukraine have been told that entry into the UK is a matter for the Home Office.

However, when The Independent approached the department for comment, it said it was a matter for the FCDO, who then claimed it was in fact a matter for the Home Office. The Independent was referred between the two departments five times.

It is understood that the Home Office is planning to enable the Ukrainian staff members to come to Britain, but the department has revealed no detail on this.

Some of the Ukrainian staff have left the country following the Russian invasion and tried to get to the UK on the understanding that they meet the conditions for entry.

However, one person who applied for a visa online from Warsaw found that the application form required him to pay around £2,000 and show he had the means to pay for medical treatment in the UK.

A former British diplomat who served in Afghanistan said: "The UK government promised to learn some lessons after the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. They clearly haven't done so, because once again we have a situation where hard-working and dedicated embassy staff are not able to get themselves and their families to the UK.

"These are people who have worked for years for the UK, often on work directly at odds with Russian interests. They may be on a Russian list as Afghan colleagues were on Taliban lists. It would be unforgiveable if we let these people down."

It comes after ministers came under fire when it emerged that thousands of Afghans who worked for the British effort in the country and were entitled to come to Britain were left behind during Operation Pitting, the mass evacuation of Kabul following the Taliban's advance on the capital.

A [*whistleblower later revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-evacuation-uk-whistleblower-b1970925.html) that tens of thousands of pleas for help from those under threat went unanswered in a system incapable of handling the situation, with some of those abandoned subsequently murdered by the Taliban and other Islamist groups.

The government has been approached for comment.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ex-lawmaker who 'engaged in domestic terrorism' accused of trying to bring 60 Ukrainian orphans to US for adoption*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-29C1-DY4H-K4FR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 8:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 707 words

**Byline:** Bevan Hurley

**Highlight:** Far-right pastor Matt Shea's attempts to bring Ukrainian orphans to the US has sparked concern in Poland

**Body**

A former state lawmaker who was found to have participated in domestic [*terrorism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/terrorism) is allegedly under investigation in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) for trying to bring more than 60 [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) to the United States for [*adoption*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adoption).

Far-right Republican pastor [*Matt Shea,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/matt-shea) an eight-term Washington state representative, says he is working with a Texas-based non-profit that helped rescue 63 children from an orphanage in Mariupol, Ukraine, which has come under intense bombing from the Russian military.

[*Follow live updates of the Russian invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-peace-talks-zelensky-latest-b2038100.html)

But his presence in the small Polish town of Kazimierz Dolny, where the children are staying, has reportedly caused an outcry among local residents and officials, who say they have reported Mr Shea's organisation to the US and Polish embassies and local police.

Aid agencies have also warned that with the war still raging and millions of Ukrainian civilians being displaced, it was inappropriate to send orphans overseas.

Weronika Ziarnicka, an aide to the mayor of Kazimierz Dolny, told [*The Seattle Times*](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/former-wa-rep-matt-shea-accused-of-domestic-terrorism-working-to-secure-adoptions-for-ukrainian-children-in-poland/) she became suspicious at the apparent the lack of information about the non-profit, Loving Families and Homes for Orphans.

Kazimierz Dolny Mayor Artur Pomianowski said in a Facebook post he had personally visited the residence where the children were staying, and had tried to clarify the "presence of people from the United States and their unknown role".

He said police were investigating the case.

Mr Shea did not respond to a request for comment from The Independent, but told a [*Polish television show*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=co6_HnA_0Gs) IdÅº Pod PrÄd TV on 10 March the orphanage had contacted his organisation to ask for help to leave Ukraine.

"When you have children in very dire distress and they're asking for help you go and help. This is the Christian and very important thing to do from my perspective."

Mr Shea said the Loving Homes organisation had been hosting Ukrainian orphans for several years with the purpose of settling them in America with Ukrainian families.

He blamed "Russian propaganda" for spreading "lies and rumours" about his presence there.

Loving Homes, which has a [*non-functional website*](https://www.lfhorphans.org/) and no obvious social media presence, registered as a non-profit in Texas secretary of state in 2018.

But according to the Seattle Times, it's not registered with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services which oversees adoption agencies in the state, nor US national agencies that facilitate international adoption.

The children are staying at a boutique hotel called [*Dom Dziennikarza*](https://domdziennikarza.com/en/) - which translates to the Journalist's House, in the town of 2500 people.

In response to the mounting concern about Mr Shea's activities, the [*hotel posted a statement in Polish*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fpermalink.php%3Fstory_fbid%3D142309741602111%26id%3D102179698948449&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/matt-shea-adoption-poland-ukraine-terrorism-b2038067.html) on behalf of Loving Families and Homes for Orphans.

"We are in direct contact with the governments of Ukraine and the United States, supported by the highest levels of politicians, international and local church leaders as well as dozens of companies from Ukraine, the USA and Poland," the statement read.

Polish radio station Tok FM has reported the case [*has been referred to the family court*](https://www.tokfm.pl/Tokfm/7,182251,28208628,amerykanski-pastor-zajmuje-sie-sierotami-z-mariupola-w-lubelskim.html).

On 14 March, Mr Shea told a different Polish media outlet that the group had no intention of taking the children out of Poland.

An estimated two million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have fled to Poland since the start of the Russian invasion according to the United Nations refugee agency.

The National Council for Adoption communications director Kristen Hamilton told The Independent they had no knowledge of The Loving Families and Homes and they are not a NCFA member agency.

"If the organisation is not a licensed, accredited agency, then the organization is not authorized to conduct intercountry adoptions to the US."

The council had also earlier issued a statement to say the current crisis in Ukraine was "not the appropriate time or context to be considering adoption by US citizens".

A 2020 House report found Mr Shea, a former Washington state Rep described as a "staunch conservative Christian" and favourite with gun rights groups, engaged in or promoted [*three armed conflicts against the US government in recent years*](https://apnews.com/article/d74b618f6ad7c412091f18abd93d5f07).

It called his actions in one - the 2016 standoff at an Oregon wildlife refuge - an "act of domestic terrorism against the United States."

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Don't play politics - Paul Canoville demands Chelsea are sold 'without delay'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YX-WHJ1-JBNF-W0VK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 6:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:1

**Length:** 692 words

**Byline:** Nick Purewal

**Highlight:** The club's first black player has revealed there is a state of alarm at Stamford Bridge.

**Body**

[*Paul Canoville*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paul-canoville) has urged the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) not to "play politics" with Chelsea but instead to oversee a quick change of ownership at [*Stamford Bridge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stamford-bridge).

Chelsea's first black player has revealed there is a state of alarm at the west London club, with some staff fearing for their jobs.

Owner [*Roman Abramovich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roman-abramovich) was sanctioned by the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) on Thursday as the Conservatives claim to have proven the Russian-Israeli billionaire has links to Vladimir Putin.

Abramovich had put Chelsea up for sale on March 2 amid Russia's continued invasion of Ukraine, but Thursday's government sanctions have stalled that process.

While Abramovich's other UK assets are frozen Chelsea can still operate under special licence, but Canoville is worried the current limbo could drag on.

Chelsea will continue negotiations with the Government over the current operating licence, with Blues bosses and Conservative chiefs understood to be hopeful of striking eventual consensus on a range of amendments to ease the club's situation.

The 60-year-old former Blues winger denounced Putin's war in Ukraine, before issuing an impassioned plea for his old club's future.

"My heart sank when I woke to the headlines of Chelsea being compromised by the Government due to the owner being sanctioned," Canoville told the PA news agency.

"I think that every sane and rational human being is entirely opposed to the war Putin is raging in Ukraine. It is depraved and I thoroughly condemn it.

"If, as the Government is claiming, Roman Abramovich is associated with Putin then I wholeheartedly agree with his being sanctioned and being made to forfeit ownership of my football club.

I have been speaking to members of the Chelsea Foundation staff who are in tears and are desperate to know what is going on

Paul Canoville

"Sadly though the way they have gone about it has not only put the club itself in danger of collapsing as sponsors run away, they are also putting many employees at risk of losing their livelihoods through no fault whatsoever of their own, and also the work of the academy and Chelsea Foundation supporting thousands of young people.

"I have been speaking to members of the Chelsea Foundation staff who are in tears and are desperate to know what is going on.

"I am asking that the Government do not play politics with my football club and allow new buyers to take over the club without delay.

"I think this is politics, and I think that's wrong, totally wrong.

"I am sure the Government would have realised this was going to happen. While the news pages and TV stations are 24/7 Chelsea we are not hearing so much about the Government's disregard for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Nothing surprises me about this."

Canoville was racially abused by his own fans when he made his Chelsea debut away at Crystal Palace in 1982.

The talented winger impressed at Chelsea between 1981 and 1986 but a difficult exit led ultimately to battles with drug addiction.

Canoville has however emerged from those tribulations, as well as a number of serious cancer illnesses, to thrive as an anti-racism campaigner, with his foundation continuing to change young lives across London.

And now he is keen to see Chelsea continue their strong community work, especially with hopes high that new ownership will soon be in place.

"Since I made my debut for the club back in 1982, Chelsea has become a centre of excellence for achievements of black players," said Canoville. "I would say it is unequalled on the global stage for black players winning major awards.

"This is why I was so proud when the club named a corporate suite after me.

"It is not just about me, it is dedicated to all the great players that followed me into the club like Paul Elliot, Marcel Desailly, Claude Makelele, Didier Drogba, Ashley Cole and N'Golo Kante. Just look at the players coming through the academy now.

"I was at Downing Street recently alongside the new chief executive of the PFA among others for a reception for the Hope Collective which I am an ambassador for.

"I was complimented for my anti-racism work. I hope I can be allowed to continue my work and that Chelsea can again be allowed to support youth work and campaigning."

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*PM to host Canadian and Dutch leaders for Ukraine talks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-5XK1-JBNF-W1FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 7:34 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 742 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** Meanwhile, ministers are scrambling to go "faster and harder" with sanctions levelled against the Kremlin.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is set to begin a week of intense diplomatic efforts with foreign leaders to build a united front against [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , beginning with Canadian Prime Minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte at Downing Street today.

It comes as ministers scramble to go "faster and harder" with sanctions levelled against the Kremlin.

Mr Johnson is expected to put more pressure on international leaders to take further action to remove Russia from the Swift payment system, while pushing them to back his six-point plan to tackle Russian aggression.

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said amendments to the Economic Crime Bill - which is set to be fast-tracked through all stages in the Commons on Monday - would "give us the chance to bring even more crippling sanctions against Putin and his regime".

In [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , a second temporary ceasefire designed to allow citizens to escape two cities failed to hold, as fresh photographs showed the desperation of those trying to escape the war.

Russia became more isolated from the West as further companies severed ties with the state.

On Sunday, Tiktok blocked its Russian users from posting new videos and Netflix said it was suspending its service in Russia.

Earlier in the day, American Express said it would suspend services in the country, and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is separating its firm in Russia - which has a staff of around 3,700 - from the rest of its global network as a result of the invasion of Ukraine.

The UK Government said it would pump an extra £74 million into Ukraine to support the country's "indomitable people" through the humanitarian crisis being faced on the ground.

The aid, provided through the World Bank, could go towards supporting public sector salaries, allowing vital state functions to keep operating, or supporting social safety nets and pensions for the Ukrainian people.

Meanwhile, Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) wrote to Interpol requesting the suspension of Russia's access to its systems.

Mr Johnson said: "While only Putin can fully end the suffering in Ukraine, today's new funding will continue to help those facing the deteriorating humanitarian situation."

However, the Government will likely come under criticism for the speed of moves made at home.

The Home Office revealed on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme as of 10am on Sunday.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper tweeted: "This is too slow. Too many hoops for desperate families to have to jump through. Home Office completely failing to understand urgency of crisis."

But Ms Patel said the UK was "doing everything possible" to speed up efforts to grant visas to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, and told The Sun she was examining a "humanitarian route" to allow all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who want to come to the UK to do so.

In Parliament, Labour is set to put pressure on ministers to further reduce the time period before foreign-owned UK property needs to be registered under new plans.

The party said Russian oligarchs still had a "get out of London free" card even though the grace period under the measures designed to tackle so-called "dirty money" have been cut from 18 months to six, the opposition was calling for this to be reduced further to just 28 days.

Shadow business secretary Jonathan Reynolds said: "The invasion of Ukraine and continued Russian aggression demands action now, not in six months' time."

But the Foreign Office insisted the new scheme would "allow the Government to move faster and harder when sanctioning oligarchs and businesses associated with the Russian Government".

The PM said: "Punishing sanctions are meaningless until properly implemented, and these changes will allow us to pursue Putin's allies in the UK with the full backing of the law, beyond doubt or legal challenge."

Putin must fail and must be seen to fail in this act of aggression.We must come together under a six point plan of action to ensure Putin fails in his ambitions.The world is watching. It is not future historians but the people of Ukraine who will be our judge. [*pic.twitter.com/mHm0cKAc4H*](https://t.co/mHm0cKAc4H) - Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1500457187340136452?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It comes after Mr Johnson, in a nearly 1,300-word essay in the New York Times, said that the West had "failed to learn the lessons of Russian behaviour" that have led to the invasion of Ukraine, warning world leaders: "We need to prepare now for even darker days ahead."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Higher oil prices push Sri Lanka into deeper economic crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-YXH1-JBNF-W0SJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 5:16 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS; Version:2

**Length:** 718 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Sri Lanka's already dire economic crisis has deepened as oil prices have surged above $110 a barrel

**Body**

Sri Lanka's already dire economic crisis has deepened as oil prices hover near $110 a barrel. Vehicles are stranded with empty tanks, power cuts are depriving students of study time for exams and shopping mall air conditioners are being switched off to conserve energy.

The South Asian island nation already was so short of hard currency that authorities had restricted imports of cars and fertilizer. It's now having to scrape into dwindling reserves to pay for ever more costly oil needed to keep the economy running.

Authorities have announced countrywide power cuts extending up to 7 1/2 hours a day because they can't supply enough fuel to power stations. Hydro power, the other energy mainstay, often runs short during the dry season. It will only end with monsoonal rains that usually begin in May.

"We can't find diesel, naphtha and furnace oil, all three kinds and therefore we have been compelled to go for such an extended power cut," Sri Lanka's Public Utilities Commission Chairman Janaka Ratnayake told reporters.

Bus services vital for many workers are also in trouble, unable to find diesel and sometimes stranding passengers mid-route.

Ravindra Mendis, owner of seven passenger buses, said four are idled for now due to the fuel crisis.

"This diesel shortage is a severe hardship," Mendis said as he waited patiently to buy fuel at a station in Gampaha town, 24 kilometers (15 miles) north of the capital, [*Colombo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/colombo).

"We are losing revenue and time, since we have to spend hours waiting in long lines to buy diesel," he said.

The higher oil prices are just an extra burden in what really is a foreign exchange crunch, said Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila. He said stations also are rationing fuel to stop people from stockpiling diesel at home for their vehicles and power generators.

Sri Lanka is struggling to pay back foreign loans for infrastructure projects that are not making money. A $1 billion repayment is due in July on foreign debt obligations of $7 billion this year.

With dollar reserves running short, banks are unwilling to open lines of credit for imports even of essentials like milk powder, medicine and fuel.

"There are ships waiting for payment before they will unload fuel. Because of this delay limited stocks are being released to the market and fueling stations are limiting sales," Gammanpila said.

"The crisis we have in our country is not one of fuel or power generation. It's a foreign exchange crisis," he told a news conference.

A $1 billion line of credit expected from [*India*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/india) may ease things somewhat, but the fighting in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) threatens to hit another important source of foreign exchange: tourists from both Ukraine and [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Both countries are important markets for Sri Lankan tea and tourism, said Ranga Kalansooriya, a political and international affairs analyst.

"We have already jumped into the fire from the frying pan and where we will be next we don't know, " Kalansooriya said.

It's a big worry as costs rise for most businesses, said Shiran Fernando, chief economist at the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, a collection of trade and industrial associations in Sri Lanka.

Leading malls featuring big fashion brands are having to switch off air conditioners despite the hot, humid weather because they lack the diesel to keep their generators running.

But the inconvenience of shopping in tropical heat palls compared with farmers afraid their harvests will be scant due to a lack of fertilizer. And the fuel shortages are eating into study time for kids who already have had their studies interrupted over the past two years due to the pandemic.

Viyara Fernando, who is preparing for important final examinations, already was having to do her classes online.

"I'm a night owl and I do my studies in the night and whenever I am awake. But now I wake up at 3 a.m. every day because of power cuts," she said.

\_\_\_\_

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Sri Lanka imposes rolling power cuts as cash crisis deepens*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/colombo-sri-lanka-electricity-inflation-b2021128.html)

[*Elderly woman arrested in Russian anti-war protest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-elderly-woman-anti-war-protest-b2027436.html)

[*ITV reveals new on-demand platform amid plans to double digital sales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/itv-carolyn-mccall-holly-williams-love-island-britbox-b2027454.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin committing war crimes in 'unprovoked and unjustifiable war' - Taoiseach*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-W301-DY4H-K3XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 4:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 744 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin also branded Vladimir Putin a "bully and a thug".

**Body**

The [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) has accused the Russian president of committing war crimes after unleashing an "unprovoked and unjustifiable war" on Ukraine.

Micheal Martin branded [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) a "bully and a thug" in the Dail.

The Fianna Fail leader said [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) must be "very generous" in helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the fighting.

He also told the Dail Putin has "fundamentally altered" the multilateral rules-based order since the end of the Cold War.

"No one in this House or anywhere else should be under any illusions about the seriousness of the situation that [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and the world faces right now this afternoon," Mr Martin said.

"Vladimir Putin, a bully and a thug, has unleashed an unprovoked and unjustifiable war on the people of Ukraine, committing war crimes in the process - as we are witnessing.

"As (Ukrainian ) President (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy said, most movingly to the European Parliament this morning, every day now in Ukraine is someone's last day.

"I was very struck by both the contribution he made there and indeed to the European heads of state last Thursday at the EU council."

He added: "The biggest challenge facing us as a country, I believe, is that we must be very, very generous in terms of the refugee crisis that will undoubtedly flow as a result of this war.

I believe Putin has fundamentally altered the multilateral rules-based order that characterized international behaviour since the end of the cold war, it's that fundamental.

Micheal Martin

"It will be beyond anything that we've comprehended before. I've said to my colleagues in government and to the departments: we must put to one side what we might have considered to be the norms in terms of responding in a humanitarian way to the plight of the Ukrainian people.

"I believe Putin has fundamentally altered the multilateral rules-based order that characterized international behaviour since the end of the cold war, it's that fundamental."

Sinn Fein leader [*Mary Lou McDonald*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mary-lou-mcdonald) condemned "unreservedly" the Russian invasion and offered Ukrainians her party's "total and unwavering solidarity" at "this deeply disturbing and traumatic time for their country".

The invasion of Ukraine is a criminal affront to the world. Ireland understands the impact of occupation and imperialist aggression and we must use our seat on the UN Security Council to be a voice for peace, justice and freedom, says Sinn Féin President [*@MaryLouMcDonald*](https://twitter.com/MaryLouMcDonald?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0hll10M57S*](https://t.co/0hll10M57S) - Sinn Féin (@sinnfeinireland) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/sinnfeinireland/status/1498681026817806354?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

She said the invasion is a "criminal affront to the civilized world and a threat to the peace and security of people everywhere".

She added: "The Irish people have been appalled at the heart-breaking scenes of civilians being killed, being injured and fleeing their homes for their lives.

"We are united in our condemnation of the actions of the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Any attempt by Putin or his regime to justify his actions as a response to Nato are without foundation and are merely a means of distraction from his own culpability."

Co-leader of the Social Democrats Catherine Murphy said Ireland has been slow to act against the Russians in the past.

Referring to a Government decision to block planning permission for an extension to the Russian Embassy in 2020, she added: "It has long been reported in relation to the Russian Embassy in Dublin, which have been used as a base for espionage operations across Europe.

"This was confirmed when the Government used legislation to block a proposed expansion of the Embassy on security grounds in 2020.

"Yesterday, (Minister for Foreign Affairs) Simon Coveney suggested that the Russian diplomats or some operatives that are in Ireland, who may not be diplomats, could be expelled in coming days.

"Can you confirm to the House whether this means that the Government have identified spies among the Russian embassy staff that are about to be expelled?"

Mr Martin did not directly answer, instead saying no country is proposing to expel any Russian ambassador.

"Our view is that it is important, from a practical point of view, in looking after our citizens, either in Russia or Ukraine, that we keep our channels open," he said.

"We have a limited presence in the embassy in Moscow - six individuals in total - and they have a fundamental function to look after Irish citizens in Russia and also to articulate our views, and to keep abreast of what's happening within that jurisdiction, and different jurisdictions."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*This is what we can learn from the evacuation of Kabul*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-H211-JCS0-D30B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 11, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 36

**Length:** 749 words

**Byline:** AMED KHAN

**Body**

"If we stay, they will kill all of us," read the WhatsApp message. It was from a young woman desperately asking for help to get her family out of Afghanistan. It was the summer of 2021 and my phone had been buzzing non-stop with similar pleas from hundreds of people who had heard we might be able to help.

A number of us who previously worked in government and NGOs had clubbed together to see if we could rescue people at risk of being hunted down by the Taliban, following the collapse of the Afghan government.

We knew who to help and how to fly them out. But in a world where all the decisions are made by governments, finding someone willing to take people seemed an impossible challenge. After working the phones for weeks, one of the few leaders who saw the importance of offering support was the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky.

The invasion of Ukraine follows wars in Syria, and Afghanistan. Too often, the dark pattern inside the country is followed by the same intransigence beyond its borders.

First, war breaks out. The aggressors meet stiff resistance. They then respond, unleashing the full force of their military. Bombing and shelling devastate built-up areas. A population is not only torn apart, but even weaponised by some countries; as they flow into others. A humanitarian crisis emerges. Good noises are heard from the international community. Promises are made to do what is right. But then the doors are closed - and countries on the front line are left to deal with the fallout alone, exacerbating an already desperate situation.

In 2021, another nation that stepped up to the plate was Greece. Despite over a million people having come through Greece, equal to a tenth of its population, prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis provided safe haven for hundreds of children, women and men fleeing the Taliban, when other western governments turned their backs.

When war broke out in Ukraine 10 days ago, Athens was still waiting for the European Union to get its act together and create a viable working mechanism to deal with the ever-increasing challenge posed by migration.

We can't keep making the same mistakes. It is vital that the stresses placed on communities hosting refugees - and in this crisis that means Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania - are recognised and met as part of our overall humanitarian response.

These communities have already been hit hard by the health and economic impacts of the Covid pandemic, and by the knock-on economic impact of Brexit. Failing to support frontline countries could well result in a furthering fraying of the European Union - a consequence likely intended - if not at least welcomed - by Putin.

To help pay for the costs associated with meeting the needs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the demands placed on host communities, a relief and reconstruction fund should be created - using the recently-frozen funds and seized assets of Putin and his oligarchs. The importance of the Robin Hood-esque semblance of repurposing ill-gotten gains to save lives cannot be underestimated.

It is also essential that western governments ensure that the funding for the United Nations refugee agency and other humanitarian organisations is commensurate to the rapidly growing crisis. More broadly, visa processes need to be streamlined and urgently sped up for those applying for entry into countries away from the front line. It's because of this that I support The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign. Ukrainians do need open, unconditional and generous help right now.

At a time when fascism and misinformation threaten to undo our hard-fought democracies, Ukraine has reminded us what it means to stand up against terrible odds and fight for our values and our freedom.

Our answer to this can't be silence. We must match Ukraine's strength. As the international community now considers how it will show up for the people of Ukraine, we must urge world leaders to remember that success or failure here has far-reaching consequences for us all.

I would also say "?????????? ??? ??i?? ???" or "Victory for all of us", which has become the defacto greeting at Ukrainian checkpoints. I've now heard it dozens of times, and each time there is an unspoken understanding - we know we are outnumbered and outgunned, but we're in this together, to the very end.

Amed Khan is a direct action philanthropist, founder of the Elpida Home Project to shelter refugees in Greece during the European refugee crisis, and a former US government official

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Lisa Keightley: Ashes drubbing has not dented England's World Cup belief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-9M31-JBNF-W403-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 7:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** SPORT,CRICKET; Version:2

**Length:** 648 words

**Byline:** David Charlesworth

**Highlight:** England failed to win once as they crumbled to a 12-4 points defeat in their multi-format series against Australia.

**Body**

[*Lisa Keightley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lisa-keightley) claimed confidence is high within England's ranks ahead of the defence of their Women's World Cup despite a miserable Ashes campaign.

England failed to win once as they crumbled to a 12-4 points defeat in their multi-format series against Australia, who are now strong favourites to dethrone Heather Knight's side as global 50-over champions in New Zealand.

While Keightley insisted there are few parallels between bilateral series and global competitions, England's head coach believes her side have some insight into Australia's tactics ahead of their opener at Hamilton on Saturday.

Keightley said: "We know what's coming, they know what's coming, we need to put both (batting and bowling plans) together and get over the line.

"The players are in a good place and they're looking forward to it. There is a lot of belief. The players and the coaching staff believe we've got what it takes to win a World Cup.

"I think they're definitely different tournaments to a series or an Ashes or multi-format series. You get on a roll, momentum's really big. If you don't play your best cricket I think it's very easy to get an upset.

"I'm happy to be where we are and Australia be favourites, that's for sure. That becomes an extra pressure - if Australia look at it that way, I'm not too sure.

"But there is a number of teams where if you play well on your day and take your chances, you can win a game of cricket, whether that's against Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, etc."

Keightley confirmed Tash Farrant is back with the squad after a bout of food poisoning while Lauren Winfield-Hill will rejoin [*Tammy Beaumont*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tammy-beaumont) at the top of the order, having been dropped for the final game of the Ashes last month.

Winfield-Hill averaged 18.5 over the course of the series against Australia but opened alongside Beaumont in the commanding warm-up wins over Bangladesh and South Africa, making an encouraging half-century against the former.

And Keightley, who revealed England will judge the pitches ahead of their matches before deciding whether to employ an extra spinner in Charlie Dean or another seamer in Farrant or Freya Davies, has backed Winfield-Hill to deliver.

Keightley said: "We're settled, it's definitely going to be Lauren and Tammy. I don't mind, I think Australia will know that anyway from the practice matches.

"As an opening combination they've got a lot of experience, they really enjoy batting together and since Lauren's come back to opening (last summer after a four-year stint further down the order) they're averaging 32 as a pair.

"I think in a World Cup you'd take that. If they can build on it even more that would be brilliant. Lauren in the last 12 matches is averaging 28 and I expect her to improve that and dominate.

"The thing they've done really well since they've got back together opening is how we start - usually they give us a pretty good foundation. We're backing both girls to get us off to good starts and cash in when they can."

England's batting against Meg Lanning's side largely floundered, especially in three one-day international defeats, but Keightley, who won the 2005 World Cup as a player with Australia, is optimistic they can rebound.

Keightley added: "I didn't have to say too much. The batters have had a meeting by themselves which is great, they're working it out and talking about how they want to go about it.

"Everyone's really clear on what they want to do and I'm backing the batters to perform well."

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Jurgen Klopp hails 'complete performance' from Takumi Minamino after final snub*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/jurgen-klopp-wembley-takumi-minamino-japan-carabao-cup-b2027311.html)

[*Ralph Hasenhuttl not worried about doubters as squad rotation pays off*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/ralph-hasenhuttl-david-moyes-tomas-soucek-west-ham-premier-league-b2027301.html)

[*Dan Lawrence ready to put Ashes frustration aside and press case in West Indies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/cricket/dan-lawrence-ashes-antigua-australia-england-b2027282.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Asian stocks rise after Fed chair supports smaller rate hike*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-4Y41-JBNF-W1F3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 6:17 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS; Version:2

**Length:** 718 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Asian stock markets have rebounded and oil prices climbed after the head of the Federal Reserve said he supports a smaller rise in interest rates than some expected

**Body**

Asian stock markets rebounded Thursday and oil prices climbed higher after the head of the [*Federal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fed) Reserve said he supports a smaller rise in interest rates than some expected.

[*Shanghai*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/shanghai) , Tokyo, Hong Kong and Sydney advanced even as Russian forces whose attack on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has roiled financial markets bombarded the country's second-largest city, [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , and besieged two ports.

Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index rose 1.9% on Wednesday, recovering this week's losses after Fed Chair [*Jerome Powell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jerome-powell) said the U.S. central bank is set to raise its key interest rate for the first time since 2018. He said he supports a traditional rate hike of 0.25 percentage points instead of the bigger rise recommended by some policymakers.

Powell said the impact on the U.S. economy of Russia's attack is "highly uncertain."

"Markets have reacted positively to the remarks, which is a debatable interpretation of Powell's nuanced comments," ING economists said in a report. "Volatility is the key here, and uncertainty. This isn't going to go away any time soon."

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo rose 0.8% to 26,605.94 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong gained 0.5% to 22,453.50. The Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.1% to 3,487.54.

The Kospi in Seoul added 1.5% to 2,743.37 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was 0.7% higher at 7,164.00.

India's Sensex opened up less than 0.1% at 55,500.49. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets also advanced.

Share prices have swung widely as investors try to figure out how the Russian attack will affect supplies of oil, wheat and other commodities and the global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Traders already were uneasy about plans by the Fed and other central banks to fight inflation by withdrawing ultra-low interest rates that boosted stock markets.

On Wednesday, Canada's central bank raised a key interest rate by 0.25%. It acknowledged Russia's attack will add to global inflation but said Canadian economic growth "is now looking more solid."

The S&P 500 rose to 4,386.54. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 1.8% to 33,891.35. The Nasdaq composite advanced 1.6% to 13,752.02.

More than 90% of stocks in the S&P 500 rose. Tech, finance and health care companies accounted for a big share of the rally. Energy stocks also helped lift the index as they rode higher oil prices.

Ford Motor Co. jumped 8.4% after it said it was accelerating its transformation into an electric-vehicle company and separated its EV and internal combustion operations.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury bond, or the difference between its market price and the payout at maturity, rose to 1.89% from Tuesday's 1.72%. However, yields still were below where they were before Russia's invasion.

In energy markets, benchmark U.S. crude rose another $2.68 to $113.28 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the price basis for international oils, added $3.61 to $116.54 per barrel in London.

Both gains were smaller than Wednesday's surge of more than $7 per barrel but still unusually wide margins for a daily change.

Leaders of OPEC and other major oil exporters decided Wednesday to stick to plans to gradually increase production. The coalition, made up of OPEC members led by Saudi Arabia and non-cartel members led by Russia, chose to increase production by 400,000 barrels per day in April.

Also this week, the United States and other major oil consumers in the International Energy Agency agreed to release 60 million barrels from strategic reserves to boost supplies. But that has had little impact on market prices.

In currency markets, Russia's ruble gained 3.4% against the U.S. dollar but still was near a record low value of less than 1 cent. It has fallen nearly 25% since the attack after Western governments imposed sanctions that cut off much of Russia's access to the global financial system.

The dollar gained to 115.67 yen from Wednesday's 115.58 yen. The euro declined to $1.1101 from $1.1126.

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Powell tells Congress that Fed will raise rates this month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jerome-powell-fed-washington-federal-reserve-congress-b2026772.html)

[*Stocks fall, oil tops $100 a barrel as Ukraine war rages*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-beijing-joe-biden-jerome-powell-ukraine-b2026437.html)

[*Asian shares climb amid Russia-Ukraine talks, oil worries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-russia-tokyo-asian-shanghai-b2025441.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish ministers say 14bn euro budget prioritises challenges of today and future*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C5-HRH1-DY4H-K24G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 10, 2023 Tuesday 3:09 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1078 words

**Byline:** Cillian Sherlock

**Highlight:** Budget 2024 was unveiled on Tuesday.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has unveiled a 14 billion euro budget package it insists balances the needs of today with the future wellbeing of the economy.

Finance minister Michael McGrath said Budget 2024 was framed against a backdrop of “global uncertainty”.

The package agreed by the Fianna Fail, [*Fine Gael*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fine-gael) and [*Green Party*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/green-party) coalition in Dublin includes a 5.27 billion euro increase in public spending.

The budget also includes 4.76 billion euro of non-core funding to respond to exceptional circumstances, including the humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine; 1.16 billion euro on tax measures; a further 444 million euro in temporary tax measures; 1.4 billion euro for one-off cost-of-living supports; and 900 million on energy credits for households.

Mr McGrath also announced two new funds that will use Ireland’s multi-billion euro windfall from corporation tax receipts, mostly derived from multinational companies, to invest in future priorities, including support for the response to climate change.

“The annual budget is about setting out how we can help with the needs of today, but it also has to be about planning for the next 10, 20, 30 years,” the minister told the Dail.

The budget includes a one-year, tax relief on mortgage interest payments. The relief for those affected by soaring rates in the last 12 months will be capped at 1,250 euro per property.

The Government estimates that the measure will benefit 165,000 mortgage holders at a cost of 125 million euro.

This budget continues that approach. Not spending every cent today; leaving some aside for tomorrow. Helping with the cost of living, but changing that help as inflation slows

Paschal Donohoe, Public Expenditure Minister

Among the one-off, cost-of-living supports are three electricity credits worth 450 euro; a winter fuel allowance lump sum of 300 euro; a 200 euro winter living alone allowance; a Christmas bonus for welfare recipients; and 250 million euro in one-off business supports.

There will be a 12 euro increase in the weekly social welfare rate for working age recipients and a 12 euro increase in weekly payments for pensioners.

In tax policy, the standard rate cut-off point for income tax has increased by 2,000 euro, meaning people will start paying the highest tax rate at 42,000 euro.

The rent tax credit has been increased to 750 euro.

Mr McGrath said a temporary tax relief to benefit small landlords would also be introduced.

This would see rental income of 3,000 euro for 2024, 4,000 euro for 2025, and 5,000 euro for 2026 and 2027 disregarded at the standard rate – as long as landlords stay in the market for that full, four-year period.

There is also a reduction in the middle rate of the Universal Social Charge (USC), a controversial tax introduced after the financial crisis, from 4.5% to 4%.

The budget included a 0.1% increase in PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance) contribution rates from October 1 next year.

There was a 75 cent increase in excise duty and VAT on a pack of 20 cigarettes.

In expenditure, the Government announced funding to recruit 1,000 more gardai into the Irish policing service and 250 civilian staff.

A scheme which provides for free school books has been extended into the first thee years of secondary school.

Child benefit will be extended for 18-year-olds who are still in full-time, secondary education.

There will be one billion euro provided for the development and renewal of the Irish road network, and “one million euro per day” invested in cycling and walking infrastructure.

The 4.76 billion euro for “exceptional challenges” includes 2.5 billion euro for measures like the education, welfare payments and accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***; 1.3 billion euro for the ongoing Covid-19 response in Ireland; and 700 million euro for other responsive provisions under by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Public Expenditure Minister Paschal Donohoe said recent budgets had been defined by global challenges, including climate change and the threat of violence around the world.

He said those challenges could have caused “long-lasting harm” to the Irish economy.

He said the reason they had not was because Ireland’s public finances had gradually been returned to health, from deficit to balance to surplus.

“This budget continues that approach,” he said. “Not spending every cent today; leaving some aside for tomorrow. Helping with the cost of living, but changing that help as inflation slows.”

He said the Government was spending more on public services and building more homes, more schools and better public transport.

But he said that was not based on spending money “we may not always have”, referencing the windfall corporation tax receipts.

“This is why this budget well help with the cost of living, will help with better public services and will give more children a better start to life,” he said.

Opposition politicians immediately criticised the Government’s planning around housing, healthcare and tax policy.

You’ve just decided to forget about health

Pearse Doherty

Sinn Fein finance spokesman Pearse Doherty said the budget was a “squandered opportunity” to deal with inequality.

Delivering his party’s budget response, Mr Doherty said the housing crisis should have been the number one priority in the budget.

He said: “We needed a budget for renters, instead we got a budget for landlords.”

The opposition TD said the budget had done “next to nothing” for the health service.

“No urgency, no vision, no compassion, and that’s the reality. You’ve just decided to forget about health.”

Labour TD Ged Nash described Budget 2024 as a “lazy rerun of all that was wrong with Budget 2023”.

“Tax cuts that favour the better-off again. Failure to properly fund the public services on which we all rely, and which the citizens of this rich Republic should expect,” he said.

“Again, a wall of once-off payments, but no permanent change and once those once-off payments are gone, they’re gone.

“The budget that will yet again be found to be regressive once lump sum payments melt away like snow on a ditch.”

Social Democrats finance spokeswoman Roisin Shortall said the Government’s housing policy is a “litany of failure”.

“There was an opportunity with this budget, given the resources, to do some transformative things to tackle the big problems facing the country and ensure that we are not again pulling up the ladder and passing on problems to the next generation to solve.

“But instead we have a budget that is desperately short of ambition.”

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WP-T8T1-JCS0-D1T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 1, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 751 words

**Body**

Tory MP says Russians living in Britain should be 'sent home'

Every Russian citizen living in the UK should be expelled and "sent home", a Conservative MP has said.

Sir Roger Gale, the MP for North Thanet in Kent, argued that visas should be rescinded for "everybody" with Russian nationality on account of the invasion of Ukraine.

Sir Roger accepted that this would mean kicking out "good and honest" people - but argued that "collateral damage" was necessary to send a message to Vladimir Putin. It comes amid debate about what sanctions should be imposed on Russia in the wake of Mr Putin's invasion of Ukraine, and how best to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Speaking during an interview on talkRadio, Sir Roger said: "Well, I'm sorry, my view is that we should send a very clear message and rescind all the visas for Russian citizens currently extant in the United Kingdom and send everybody home."

Protester paints the word 'murder' outside DC Russian embassy

The word "murder" was removed from outside the Russian embassy in Washington DC after it was graffitied during an anti-war demonstration.

Almost a hundred people turned up to protest in front of the Russian embassy within hours of Moscow's war on Kyiv beginning on Thursday.

An individual allegedly sprayed the word "murder" in front of the embassy building, with images on social media showing DC police at the scene.

Among those who took part in the demonstration were Ukrainian Americans, as well as those calling for Russia to withdraw its troops from the country.

The suspect was arrested for defacing property.

Girl shot dead by Russians among at least 16 children killed

A schoolgirl has been shot dead in Kyiv, bringing the number of children killed in Russia's invasion to at least 16, according to Ukraine's president.

Polina, believed to have been nine or 10 years old, was in her final year of primary school. She was killed along with her mother and father when Russian troops opened fire on their family car, according to Kyiv's local authority.

Her sister is in intensive care and her brother is being treated at a children's hospital after the attack in the northwest of the capital, the city's deputy mayor Volodymyr Bondarenko said.

Five days into Russia's invasion, at least 16 children have been killed and another 45 wounded, president Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Hundreds of thousands join Ukraine 'IT Army' to fight cyberwar

Hundreds of thousands of people have signed up to a Ukrainian 'IT Army' in an attempt to help the country launch cyberattacks.

The initiative has been supported by high-ranking members of the Ukrainian government and has already indicated that it may be behind a number of cyberattacks on Russian targets.

It suggested that it took down a technology used by Sberbank, one of Russia's biggest banks. It has also indicated that it could have been behind attacks on other official websites.

The group has gained around 230,000 subscribers in the days since it was launched. Those who join are instructed to help with cyberattacks as well as other online efforts, including sending information to Belarus.

Compare the Market meerkat adverts pulled from TV news

Price comparison site Compare the Market has pulled some adverts featuring Russian meerkat Aleksandr Orlov following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The company, which spends tens of millions on marketing in the UK annually, said it had reviewed its media plan to make sure the adverts did not appear around news bulletins on the Ukrainian conflict.

"The Compare the Market meerkats are fictional characters. They have no association with Russia and the current situation," a spokesperson for the company, which is owned by the Peterborough-based financial services firm BGL, said in a statement.

"We are continually reviewing our advertising to ensure we're being sensitive to the current situation."

Prisoners to be released from jail to help defend against Russia

Ukrainian prisoners with military experience will be released if they are willing to fight against Russian forces, Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

In an address to the people of Ukraine yesterday, he said that everyone who can "join the struggle against the invaders must do so", and that the country is dedicating "every minute" to fighting Russia's invasion.

His comments came as diplomats from Ukraine and Russia met on the Belarusian border to discuss a ceasefire. Mr Zelensky confirmed that those with previous combat experience would be released to help with the "struggle for our state".

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war – live: Zelensky makes rare state visit to Poland following Nato expansion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67XT-6YC1-DY4H-K3FR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2023 Tuesday 3:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:32

**Length:** 6678 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** It comes as relentless attacks from Russia on Bakhmut continue

**Body**

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and his wife are making a rare state visit to Poland following the country leading a NATO campaign to defend Ukraine.

The trip is a rare foray for Mr Zelensky out of Ukraine since Russia unleashed the war in February 2022 and is meant as a gesture of thanks to Poland for supporting Ukraine’s defence.

While it follows visits to the United States, Britain, France and Belgium, it stands out from the others because it was announced in advance without the secrecy of past visits.

It is also unusual that the president is joined by the first lady, Olena Zelenska.

Marcin Przydacz, the head of Polish president Andrzej Duda’s foreign policy office, described it as Mr Zelensky’s first visit of this kind since the war began.

The visit shines a light on Poland’s rising international role in a new security order that is emerging after Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

Poland, a member of NATO and the European Union, is modernising its military with orders of tanks and other equipment from US and South Korean producers, while the United States has beefed up its military presence in Poland.

Warsaw has been a key ally for Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale invasion last year, also becoming a hub for humanitarian aid and weapons to move into Ukraine.

Key Points

Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled Finland joins Nato, doubling military alliance’s border with Russia Putin responsible for Finland’s ‘historic’ accession to Nato, says alliance chief Paranoid Putin stays in bunker because he 'fears for his life', says ex-security guard Wagner raised ‘flag over some kind of toilet’, says Ukraine Russia launches 17 drones on Ukraine overnight, 14 drowned

Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled

Ukrainian commanders leading the charge in the bitter battle for Bakhmut have said that the relentless attacks from Russia have continued.

“In the Bakhmut sector, there was no let-up in enemy actions aimed at storming the city of Bakhmut. At least 20 enemy attacks were repelled here alone over the past 24 hours,” the Ukrainian general staff said in a report on Facebook.

At least tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides have been killed in the Russian invasion of Ukraine that started in February last year.

The battle for Bakhmut has been one of the bloodiest of the conflict, with heavy casualties on both sides and the city largely destroyed.

Watch: Finland joins Nato as war in Ukraine continues

Zelensky to meet president and PM and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on Poland state visit

Ukrainian presdient Volodymyr Zelensky will meet president Andrzej Duda and prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on a rare state visit to Poland with his wife.

Mr Zelensky is to meet Mr Duda and Mr Morawiecki, attend an economic forum focused on the reconstruction of Ukraine and meet some of the Ukrainians who have found refuge in Poland.

Poland has been a key destination for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, particularly those who want to remain close because they plan to return or want to be able to visit loved ones.

More than 1.5 million Ukrainians have registered with the Polish government since the war began, joining large numbers of Ukrainians who had already arrived in recent years for work.

The exact number of Ukrainians present in the country at any given moment is impossible to measure, especially with many going back and forth.

Mr Zelensky has travelled through Poland on his other trips but until now has not made Poland the focus of one his trips.

Zelensky and wife welcomed to Poland on rare state visit

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and his wife have been welcomed with military honours in Poland at the start of a state visit.

The trip is a rare foray for Mr Zelensky out of Ukraine since Russia unleased the war in February 2022 and is meant as a gesture of thanks to Poland for supporting Ukraine’s defence.

While it follows visits to the United States, Britain, France and Belgium, it stands out from the others because it was announced in advance without the secrecy of past visits.

It is also unusual that the president is joined by the first lady, Olena Zelenska.

Marcin Przydacz, the head of Polish president Andrzej Duda’s foreign policy office, described it as Mr Zelensky’s first visit of this kind since the war began.

The visit shines a light on Poland’s rising international role in a new security order that is emerging after Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

Poland, a member of Nato and the European Union, is modernising its military with orders of tanks and other equipment from US and South Korean producers, while the United States has beefed up its military presence in Poland.

Warsaw has been a key ally for Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale invasion last year, also becoming a hub for humanitarian aid and weapons to move into Ukraine.

ICYMI: Suspect in Russia cafe bombing that killed pro-Putin blogger charged with terror offences

A 26-year-old woman has been charged with terrorism offences in Russia over a [*bombing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bombing) that killed [*a pro-war military blogger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-finland-nato-b2313588.html).

Footage released by the Russian interior ministry on Monday [*appeared to show*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/darya-trepova-vladlen-tatarsky-bomb-putin-b2313148.html) Darya Trepova admitting to [*bringing a statuette to the restaurant in St Petersburg,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/st-petersburg-female-assassin-vladlen-tatarsky-b2312967.html) which blew up, also allegedly injuring 42 others.

She did not say that she knew there would be an [*explosion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/explosion) or who had given her the object.

While it is unclear whether her account was given under duress, Ms Trepova’s husband told Russian website SVTV News that – despite being against the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) – his wife “would never kill” and “was framed”.

[*Russia charges St Petersburg cafe bombing suspect with terror offences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-cafe-bombing-suspect-charged-terrorism-b2314177.html)

EU lashes out at China for support of Russia in Ukraine war

The European Union’s foreign policy chief on Tuesday lashed out at [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) for its support of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) amid the invasion of Ukraine and called it “a blatant violation” of [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) ‘s United Nations commitments.

“There cannot be siding with the aggressor,” [*Josep Borrell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/josep-borrell) said. “There is a clear expectation from a permanent member of the (U.N.) Security Council to stand up in defense of international rules-based order and China as a moral duty to contribute to a fair peace.”

Standing alongside visiting U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Borrell was forceful in his condemnation of a nation that has increasingly moved from being a partner to being a rival on the global stage.

Raf Casert reports:

[*EU lashes out at China for support of Russia in Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-ap-beijing-josep-borrell-russia-b2313781.html)

Polish agriculture minister resigns amid anger over Ukrainian grain imports

Polish Agriculture Minister Henryk Kowalczyk will resign from his post, he said on Wednesday, amid rising anger among farmers over the impact of Ukrainian grain imports on prices.

In pictures: In Ukraine, the grief-stricken bear the pain of war

Spanish Leopard tanks to leave to Ukraine in second half of April -Defence Minister

The six Leopard 2A4 tanks Spain committed to send to Ukraine will leave the country in the second half of April, defence minister Margarita Robles said on Wednesday in an interview on 24H TV station.

She added the country’s army services are working on four additional tanks to make them ready for combat and possibly send them to Ukraine too.

Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he only has himself to blame

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin will not be happy with [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) becoming the 31st member of [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato). The date is significant – 4 April – which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Nato treaty 74 years ago, writes Jamie Shea.

Yet Putin has only himself to blame for this most significant enlargement of the Western alliance in some time.

Before Putin invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last year, barely 30 per cent of Finns wanted their country to join Nato.

Finland was largely comfortable with the dense network of security partnerships that it had devised since the end of the Cold War: close cooperation with Nato, participation in the EU’s common security and defence policy and military integration with its neighbour, Sweden, and the other Nordic partners.

[*Analysis: Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he can only blame himself*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-russia-nato-membership-putin-b2313988.html)

Zelensky arrives in Poland to deepen ties with key Western ally

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in neighbouring Poland on Wednesday, a Polish presidential aide said, as he begins an official visit to a close ally that has galvanised Western military and political support for Kyiv.

The visit, which was announced this week by Poland but has not been officially confirmed by Kyiv, comes with Ukraine planning to conduct a counter-offensive in the coming weeks or months to recapture occupied land in its east and south.

“I can say that President Zelensky has crossed the Polish border,” Marcin Przydacz told private broadcaster TVN24 on Wednesday.

In televised comments on Tuesday ahead of the visit, Przydacz had said the visit “should be taken as a sign of trust and of thanking Poland and Poles”.

Poland has taken in more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** over the past 13 months of war. The NATO member has also played an important role in persuading other Western powers to supply battle tanks and other weaponry to Ukraine.

Military deliveries have been vital for Ukraine to fend off and fight back Russian forces that poured over the Ukrainian border in February 2022. Swathes of Ukraine remain occupied in the south and the east.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Tuesday that Kyiv was grateful to Poland for clearing the way for deliveries of MiG fighter jets. Przydacz said earlier this week the first MiGs had already been delivered to Ukraine.

“MiGs from Poland will significantly strengthen our defence, allow us to make our skies safer, save the lives of our citizens and also reduce the destruction caused by Russian attacks,” Reznikov wrote on Telegram.

Zelensky will meet President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on the trip, and speak to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and Polish members of the public, Przydacz said.

“It will not be a surprise to anyone that the Ukrainian side will ask Poland and other foreign partners for more support... but we must be aware that we as Poland have already really done a lot,” he said.

Poland has said talks will focus on developments on Ukrainian front lines, international support and economic cooperation, he said.

Ukraine‘s presidential office has not said anything in advance about the trip or what it will focus on.

Ukrainian drone crashes near Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

A Ukrainian drone has crashed near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Russia‘s RIA news agency cited a Russian officer as saying on Wednesday, as the chief of the global nuclear watchdog was expected in Russia for talks on the plant’s security.

International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Grossi was due to travel to Russia‘s Kaliningrad region on Wednesday, a week after visiting the Zaporizhzhia facility in southern Ukraine, which is controlled by Russian forces.

According to the Russian military officer cited by RIA, a Polish-made drone weighing more than 2 kg (4.4 pounds) had crashed near the plant. The news agency did not say when.

Grossi has been pushing for a demilitarised zone around Europe’s largest nuclear facility, which has come under repeated shelling, with Russia and Ukraine have blamed on each other.

Russian foreign ministry claims Finland has ‘lost its special voice in international affairs'

Russia's foreign ministry has claimed that, in dropping non-alignment, Finland was committing a dangerous historical mistake that would fray relations with Moscow and undo its status as a confidence-building presence in the Baltic Sea and Europe at large.

“This is now a thing of the past. Finland has become one of the small members of [Nato] that doesn’t decide anything, losing its special voice in international affairs. We are sure that history will judge this hasty step,” a ministry statement said.

France boosts military spending amid war in Ukraine

The French government has approved a key budget bill presented as the country’s biggest military spending spree in more than 50 years, underscoring the impact of Russia’s war in Ukraine.

The bill foresees €413bn in military spending or the period covering 2024-2030 – up by more than a third relative to the previous timeframe.

Defence minister Sébastien Lecornu said bill’s political, budgetary, military and technological drive is comparable to the huge push in the 1960s that saw France develop nuclear weapons, making the country one of the world’s major military powers.

Championed by French President Emmanuel Macron, the bill would notably modernise France’s nuclear arsenal, boost intelligence spending by 60 per cent, double the number of military reservists, reinforce cyberdefense and develop more remote-controlled weapons.

It would also boost the arms industry’s production capacity in order to provide assistance to Ukraine and adequately supply the French military.

[*France boosts military spending amid war in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/france-ap-russia-emmanuel-macron-ukraine-b2313906.html)

Zelensky heads to Poland to deepen ties with key Western ally

Volodymyr Zelensky is expected to reach Poland shortly as he looks to thank one of Ukraine’s staunchest allies.

Poland has played a key role in galvanising Western military and political support for Kyiv against Russia’s full-scale invasion.

“(The visit) should be taken as a sign of trust and of thanking Poland and Poles,” Polish presidential foreign policy adviser Marcin Przydacz said in televised comments yesterday evening, ahead of Mr Zelensky’s expected arrival.

The visit, which was announced this week by Poland but has not been officially confirmed by Kyiv, comes with Ukraine planning to conduct a counter-offensive in the coming weeks or months to recapture occupied land in its east and south.

Poland has taken in more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** over the past 13 months of war.

The Nato member has also played an important role in persuading other Western powers to supply battle tanks and other weaponry to Ukraine.

Hopeful Zelensky welcomes Finland’s entry into Nato

Volodymyr Zelensky has welcomed Finland’s entry into Nato, cheering on the strengthening of the alliance.

“Today, by the way, a historic event took place for our region, for all of Europe, for the entire Euro-Atlantic community. Finland becomes the 31st member of Nato. The alliance is getting stronger on the eastern flank,” he said in his nightly address.

Mr Zelensky congratulated all the people of Finland and the country’s president “personally on a reliable security guarantee – a collective guarantee”.

“Russian aggression clearly proves that only collective guarantees, only preventive guarantees can be reliable. That’s what we always talked about. We also talked about speed – the speed of security decisions matters. Now we can see how fast the procedures can be,” he said.

He added: “By the way, this year’s Nato Summit in Vilnius deserves to be quite ambitious. The more ambitious the one who protects freedom, the less opportunities for aggression the one who wants evil has. The day will come when security will be guaranteed for our country as well.”

Putin officer defects and says ‘paranoid’ president lives in a bunker

A protection officer for Vladimir Putin has defected and labelled the Russian president a “paranoid war criminal”.

Gleb Karakulov, 35, had served as an engineer in the Federal Guard Service (FSO) presidential communications unit and said he has fled Russia over the war in Ukraine.

The former FSO officer claims president Putin opts to stay “in his bunker” rather than make trips because he is so paranoid about an assassination attempt. The Russian president also allegedly travels with a 2.5 metre-high box to prevent his secret talks from leaking and Western bugging.

Mr Karakulov escaped to safety via Istanbul while on a business trip to Kazakhstan in October 2022 after accompanying president Putin on more than 180 trips over the past 13 years. It is unclear where the 35-year-old is now.

Read the full story here:

[*Putin officer says ‘paranoid’ president lives in bunker and is terrified of Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

Watch: Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin 'war criminal'

Lawyers meet with jailed WSJ reporter in Russian prison

Lawyers representing an American reporter arrested in Russia on spying charges met with him in a Moscow prison yesterday for the first time since his detention last week and said “his health is good,” according to his employer, The Wall Street Journal.

Evan Gershkovich, 31, was arrested on Thursday in Yekaterinburg, Russia’s fourth-largest city.

He is the first US correspondent since the Cold War to be detained on espionage accusations. The Journal has denied the charges.

“Evan’s health is good, and he is grateful for the outpouring of support from around the world. We continue to call for his immediate release,” the Journal’s editor-in-chief, Emma Tucker, said in a note to the newsroom on Tuesday. She said the paper was encouraged by the visit.

Read the full story here:

[*Lawyers meet with jailed American reporter in Moscow prison*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ap-lawyers-moscow-american-russia-b2314232.html)

Ukrainian fighters describe Bakhmut battle: ‘They creep in, fire’

Ukrainian forces placed in the muddy dugouts have described the battlefield situation in Bakhmut where dozens of Russian artillery and missile attacks continue on a daily basis.

Near the town of Niu-York, 50 km south of Bakhmut, a commander of an infantry unit explains: “They creep in, fire and try to exhaust us. Then they evaluate the situation and can move forward for a little more".

"Meanwhile, we try to let them get closer to us so that we can hit them more precisely,” the military commander who gave his nom-de-guerre as "Bodia" told Reuters.

Earlier this week, the chief of Russia’s Wagner mercenary force, Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed that his forces have “legally” captured the mining city and logistics hub but Ukraine swiftly denied the reports and said that the fighting continues.

Mike Pompeo warns of Putin’s ‘broader war in Europe'

Former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo has warned against larger threats from Vladimir Putin to Europe if Russia wins the war against Ukraine after he returned from his visit to the war-hit nation yesterday.

“I’ve just left Ukraine. I’ve seen the damage caused by Putin’s invasion. And I’ve been inspired by the bravery of the Ukrainian people. One thing is clear: helping Ukraine end this war is in America’s core interest,” Mr Pompeo said.

He added: “Supporting Ukraine isn’t about abstract ideals like ‘global democracy’: it’s about strengthening OUR national and economic security.”

“If Putin wins, he’ll control critical exports to the US. And he’ll be on the brink of a broader war in Europe. We can’t let that happen,” the former top US official from Donald Trump administration said.

Lauding the Ukrainian people for enduring “indescribable suffering”, Mr Pompeo said that the “resilient” people are “not asking for American troops—just our support”.

We should give it to them, Mr Pompeo said.

Visuals from the former director of the CIA visit showed him dressed in casual attire and interacting with locals and children in Ukraine at a site of the attack as a building hollowed out likely in an artillery attack appeared in the backdrop.

Mr Pompeo said he had travelled to Ukraine with a delegation of US businessmen and representatives of several humanitarian institutions. He visited a military hospital and also met Ukrainian government officials.

Britain blocks UN webcast of Russian meeting on Ukraine

Britain has blocked the UN webcast of an informal Security Council meeting on Ukraine on Wednesday at which Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights – who the International Criminal Court wants to arrest on war crimes charges – is due to speak, diplomats said.

Russia had told council members that the discussion about Ukraine will focus on “evacuating children from conflict zone” and signalled that commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova would feature.

Such meetings are held at UN headquarters, but not in the Security Council chamber, and briefings can be done virtually. All 15 council members have to agree to allow it to be webcast by the United Nations.

Britain blocked the webcast because Russia would not confirm who would brief, diplomats said on Tuesday. Russia’s Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy confirmed Britain’s move on Twitter.

“Russia will from now on block UN webcasts of all similar meetings citing ‘UK censorship clause’,” Polyanskiy wrote. Later on Tuesday Russia confirmed that Lvova-Belova would speak at the briefing.

Diplomats have said it is rare for a U.N. webcast to be blocked. However, last month China blocked the UN webcast of a US-convened informal Security Council meeting on human rights abuses in North Korea.

Moscow hosts talks aimed at Syria-Turkey rapprochement

Senior diplomats from Russia, Turkey, Syria and Iran wrapped up two days of talks in Moscow on Tuesday, part of the Kremlin’s efforts to help broker a rapprochement between the Turkish and Syrian governments.

The Russian and Turkish foreign ministries issued terse readouts, saying diplomats discussed preparations for a planned meeting of the four countries’ foreign ministers. Moscow described the consultations as “frank and direct,” and Ankara said they were held in a “transparent and clear manner,” while offering no details.

The talks in Moscow were held as UN-mediated negotiations aimed at reaching a political solution to Syria’s conflict have stalled.

[*Moscow hosts talks aimed at Syria-Turkey rapprochement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/syria-ap-turkey-moscow-bashar-assad-b2314193.html)

Russia’s Lavrov accuses US of trying to ‘torpedo’ Moscow’s upcoming African summit

Russia’s foreign minister has accused Washington of trying to wreck Russia’s planned summit with African countries as part of efforts to isolate Moscow.

Moscow is preparing for its second summit with African countries, scheduled for the end of July in St Petersburg, including work on infrastructure, technology and energy projects.

Sergei Lavrov told the news site Argumenty i Fakty that Moscow was different from Western countries in its relations with Africa in that “we never tell our foreign partners how they are supposed to live,” claiming: “We have no secret agenda.”

“It is true that the United States and its vassals are doing everything possible to achieve Russia’s international isolation,” Mr Lavrov told the website. “In particular, they are trying to torpedo the planned second Russia-Africa summit ... to persuade our African friends not to take part.”

He claimed, however, that the chances of damaging the conference were diminishing as “fewer and fewer people are now willing to pull out all the stops for former colonial powers”, saying: “Attempts to interfere in our cooperation with countries for the global South and East will therefore continue, but success is far from guaranteed.”

The US State Department did not address Lavrov’s accusations directly, but said in a statement that Washington was pursuing strong relationships with African countries “to address the shared challenges we face. Our Africa policy is about Africa.”

Full report: Suspect in Russia cafe bombing charged with terror offences

A 26-year-old woman has been charged with terrorism offences in Russia over a bombing that killed a military blogger who had been a high-profile cheerleader for Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.

Footage released by the Russian interior ministry on Monday appeared to show Darya Trepova admitting to bringing a statuette to the restaurant in St Petersburg, which blew up, also allegedly injuring 42 others. She did not say that she knew there would be an explosion or who had given her the object.

While it is unclear whether her account was given under duress, Ms Trepova’s husband told Russian website SVTV News that – despite being against the war in Ukraine – his wife “would never kill” and “was framed”.

But on Tuesday, Russian investigators said they had charged Trepova with committing “a terrorist act by an organised group that caused intentional death” and the “illegal possession of explosive devices by an organised group”.

[*Russia charges St Petersburg cafe bombing suspect with terror offences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-cafe-bombing-suspect-charged-terrorism-b2314177.html)

Russia accuses US of ‘increasing civilian casualties’ with new military aid package

The Russian embassy in Washington has reacted to the Pentagon’s announcement of $2.6bn of military aid for Ukraine by accusing the United States of wanting to drag out the conflict as long as possible.

“The decision to supply weapons to Kyiv is a step towards escalating the Ukrainian crisis and increasing the number of civilian casualties,” Russian news agency Tass cited an embassy statement as saying.

US can protect its values by helping Ukraine, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has told the US National Governors Association that the United States could protect its values by helping Ukraine.

“Our cooperation will allow for the new enhancement of your security, for our economy and yours, for jobs in both our countries,” the Ukrainian president said by video link on Tuesday.

“The main thing is not to lose time, not to lose the chance we have. Act now, help now. Ukrainians act so that Americans don’t have to fight – and together we gain new strength for our countries,” he added.

US unveils £2.6bn in military aid for Ukraine, Pentagon says

The United States has unveiled $2.6bn of military assistance for Ukraine, as Kyiv prepares for its spring counterattack.

The weapons aid package was comprised of $2.1bn from Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funding which allows Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry rather than from US weapons stocks.

The USAI package included additional munitions for NASAMS air defenses that the US and allies have given to Kyiv, precision aerial munitions, Soviet-era GRAD rockets, anti-tank rockets, armored bridging systems used in assaults, and 105 fuel trailers, along with funding for training and maintenance.

The remaining $500m came from Presidential Drawdown Authority funds, which allows the president to take from current U.S. stocks in an emergency.

That segment of the package included a half a dozen types of munitions, including munitions for Patriot air defense systems, tank munitions, and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

US journalist jailed by Russia meet lawyers for first time

Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich has met his lawyers for the first time since being arrested and charged with espionage in Russia last week, editor-in-chief Emma Tucker has said in a message to staff.

“Evan’s health is good, and he is grateful for the outpouring of support from around the world,” Ms Tucker said in the letter, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

“Evan’s family ... are relieved to know we finally have contact with Evan,” she said, adding she was encouraged by the meeting. Last Thursday a Moscow court remanded Gershkovich in pre-trial detention until May 29 on charges that carry a prison term of up to 20 years.

He has appealed the detention through his lawyers, as Washington said it was pushing hard to secure his release. The Wall Street Journal denies the charges. The Kremlin said last week, without providing evidence, that Gershkovich had been “caught red-handed”.

“We continue to call for his immediate release. The legal avenue is one of several avenues we are working to advocate for Evan’s release,” said Ms Tucker.

First Polish MiG-29 fighter jets arrive in Ukraine

The first MiG-29 fighter jets sent from Poland have arrived in Ukraine in a major escalation of military backing for Kyiv, my colleague [*Mary-Kate Findonreports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-polish-mig-fighter-jet-b2314041.html%22%20title=%22First%20Polish%20MiG-29%20fighter%20jets%20arrive%20in%20Ukraine).

Poland and Slovakia became the first Western countries to announce the shipment of 41 MiG-29s to the war-torn country.

The move is anticipated to start a precedent that could lead to other Nato allies sending fighter jets.

Analysis | Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he only has himself to blame

Jamie Shea writes:

Russia’s president Vladimir Putin will not be happy with Finland becoming the 31st member of Nato. The date is significant – 4 April – which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Nato treaty 74 years ago.

Yet Putin has only himself to blame for this most significant enlargement of the Western alliance in some time.

Before Putin invaded Ukraine last year, barely 30 per cent of Finns wanted their country to join Nato. Finland was largely comfortable with the dense network of security partnerships that it had devised since the end of the Cold War: close cooperation with Nato, participation in the EU’s common security and defence policy and military integration with its neighbour, Sweden, and the other Nordic partners.

Yet overnight public support for joining Nato shot up to around 80 per cent, and has stayed there ever since. Nato membership did not feature as an issue in last weekend’s Finnish elections despite the broad spectrum of parties participating. So, what has changed? Essentially two things.

Read the full analysis here:

[*Analysis: Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he can only blame himself*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-russia-nato-membership-putin-b2313988.html)

Suspect in killing of Russian war blogger charged with terrorism

Russian investigators have charged 26-year-old Darya Trepova with terrorist offences over the killing of pro-war blogger Vladlen Tatarsky in a bomb blast in St Petersburg, and remanded her in pre-trial detention.

Tatarsky, a cheerleader for Russia’s military campaign in Ukraine whose real name was Maxim Fomin, was killed on Sunday in a cafe where he was due to talk.

Russia’s Investigative Committee said it had charged Ms Trepova with committing “a terrorist act by an organised group that caused intentional death”. The charges carry a maximum jail term of 20 years. It claimed she had acted under instructions from people working on behalf of Ukraine.

Russia’s health ministry said 40 other people had been injured in the blast, and 25 were still in hospital on Tuesday morning.

Ms Trepova was transferred from St Petersburg to Moscow, where the Basmanny district court remanded her in custody on Tuesday until 2 June, Russian news agencies reported.

Subject of ICC arrest warrant denies claims she unlawfully deported children to Russia

Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights has rejected International Criminal Court (ICC) allegations that she is responsible for unlawfully deporting children from Ukraine.

The ICC has issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and children’s commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova for the war crime of hundreds of children allegedly being taken from orphanages and children’s care homes in areas of Ukraine claimed by Russia. Some children, the ICC said, had been given up for adoption in Russia.

But Ms Lvova-Belova told reporters on Tuesday that her commission had acted on humanitarian grounds to protect children in a militarised area, and had not moved anyone against their will or that of their parents or legal guardians, whose consent was always sought unless they were missing.

Children were not given up for adoption but were placed with temporary legal guardians in foster homes, she insisted.

“As far as the ICC’s accusations are concerned, we don’t understand what we are accused of. Give us the facts and we will look into it. So far, it all looks like a farce without specifics and is incomprehensible,” she said.

The ICC had not submitted any documents to her office, Ms Lvova-Belova said, noting that Russia did not recognise the court’s jurisdiction anyway. Ukraine has not sent any official requests regarding children allegedly separated from their parents, she claimed.

UN council extends Ukraine inquiry into crimes since Russia's invasion

The United Nations Human Rights Council has overwhelmingly voted in favour of extending the mandate of an investigative body probing possible war crimes committed since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Twenty-eight countries voted in favour of extending the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine by a year. Seventeen abstained and two voted against the body, which Ukraine says is essential for keeping Russia accountable for its crimes.

“The scope and brutality of Russia’s atrocities in Ukraine are simply beyond any human comprehension,” Ukraine’s ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Yevheniia Filipenko, told the Council ahead of the vote.

“We strongly believe that the continued work of the Commission in further investigating, documenting and reporting human rights violations and international crimes committed against the people in Ukraine could save more innocent lives (and) could contribute to accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims.”

In a report published last month, the commission found that some crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture and attacks against the country’s energy infrastructure, could constitute crimes against humanity.

Watch: Finland joins Nato

Biden urges Turkey and Hungary to approve Sweden’s Nato bid ‘without delay’

Joe Biden has welcomed Finland’s accession to Nato, and urged Turkey and Hungary to conclude their ratification processes for Sweden to join the military alliance “without delay”.

“I look forward to welcoming Sweden as a Nato member as soon as possible,” the US president said in a statement.

Finland joining Nato is ‘direct result of Putin’s aggression’, says UK

Finland’s accession to Nato is a “direct result” of Vladimir Putin’s aggression and demonstrates the strength of the alliance, Britain’s foreign secretary has said.

Mr Cleverly, who was at Nato’s headquarters, said: “Today we see, as a direct result of Vladimir Putin’s aggression and his illegal invasion of Ukraine, the day where a new ally joins our defensive alliance.”

He added: “Russia thought its aggression would divide us. Instead, we are bound tighter together, resolute in our defence of the principles of freedom and the rule of law. Let us be clear that our door remains open. We will welcome further allies with open arms and we continue to push for Sweden’s swift accession.”

Calling it “a historic day”, prime minister Rishi Sunak said Finnish membership “made our alliance stronger and every one of us safer”, adding: “All Nato members now need to take the steps necessary to admit Sweden too, so we can stand together as one alliance to defend freedom in Europe and across the world.”

Defence secretary Ben Wallace said the tectonic shift should “be a lesson to President Putin”, adding: “Finland chose to join, based on their own free will. The freedom to choose their alliances as a sovereign state is a matter for their citizens and their citizens alone.”

[*Finland joining Nato is ‘direct result of Putin’s aggression’, says UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/finland-rishi-sunak-james-cleverly-sweden-nato-b2313944.html)

West should not ‘provoke Moscow’ as tactical nuclear weapons to move to Belarus, says Russian official

The West should acknowledge realities after Russia’s decision to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and not “provoke Moscow”, deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov has said.

The senior Russian official claimed on Tuesday that Russia had gained new opportunities to guarantee its security after suspending its participation in the New START nuclear arms control treaty, the TASS news agency reported.

Lukashenko to join Putin in Moscow for two-day talks

Belarussian president Alexander Lukashenko will travel to Moscow on Wednesday for two days of talks with Vladimir Putin, according to the Kremlin.

Russia’s defence minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday that Moscow was boosting Belarus’s nuclear capabilities in response to Finland joining Nato.

Last week, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov that the two presidents would discuss Mr Lukashenko’s call for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine at an upcoming face-to-face meeting.

In an anouncement on Tuesday, the Kremlin said the pair would discuss “topical bilateral and international issues” on Wednesday, before a meeting on Thursday of the Supreme Council of the Union State.

Russia and Belarus are formally part of a Union State, a borderless union and alliance between the two ex-Soviet countries, though long-standing plans for closer integration of their economies have repeatedly stalled.

Finland’s president hails ‘great day’ for his country as it joins Nato

Finland’s president has said that “it is a great day for Finland” and “an important day for Nato” as his country joined the military alliance.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Nato general secretary Jens Stoltenberg, Mr Niinisto said Finland’s most significant contribution to Nato’s common deterrence and defence would be to defend its own territory.

There is still significant work to be done to coordinate this with Nato, he said.

Full report: Finland joins Nato, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

My colleagueLiam Jameshas more details on Finland’s accession to Nato in this breaking report, which you can refresh for updates:

[*Finland joins Nato, doubling alliance’s border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-nato-russia-brussels-border-b2313909.html)

Breaking: Finland joins Nato

Finland has officially joined Nato, doubling the military alliance’s border with Russia and dealing a significant blow to president Vladimir Putin.

Finland’s membership became official when its foreign minister handed over documents completing its accession process to US secretary of state Antony Blinken.

The US State Department is the repository of Nato texts concerning membership.

Russia has warned that it would be forced to take “retaliatory measures” to address what it called security threats created by Finland’s membership, and that it will bolster forces near Finland if Nato sends any additional troops or equipment to what will be its 31st member country.

Watch: Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin 'war criminal'

Putin officer defects and says ‘paranoid’ president lives in a bunker and is terrified of Covid

More now from my colleague Martha McHardy on the interview given by a former protection officer of Vladimir Putin...

[*Putin officer says ‘paranoid’ president lives in bunker and is terrified of Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XJ-P2D1-JCS0-D34M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 5, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 755 words

**Body**

Tanker diverted after UK dockers refuse to unload Russian gas

Dock workers have refused to unload a tanker of Russian gas in Kent as a show of solidarity with Ukraine, a union has said. The tanker had been due to arrive at a Thames Estuary port early yesterday morning but was diverted following the protest from workers, according to the TUC. The Boris Vilkitskiy, owned by the Greek firm Dynagas, was headed to the Isle of Grain, carrying liquefied natural gas destined for Centrica, which is the parent company of British Gas.

There is currently a government ban on all Russian-associated ships docking in UK ports in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine, but the firm is believed to have used a loophole as the ban does not apply to the origin of cargo. Dock workers were backed by the trade union Unison in refusing to help bring the gas onshore. Matt Lay, Unison's national officer for energy, told The Guardian: "The government must act immediately to close this loophole and stop Russian goods continuing to arrive in the UK under the cover of another country."

Lasting consequences for Russia, says World Bank president

Russia's invasion has "horrified" the World Bank's shareholders and will have lasting consequences for Vladimir Putin and the country's standing on the international stage, the global lender's president said yesterday. David Malpass told the TV channel Fox Business Network that China's reaction to the war and the western sanctions imposed on Moscow would be influential in determining how Russia's future trade relationships develop. "There's a global outpouring in favour of Ukraine, and that will have lasting consequences, whatever the outcome of the war," Mr Malpass said, citing what he called "a very clear focus on Putin being the source of the problem".

Mr Malpass said he would speak with Ukraine's president, Vododymyr Zelenskiy, and yesterday planned to submit to the World Bank's board a loan package for Ukraine that has been expanded with country contributions and has been coordinated with "people that are in bunkers in Ukraine". Reuters reported on Thursday that the package had grown to Euro 460m (£380m). Mr Malpass said the goal was to get the money to Ukraine as early as next week. Reuters

US government weighs options to reduce imports of Russian oil

The Biden administration is looking at options to cut US imports of Russian oil and weighing possible actions to minimise the impact on global supplies and impacts on consumers, the White House said yesterday. The White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, said it also remains in contact with US lawmakers over the issue. "We are looking at ways to reduce the import of Russian oil while also making sure that we are maintaining the global supply needs out there," Ms Psaki said.

The United States imported more than 20.4 million barrels of crude and refined products a month on average in 2021 from Russia, about 8 per cent of US liquid fuel imports, according to the Energy Information Administration. The White House economic adviser Cecilia Rouse noted that while the US does not import much Russian oil, it is still reviewing a range of possible steps. Oil prices have soared over the past week after the United States and its allies sanctioned Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. Reuters

Kutcher and Kunis raise almost $7m in a day for refugees

Hollywood couple Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis have raised more than $6.8m as of yesterday after setting up a GoFundMe page seeking humanitarian aid for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine in 1983, moved to the United States in 1991. "I have always considered myself an American, a proud American ... But today, I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian," Kunis said in a video. "The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating. There is no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity."

Kutcher, sitting by Kunis's side in the video, said the funds would be used to provide refugee and humanitarian aid to Ukrainians affected by the invasion. "The principle challenge right now is logistics. We need to get housing and we need to get supplies and resources into the area," said Kutcher. "And I have never been more proud to be married to a Ukrainian." The two actors, who married in 2015, have agreed to match up to $3m of donations, with the ultimate goal of raising $30m. They are partnering with short-term housing website Airbnb and Flexport, which is organising shipments of humanitarian aid to refugees. Reuters

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*No 10 bows to pressure and expands family visa scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WX-SDS1-F072-4340-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 2, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 759 words

**Byline:** ADAM FORREST

**Body**

Boris Johnson said Britain would "welcome" a large number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, as he bowed to pressure and expanded the visa criteria to allow more to join family members in the UK as they flee the war zone.

The government has come under pressure from both Tory and Labour MPs for its response to the refugee crisis, but the prime minister insisted the widened access would allow "very considerable numbers" of Ukrainians to seek refuge in the UK.

Mr Johnsonclaimed more than 200,000 people from Ukraine could soon be eligible under the visa route, as the scheme was broadened to include more parents, adult children, grandparents and siblings. He insisted Britain had "always had a tradition of welcoming people in large numbers" as he was grilled over his refusal to copy the EU by waiving visa rules forrefugees fleeing Vladimir Putin's forces.

Mr Johnson told reporters: "We're extending the family [visa] scheme so that considerable numbers would be eligible. We're talking about a couple of hundred thousand, maybe more." He added: "We're going to have a humanitarian scheme, and then a scheme by which UK companies and citizens can sponsor individual Ukrainians to come to the UK. We're doing exactly what the UNHCR [UN Refugee Agency] is asking us to do."

The prime minister's spokesperson said the 200,000 figure used by Mr Johnson was "indicative only" as it was "impossible to predict" how many would want to come to the UK. The expansion of the Ukrainian visa scheme announced on Sunday was set to apply only to spouses, the parents of children under 18, as well as children under 18.

But Priti Patel confirmed in the Commons that the definition of relatives would be extended to "parents, grandparents, adult offspring, siblings" under the Ukrainian family visa scheme. She also said a "humanitarian sponsorship pathway" was being set up for Ukrainians who do not have close family members in the UK, but who can get sponsorship from a firm or individual, saying there would be no limit of the numbers who could apply.

The home secretary told MPs both the family route and sponsorship route would allow Ukrainians to reside in the UK for an initial period of 12 months. MsPatelsaid: "This is a very generous and it is an expansive and unprecedented package. It will mean that the British public and the Ukrainian diaspora can support displaced Ukrainians in the UK."

The home secretary defended her claim that the UK could not copy the EU by dropping visa requirements forrefugeesfleeing the Russian invasion because of "security advice". She told MPs: "Russian troops are seeking to infiltrate and merge with Ukrainian forces", adding there are "extremists on the ground" in Ukraine.

Ms Patel also sparked anger by suggesting Labour MPs cannot be trusted to receive security briefings about threats to the UK from the crisis inUkraine. "I'm very sceptical of how they treat and respect security advice."

Jacqui Smith, former Labour home secretary, later tweeted: "That's an unwarranted slur on the current opposition and unworthy of a home secretary." Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper welcomed the changes announced yesterday, but questioned MsPatelover whether more could still be done.

The senior Labour figure added: "Surely she is not expecting to turn their families away? When people are fleeing Russian authoritarianism or war I assume she will not be applying a test based on which bureaucratic box UK residents tick."

Sir Keir Starmer said the government's plans to relax visa rules for Ukrainians still do not go far enough. "A simple route to sanctuary is what we're seeking," the Labour leader told reporters yesterday. "I don't think the Home Office and home secretary have gone far enough on this."

Dozens of senior Conservatives had joined Labour in demanding more "decisive" action on refugees, including ex-ministers Jeremy Hunt, Robert Buckland, Greg Clark, Damian Green and Caroline Nokes. Tory hardliner Sir Edward Leigh raised eyebrows by praising Ms Patel for refusing to drop visa requirements and "throw away the immigration rulebook". He said his Lincolnshire constituents had already "done our bit in terms of migration from eastern Europe".

The UK has also provided an extra £80m in funding for the humanitarian relief effort, taking the total to £220m. No 10 said the extra money would be used on the border of Ukraine to provide assistance torefugees.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XJ-P2D1-JCS0-D370-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 5, 2022 Saturday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 747 words

**Body**

Tanker diverted after dockers refuse to unload Russian gas

Dock workers have refused to unload a tanker of Russian gas in Kent as a show of solidarity with Ukraine, a union has said. The tanker had been due to arrive at a Thames Estuary port early yesterday morning but was diverted following the protest from workers, according to the TUC. The Boris Vilkitskiy, owned by the Greek firm Dynagas, was headed to the Isle of Grain, carrying liquefied natural gas destined for Centrica, which is the parent company of British Gas.

There is currently a government ban on all Russian-associated ships docking in UK ports in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine, but the firm is believed to have used a loophole as the ban does not apply to the origin of cargo. Dock workers were backed by the trade union Unison in refusing to help bring the gas onshore. Matt Lay, Unison's national officer for energy, told The Guardian: "The government must act immediately to close this loophole and stop Russian goods continuing to arrive in the UK under the cover of another country."

Lasting consequences for Russia, says World Bank

Russia's invasion has "horrified" the World Bank's shareholders and will have lasting consequences for Vladimir Putin and the country's standing on the international stage, the global lender's president said yesterday. David Malpass told the TV channel Fox Business Network that China's reaction to the war and the western sanctions imposed on Moscow would be influential in determining how Russia's future trade relationships develop. "There's a global outpouring in favour of Ukraine, and that will have lasting consequences, whatever the outcome of the war," Mr Malpass said, citing what he called "a very clear focus on Putin being the source of the problem".

Mr Malpass said he would speak with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, and yesterday planned to submit to the World Bank's board a loan package for Ukraine that has been expanded with country contributions and has been coordinated with "people that are in bunkers in Ukraine". Reuters reported on Thursday that the package had grown to Euro 460m (£380m). Mr Malpass said the goal was to get the money to Ukraine as early as next week. Reuters

US government 'looks at' reducing imports of Russian oil

The Biden administration is looking at options to cut US imports of Russian oil and weighing possible actions to minimise the impact on global supplies and impacts on consumers. The White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, said it also remains in contact with US lawmakers over the issue. "We are looking at ways to reduce the import of Russian oil while also making sure that we are maintaining the global supply needs out there," Ms Psaki said.

The United States imported more than 20.4 million barrels of crude and refined products a month on average in 2021 from Russia, about 8 per cent of US liquid fuel imports, according to the Energy Information Administration. The White House economic adviser Cecilia Rouse noted that while the US does not import much Russian oil, it is still reviewing a range of possible steps. Oil prices have soared over the past week after the United States and its allies sanctioned Russia following its invasion of Ukraine. Reuters

Kutcher and Kunis raise almost $7m in a day for refugees

Hollywood couple Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis have raised more than $6.8m as of yesterday after setting up a GoFundMe page seeking humanitarian aid for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Kunis, who was born in Chernivtsi, Ukraine in 1983, moved to the United States in 1991. "I have always considered myself an American, a proud American ... But today, I have never been more proud to be a Ukrainian," Kunis said in a video. "The events that have unfolded in Ukraine are devastating. There is no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity."

Kutcher, sitting by Kunis's side in the video, said the funds would be used to provide refugee and humanitarian aid to Ukrainians affected by the invasion. "The principle challenge right now is logistics. We need to get housing and we need to get supplies and resources into the area," said Kutcher. "And I have never been more proud to be married to a Ukrainian." The two actors, who married in 2015, have agreed to match up to $3m of donations, with the ultimate goal of raising $30m. They are partnering with short-term housing website Airbnb and Flexport, which is organising shipments of humanitarian aid to refugees. Reuters

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Truss 'urgently' examining visa rules for Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WG-V3D1-F072-42FY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 28, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 729 words

**Byline:** ASHLEY COWBURN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ministers are "urgently" examining how to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing war after getting intense criticism over current UK visa rules. As the Kremlin wages war on Ukraine, it is understood the Home Office is working on a package of measures to help those escaping the Russian invasion, with an announcement expected in days.

Priti Patel, the home secretary, has unveiled minor concessions for Ukrainians who are already in Britain for work, study and tourism by extending the time period before they must leave the country. But so far there has been no announcement of a resettlement scheme for Ukrainians, or other measures in response to an expected exodus of refugees from the country.

Speaking on the BBC's Sunday Morning programme, foreign secretary Liz Truss said the UK was "urgently looking" at what the government can do to "facilitate" the arrival of people fleeing war. It was put to the cabinet minister that those with no connections to the UK cannot get in, and when asked if that will change, she replied: "We are looking urgently at what we can do. We're working with European partners about how we support refugees who are leaving Ukraine. So, yes, is the answer."

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an estimated 368,000 people have left Ukraine for bordering countries - predominantly Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania. David Lammy, the shadow foreign secretary, told Sky News that current visa restrictions for Ukrainians seeking sanctuary in the UK were "totally unacceptable" and "bureaucratic".

"It is insisting that people demonstrate salaries, that they have families ties in this country," the Labour frontbencher said. "People are fleeing with their children in their arms. Why would you ask people how rich they are to enter our country? Of course, there are some people who may not have family ties, but want to come into this country." Welsh first minister Mark Drakeford also said the UK will need to "go beyond" its current visa arrangements for those fleeing conflict in Ukraine.

A ministerial aide at the Home Office provoked outrage at the weekend for suggesting those fleeing the Russian invasion could apply for a seasonal workers' scheme. The Conservative MP was replying to Labour's shadow armed forces minister Luke Pollard, who had raised concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the conflict still have to apply for a visa to enter the UK - something that other countries such as Ireland and Portugal have waived.

In response to Mr Pollard, the minister said in a now-deleted tweet: "As you will be well aware there are a number of routes, not least our seasonal worker scheme you will recall from your shadow Defra days, which Ukrainians can qualify for, alongside the family route for those with relatives here."

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said events over the weekend were "creating yet more confusion and distress to Ukrainian families desperately seeking reassurance and support from the UK government regarding their future safety".

He added: "We urgently need the government to announce a clear plan which immediately relaxes visa requirements to allow family members of Ukrainians in the UK to join them here and a safe route so people at risk of persecution can apply for a humanitarian visa to travel to the UK and claim asylum once here. We must uphold our tradition of supporting people fleeing war and bloodshed, and send a clear signal to Ukrainian families that they are welcome in the UK."

In an update posted on Twitter on Saturday, the Home Office said it "has an extensive visa application centre network" in countries neighbouring Ukraine. "Ukrainians in these countries can access these services and apply for visas under existing immigration routes," it said.

The department added: "We have been planning for the impact that a Russian invasion would have on visa application centres, and swift action was taken to ensure contingency plans were put in place. More staff have been surged to visa application centres. Dependents of UK nationals resident in Ukraine needing a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary Lviv location or through a visa application centre in nearby countries."

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Let Ukrainians fleeing war in without visas, say MPs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-4X71-JCS0-D0X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 27, 2022 Sunday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 784 words

**Byline:** ASHLEY COWBURN POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The UK needs to ditch bureaucracy and visa restrictions to provide sanctuary to Ukrainians fleeing their country under attack from Russia, senior Tory and Labour MPs have said.

As the Kremlin wages war on their eastern European neighbour, Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, said it was "immoral" to apply usual visa restrictions to Ukranians escaping war.

Priti Patel called her comments "appalling misinformation" and said "the facts" were in government guidance that she shared. The document showed a visa application fee is being waived for family members of Britons who live in Ukraine and Ukrainians in the UK are being given temporary concessions when their visa expires.

According to the latest estimates from the UN refugee agency, almost 116,000 have fled their homes - predominately to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania - since Vladimir Putin declared war.

Earlier this week The Independent reported that there is currently no safe and legal route for Ukrainians to travel directly from their country to the UK in order to seek asylum, unless they have close British relatives.

A No 10 spokesperson said on Friday that troops had been deployed to help the humanitarian response in Poland and were "working incredibly closely with Ukraine's neighbours" to help support those fleeing.

But they would not be drawn on any further action when asked about safe and legal routes for those wanting to seek asylum in the UK.

Posting on social media yesterday, Conservative MP Julian Smith said ministers must "welcome" those who have been displaced, and "make it as easy as possible to be here".

"It's really important that the United Kingdom makes an immediate open, welcoming & warm hearted commitment of sanctuary to those who wish to leave Ukraine.

"Rip up the usual bureaucracy & let's just say they are welcome & we will make it as easy as possible to be here."

Ms Cooper also tweeted yesterday: "Ukraine is under fire. People are fleeing war. Yet Home Office still applies normal visa restrictions inc salaries, language, close relatives."

She said this "isn't solidarity" with Ukraine but "immoral" and urged the government to "urgently provide simple sanctuary route to UK for Ukrainians who need our help".

The government told The Independent last week it had waived language requirements for dependents of British nationals.

Speaking during a visit to Birmingham, the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said Britain should be prepared to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, saying the government has "got this one wrong" in continuing to apply existing visa rules.

"We must help Ukrainian people looking for safety. That is what we have always done as a country in a moment like this," he said.

"The government has got this one wrong. They are applying the same rules as they had before."

He called for a "humanitarian approach" with "sanctuary for those who are fleeing from Russian aggression, fleeing from this invasion, fleeing for their lives".

It comes after a poll by YouGov - following the Russian invasion - found almost two-thirds of British people would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme for those fleeing Ukraine.

Ms Cooper said the war was "already having devastating consequences", adding: "The UK has a duty to work with our allies to provide humanitarian assistance and support to those fleeing this horrific situation."

"We must also work with the UN Refugee Agency to make sure contingency plans are ready for further support and sanctuary schemes that will be needed and be prepared to play our part in further international action to support refugees."

Images of Downing Street and other government buildings flying Ukrainian flags posted on social media were also met with calls to ease restrictions on movement.

"Don't wave flags; waive visas," Sabir Zazai, the chief executive of the Scottish Refugee Council, said. "Only then will you truly stand with #Ukraine or anyone else fleeing a dreadful conflict."

In an update posted on Twitter yesterday, the Home Office said the UK government "has an extensive visa application centre network" in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

"Ukrainians in these countries can access these services & apply for visa under existing immigration routes," they said.

The department added: "We have been planning for the impact that a Russian invasion would have on visa application centres, and swift action was taken to ensure contingency plans were put in place.

"More staff have been surged to visa application centres. Dependents of [UK] nationals residents in [Ukraine] needing a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary Lviv location or through a visa application centre in nearby countries including Poland, Moldova, Romania & Hungary."

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel rejects call for visa waiver for Ukrainians fleeing war zone*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WJ-WTF1-DY4H-K3X4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 4:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 694 words

**Byline:** David Hughes

**Highlight:** The Home Secretary said Russian forces were 'infiltrating' Ukraine and she also warned that 'extremist groups' could threaten the UK.

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) ruled out a visa waiver for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict with Russia because of fears that Moscow's troops and extremists could seek to come to the UK.

The [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) , who has come under intense political pressure from [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) across the [*Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/commons) to do more to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach the UK, insisted she was taking action to open safe routes.

She told MPs she was following the "strongest security advice" as she rejected the call to scrap the need for visas.

"Over the weekend I have seen members of this House calling for full visa waivers for all Ukrainians," Ms Patel said.

"Security and biometric checks are a fundamental part of our visa approval process worldwide and will continue, as they did for the evacuation of people from Afghanistan.

"That is vital to keep British citizens safe and to ensure that we are helping those in genuine need, particularly as Russian troops are now infiltrating [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and merging into Ukrainian forces.

"Intelligence reports also state the presence of extremist groups and organisations who threaten the region but also our domestic homeland.

"We know all too well what Putin's Russia is willing to do, even on our soil, as we saw through the Salisbury attack."

The Home Secretary said the first phase of the "bespoke humanitarian route" being created for Ukrainians to enter the UK would allow around 100,000 people to come to "seek sanctuary".

The Government has already announced measures allowing people who are settled in the UK to be able to bring their Ukrainian immediate family members to join them.

"Where family members of British nationals do not meet the usual eligibility criteria, but pass security checks, UK visas and immigration will give them the permission to enter the UK outside the rules for 12 months and is prioritising all applications," Ms Patel said.

"Giving British nationals and any person settled in the UK the ability to bring over their immediate Ukrainian family members."

The Home Secretary also set out plans to tighten the Nationality and Borders Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

The moves could make it harder for Russians to obtain visas to enter the UK.

The legislation allows Ms Patel to suspend visas entirely, impose a £190 surcharge on applications to come to the UK or increase visa processing times.

Currently that power is limited to countries that refuse to co-operate with the return of their nationals but Ms Patel said the powers would be extended to cover countries that have "taken significant steps which threaten international peace and security".

Ms Patel's comments in the Commons came after senior Tory MPs urged Boris Johnson to do more to take in Ukrainians.

Former Cabinet ministers Sir Robert Buckland, Jeremy Hunt, Damian Green and Matt Hancock were among the MPs to put their names to the letter calling for a "flexible and pragmatic approach" to allow Ukrainians to seek temporary refuge in the UK.

This is totally chaotic.Those who are urgently seeking sanctuary or to rejoin relatives, and their family & friends who are worried for them, need clear answers. They deserve better than this [*https://t.co/8qKZZ4hrxY*](https://t.co/8qKZZ4hrxY) - Yvette Cooper (@YvetteCooperMP) [*February 28, 2022*](https://twitter.com/YvetteCooperMP/status/1498327511767392256?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The 38 Tory MPs said: "It is clear that this is not another migration crisis; this is a crisis of war. This should not be business as usual, we need sincere and immediate support for the Ukrainian people.

"The United Kingdom cannot flag or fail, our message must be clear: Ukrainian victims of war seeking refuge are welcome."

Opposition figures criticised Ms Patel's "chaotic" response to the crisis.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said: "The Home Secretary has just said she is announcing a bespoke humanitarian route but it's extremely unclear from what she's said what the details actually are or who it will apply to."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman Alistair Carmichael said: "Ukrainians are fleeing for their lives.

"They deserve far better than just more spin and confusion from our Government.

"The Home Secretary should come back to Parliament urgently to announce a full refugee scheme to resettle Ukrainians in the UK."

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W2-WPC1-F072-40MG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 26, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 756 words

**Body**

Two-thirds of Britons want government to resettle Ukrainians

Almost two-thirds of British people want the government to resettle ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, polling has found as ministers refuse to set up a scheme. Research carried out by YouGov following the Russian invasion found that 63 per cent of Britons would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme for those fleeing, and only 18 per cent are opposed.

There is currently no safe and legal route for Ukrainians to travel directly from the country to the UK in order to seek asylum unless they have close British relatives. But the UK has stopped accepting visa applications from those stuck in the country, with thousands who are displaced or fleeing to neighbouring nations.

UK flights banned from Russia

Russia has banned UK flights from its airspace. The country's civil aviation authority has announced that UK flights to and over Russia are prohibited, in retaliation to the UK imposing a ban on Russian aircraft from midnight on 25 February.

The Russian Federal Air Transport Agency called the UK's decision "unfriendly". It said in a statement: "From 11.00 Moscow time, a restriction was introduced on the use of the airspace of the Russian Federation for flights of aircraft owned, leased or operated by a person associated with the UK or registered in the UK, to points in the territory of the Russian Federation, including transit flights through the airspace of the Russian Federation."

Council of Europe suspends Russia

Russia has been suspended from the Council of Europe following its invasion of Ukraine, Italian foreign minister Luigi Di Maio said yesterday. The Council of Europe was formed after the Second World War to protect human rights and the rule of law across the continent. It is separate from the EU.

"The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, of which Italy holds the presidency, has taken the decision to exclude the Russian Federation from its membership," Mr Di Maio said in a statement. "Italy considers this to be a necessary measure in light of Russia's unacceptable military aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a serious violation of international law."

Russia limits access to Facebook

Russia has restricted access to Facebook after the fallout of its attack on Ukraine. It is not clear what those restrictions - which did not appear to amount to a total ban or shutdown of the website in Russia - will actually involve. Roskomnadzor, the country's communications regulator, appeared to have brought in the restrictions in response to changes made by Facebook's parent company, Meta.

Meta said that it would label the accounts of Russian-owned media outlets, in what it said was an attempt to limit the amount of disinformation on its platform. But Russian authorities said that the restrictions were "censorship" and accused Facebook of violating the human rights of its citizens.

Ukraine crisis may cause gas bills to soar, experts warn

Energy bills could soar as high as £3,000 a year following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, analysts have warned. Bills in the UK are already on the rise and are set to climb by £693 to £1,971 in April after regulator Ofgem announced in February it would be lifting the price cap then.

Now, following Russia's move to invade Ukraine, there are fears an increase in the energy price cap could be even more extreme. This is in part due to fears that the Russian-Ukrainian war could result in a fuel shortage, as western sanctions on Russia may push Mr Putin to retaliate and "weaponise" his resources, constricting supplies to Europe. Should the Russian president do this, it would drive up wholesale prices worldwide since Russia is the world's largest natural gas exporter.

Delayed Salisbury probe must start urgently, hearing told

A delayed public inquiry into the Salisbury novichok attack must be started urgently after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a hearing has been told. The death of Dawn Sturgess, who died in July 2018 after being poisoned with the nerve agent, was initially being investigated by an inquest.

But last September, Baroness Heather Hallett, a former High Court judge, said it must "urgently" be converted into a public inquiry with powers to hear material relating to intelligence over alleged Russian state responsibility for the attack. Priti Patel granted the request in November, but a hearing yesterday was told the public inquiry had not yet been set up. A new chair has not been appointed to replace Lady Hallett after she was appointed to lead the national Covid inquiry.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Eastern Europe prepares for refugees as Russia-Ukraine tensions rise*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64SK-8JV1-DY4H-K11R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 14, 2022 Monday 4:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:2

**Length:** 728 words

**Byline:** Alicja Ptak and Krisztina Than

**Highlight:** Poland and Romania are among the countries bracing for the possibility of a huge influx of Ukrainians

**Body**

Countries in [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) are making preparations for potentially hundreds of thousands of people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) if the crisis with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) escalates, with some Polish towns already listing places available and [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) considering refugee camps.

Memories of the Iron Curtain and Soviet influence are still very much alive on the European Union's eastern flank, where people are wary of any instability that could hit their economies and unleash a wave of migration last seen in the 1990s during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

Russia has more than 100,000 troops massed near Ukraine, and the United States has warned that an attack could begin in the coming days. [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) denies any such plans and has accused the West of "hysteria".

Nonetheless, governments and towns near the Ukrainian border, from north to south, are getting ready to take in [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , if needed.

[*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , which is home to between 1 million and 2 million Ukrainians, who mostly came to the country to work, said on Monday it was preparing for a worst case scenario. Deputy Foreign Minister Marcin Przydacz told Catholic broadcaster Radio Plus he was "preparing for large numbers so as to be better prepared".

The mayor of the eastern Polish town of Ciechanow, which has a population of around 44,000, said it was ready to receive around 80 refugees in a hotel within 48 hours, at a cost of 140 zlotys per night including food.

"We have been assured that the state budget will fully cover the costs," Krzysztof Kosinski told Reuters.

On Sunday, the northern town of Elblag said it had 420 places available. The central Polish city of Torun said it had 96 places for refugees. In the south, the city of Czestochowa said it has 1,100 places.

Romania, which also shares a long border with Ukraine, finalised an action plan on Sunday, Interior Minister Lucian Bode told private television station B1.

"We know that Poland is preparing to take 1 million migrants. Is Romania ready to take hundreds of thousands of refugees in an uncontrolled influx?," he said.

"We have taken several hypotheses into account ... We are currently analysing how many refugee camps we can install in a relatively short time, 10, 12, 24 hours. We are analysing existing lodging capacities in border counties but we are also discussing the second stage, with neighbouring counties, and the third stage across the country."

Slovakia's defence minister has said that there may be tens of thousands of refugees even under a limited conflict. Interior Minister Robert Mikulec said the government was preparing for various scenarios with its armed forces and was in close contact with the authorities in Ukraine.

[*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , which has over 150,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine and tens of thousands of immigrant workers from Ukraine, is also making preparations.

"We also have a playbook and an action plan in the event of war," Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Saturday, stressing that "Hungary's interests are clear: first and foremost, war must be avoided".

Orban flagged the possibility of hundreds of thousands of refugees arriving in the case of war.

"Think back to the 1990s, when tens of thousands of people arrived from the former Yugoslav territories. That was not easy either but many more would come from Ukraine, probably with no hope of return," he said.

The Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have also said they were readying to accept refugees. Lithuania's interior minister last week said the government asked municipalities to list available housing, adding they expected refugees to come mainly from Poland and on flights.

The Latvian Interior Ministry is considering a string of refugee centres along its eastern border to house undocumented ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with no place to stay, BNS news wire reported on Monday. The plan would need government approval.

Reuters

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[*Ukraine-Russia news - live: Invasion possible within 48 hours, PM says as Kremlin pushes Kiev to drop Nato bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-war-news-b2014523.html)

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[*Why does Russia want to block Ukraine from joining Nato?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-nato-invasion-explained-b2014545.html)

[*Russia could invade Ukraine 'almost immediately', Truss warns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/vladimir-putin-ukraine-boris-johnson-russia-britons-b2014845.html)

[*'We knew we would have to fight': Worried Ukrainians prepare for whatever comes next*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-kiev-conflict-b2014787.html)

[*Johnson warns threat of imminent invasion of Ukraine is 'extremely concerning'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-boris-johnson-vladimir-putin-nato-prime-minister-b2014696.html)

**Load-Date:** February 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*EU can withhold funds from Hungary, Poland, top court rules*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64T0-CKH1-JBNF-W4KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 16, 2022 Wednesday 10:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK,UK POLITICS; Version:1

**Length:** 736 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The European Union's highest court rules that the 27-nation bloc can suspend support payments to member states if they breach rule of law principles, and dismissed a challenge by Hungary and Poland

**Body**

The European Union's highest court ruled on Wednesday that the 27-nation bloc can suspend support payments to member states if they breach rule of law principles, and dismissed a challenge by [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

The right-wing governments of both nations had argued that such action lacked a proper legal basis. Both nations, large recipients of EU funds, have come under increasing criticism over the past few years for veering away from the Western principles of the respect for democratic values in their nations.

"The Court dismisses the actions brought by Hungary and Poland in their entirety," the European Court of Justice said in a statement.

The ruling was hotly anticipated by many who had accused the two nations of democratic backsliding and had seen the linkage measure as the EU's most potent weapon to prevent a democratic legitimacy rift deepening within the bloc.

When it comes to democratic principles, "the European [*Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/union) must be able to defend those values, within the limits of its powers," the court said.

The EU's executive Commission said it would await Wednesday's ruling before committing on whether to withhold funds but its president [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) immediately welcomed the ruling.

"The Commission will defend the Union's budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law. We will act with determination," von der Leyen promised.

Hungary's reaction was swift. Justice Minister Judit Varga slammed the ruling on her Facebook page, calling it a "political judgement" and proof that the EU was abusing its power.

"The ruling is another application of pressure against our country because we passed our child protection law during the summer," Varga wrote, referring to contentious Hungarian legislation last year which forbids the depiction of homosexuality or gender change to minors in media content. But the EU's passage of the rule of law mechanism pre-dates that Hungarian law, which many critics have decried as a violation of LGBTQ rights.

Both Hungary and Poland have in the past reasoned that the court was overstepping its authority in approving a new mechanism that is not described in the EU's own treaties. They said making such a link between finances and the legal decisions of independent member states amounted to blackmail from [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels).

The court argued however that democratic backsliding had not only a political impact but also affected budgetary matters.

"The sound financial management of the Union budget and the financial interests of the Union may be seriously compromised by breaches of the principles of the rule of law committed in a member state," it said.

Poland and Hungary have faced criticism in the EU for years over allegations that they have been eroding judicial and media independence, among other democratic principles. The EU had found itself unable to do much to alter the course of either nation, and therefore turned to linking money to their adherence to democratic behavior.

Respecting democratic rule of law principles is a beacon of the EU admission criteria and the court insisted that, once in, those principles should stick.

"The Court specifies, first, that compliance with those values cannot be reduced to an obligation which a candidate state must meet in order to accede to the European Union and which it may disregard after accession," it said.

In Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been pushing what he calls "illiberal democracy," which his critics say amounts to stifling democracy. In Poland, the Law and Justice party overwhelmingly dominates government and has also increasingly faced criticism from other EU member nations. The rightwing-government has broken the nation's own laws in order in order to gain political control over courts and judges.

Hungary and Poland initially sought to block the budget because of the introduction of the new mechanism, but eventually agreed to the plan on condition that the European Court of Justice would review it.

\_\_\_

AP reporter Justin Spike contributed from Budapest.

Read More

[*Brazil's Bolsonaro readies trip to Russia despite objections*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-vladimir-putin-russia-ukraine-b2015039.html)

[*Poland's plan to gift Orban precious document draws scorn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/poland-orban-warsaw-hungary-florence-b2014977.html)

[*Eastern Europe prepares for refugees as Russia-Ukraine tensions rise*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-tensions-eastern-europe-b2014811.html)

[*Poland prepares to accept* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *in case of war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/poland-warsaw-european-union-viktor-orban-slovakia-b2014683.html)

[*Viktor Orbn 'invites' Trump to Hungary to boost re-election bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/viktor-orban-donald-trump-hungary-elections-b2013213.html)

[*Austrian police finds 8 people hidden in 'horror box' attached to underside of lorry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/human-trafficking-turkey-lorry-austria-b2012064.html)

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Google is attempting to ‘inoculate’ people against misinformation using pre-emptive ‘pre-bunking’ strategies*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667H-GY01-DY4H-K2WC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 25, 2022 Thursday 3:36 PM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** Vishwam Sankaran

**Highlight:** Strategy more effective at fighting misinformation than fact-checking each untruth after it spreads, scientists say

**Body**

[*Google*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/google) is attempting to “inoculate” people against harmful content on [*social media*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/social-media) by pre-emptively debunking [*misinformation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/misinformation) or [*conspiracy theories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/conspiracy-theories) using “pre-bunking” strategies.

The online experiment led by the [*University of Cambridge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/university-of-cambridge) in the UK exposes users to tropes at the root of malicious [*propaganda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/propaganda) via short animations so that they can better identify online falsehoods regardless of the subject matter.

In the study, [*published in the journal Science Advances*](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abo6254) on Wednesday, researchers, including those from Google’s Jigsaw unit, exposed people to 90-second clips designed to familiarise users with manipulation techniques.

When these clips are deployed in [*YouTube*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/youtube) ’s advert slot, scientists say they can help “inoculate” people against misinformation or conspiracy theories.

Scientists say this strategy is more effective at fighting misinformation than fact-checking each untruth after it spreads since it is impossible to do at a larger scale.

Researchers compare the effort to vaccination, adding that it gives people a “micro-dose” of misinformation in advance to prevent them from falling for it in the future – an idea that is based on what social psychologists call the “inoculation theory”.

In a total of seven experiments involving nearly 30,000 participants overall, scientists showed a single viewing of a film clip increases awareness of misinformation.

Researchers collected basic information from the participants, including gender, age, education, political leanings, levels of numeracy, conspiratorial thinking, news and social media checking, “bullshit receptivity”, and a personality inventory, among other “variables.”

The videos, scientists say, show concepts from the “misinformation playbook”, illustrated with relatable examples from film and TV such as Family Guy, or in the case of false dichotomies, Star Wars.

They found that the inoculation videos improved people’s ability to spot misinformation, and boosted their confidence in being able to do so again.

Our new research with [*@Cambridge\_Uni*](https://twitter.com/Cambridge_Uni?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) & [*@BristolUni*](https://twitter.com/BristolUni?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) shows that [*#prebunking*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/prebunking?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) can help build resilience to misinfo, at scale, on platforms. The team produced 90-second videos to "inoculate" viewers against manipulation techniques like scapegoating. Read more: [*https://t.co/6mYMBlGvBU*](https://t.co/6mYMBlGvBU) — Jigsaw (@Jigsaw) [*August 24, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Jigsaw/status/1562500381455765504?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “YouTube has well over 2 billion active users worldwide. Our videos could easily be embedded within the ad space on YouTube to prebunk misinformation,” study co-author Sander van der Linden at Cambridge said in a statement.“Our research provides the necessary proof of concept that the principle of psychological inoculation can readily be scaled across hundreds of millions of users worldwide,” Dr van der Linden said.YouTube’s parent company Google is already harnessing the findings.A “pre-bunking” campaign is expected to be rolled out across several platforms in Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic to get ahead of emerging disinformation relating to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, researchers say.The campaign is aimed at tackling harmful anti-refugee narratives, in partnership with local NGOs, fact-checkers, academics, and disinformation experts.“Harmful misinformation takes many forms, but the manipulative tactics and narratives are often repeated and can therefore be predicted,” study co-author Beth Goldberg said.“We’ve shown that video ads as a delivery method of pre-bunking messages can be used to reach millions of people, potentially before harmful narratives take hold,” she added. New paper in [*@ScienceAdvances*](https://twitter.com/ScienceAdvances?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ! In 7 studies (N=29,096), including an ecologically realistic field study on [*@YouTube*](https://twitter.com/YouTube?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , we find that [*#prebunking*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/prebunking?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) videos confer strong resistance against 5 manipulation techniques common in [*#misinformation*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/misinformation?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/u29lOINwi1*](https://t.co/u29lOINwi1) 1/12 [*pic.twitter.com/zqIheyfuqx*](https://t.co/zqIheyfuqx) — Jon Roozenbeek (@roozenbot) [*August 24, 2022*](https://twitter.com/roozenbot/status/1562500988237320193?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

While fact-checking only rebuts a fraction of the falsehoods circulating online, researchers say the new technique can teach people to recognise the misinformation playbook and help them understand when they are being misled.

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A random 30 per cent of the users who watched the clip were given a voluntary test question within 24 hours of their initial viewing.

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Researchers found that the videos “improve manipulation technique recognition, boost confidence in spotting these techniques, increase people’s ability to discern trustworthy from untrustworthy content, and improve the quality of their sharing decisions”.

They say the technique could be “game-changing” if dramatically scaled up across social platforms with an average cost for each view of significant length being a tiny sum of $0.05.

“If anyone wants to pay for a YouTube campaign that measurably reduces susceptibility to misinformation across millions of users, they can do so, and at a miniscule cost per view,” study co-author Jon Roozenbeek from the University of Cambridge said.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

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The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 25, 2022 Thursday 8:18 AM GMT

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**Section:** TECH; Version:1

**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** Vishwam Sankaran

**Highlight:** Strategy more effective at fighting misinformation than fact-checking each untruth after it spreads, scientists say

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

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[*Leo Varadkar to step down as Taoiseach and quits as Fine Gael party leader*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKP-G0P1-JBNF-W1SN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2024 Wednesday 12:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1270 words

**Byline:** PA Reporters

**Highlight:** His resignation as Fine Gael leader is effective from Wednesday and he will step down as Taoiseach when a successor is selected.

**Body**

Irish premier [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) is to step down as [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) and is resigning as leader of the [*Fine Gael*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fine-gael) party.

In an emotional announcement outside Government Buildings in Dublin, Mr Varadkar said his tenure as Ireland’s head of government had been “the most fulfilling time” of his life but said he no longer felt he was the best person for the job.

Flanked by party ministerial colleagues, he said his resignation as Fine Gael leader was effective from Wednesday and he will step down as Taoiseach when a successor is selected.

The announcement comes after a turbulent number of weeks for the Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Green Party three party coalition government.

Earlier this month, it was resoundingly beaten in two referendums on changes ministers had proposed to the Irish constitution.

The comprehensive defeats were a significant blow to Mr Varadkar and other coalition leaders who had campaigned for “Yes Yes” votes in the plebiscites.

I believe that a new taoiseach and a new leader will be better placed than me to achieve that, to renew and strengthen the team, to focus our message and policies, to drive implementation

Leo Varadkar

He said his decision to quit was both “personal and political”.

“I believe this government can be re-elected and I believe my party, Fine Gael, can gain seats in the next poll,” he said.

“Most of all I believe the re-election of this three-party government would be the right thing for the future of our country.

“Continuing to take us forward, protecting all that has been achieved and building on it.

“But, after careful consideration and some soul searching, I believe that a new taoiseach and a new leader will be better placed than me to achieve that, to renew and strengthen the team, to focus our message and policies, to drive implementation.

“And, after seven years in office, I don’t feel I’m the best person for that job anymore.”

The announcement comes ahead of local government and European Parliament elections in Ireland in June.

The next general election must be held by early spring next year.

Over the last year, 10 Fine Gael TDs have announced their intention to step away from politics at the general election, fuelling speculation of internal discontent within the party.

Cabinet ministers met in Dublin for the first time on Wednesday since the referenda defeats.

Mr Varadkar, 45, has also just returned from the United States where he was involved in several high-profile engagements with President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) as part of traditional St Patrick’s Day celebrations.

He is currently serving his second term as Taoiseach.

Mr Varadkar, who first became premier in 2017, once insisted he would not remain in politics beyond the age of 50, albeit he later said he regretted making that pledge.

During his time as Taoiseach, Ireland passed a landmark referendum to liberalise its strict abortion laws in 2018.

Mr Varadkar also played a key role in the Brexit negotiations, with a crunch meeting with then prime minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) at a manor house on The Wirral in England seen as a significant moment in paving a way for the deal on the UK’s exit from the EU.

The agreement staved off the prospect of a hard trade border being introduced on the island of Ireland, but it did prompt years of further political turmoil, particularly within unionism in Northern Ireland, over the creation of a so-called Irish Sea border on the movement of goods between the region and Great Britain.

He was taoiseach at the onset of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and announced a lockdown, in arguably his most famous address, while on an annual St Patrick’s Day trip to Washington DC.

In his first term as Taoiseach, Mr Varadkar led a minority government that was sustained in power by way of a confidence and supply deal with the then main opposition party Fianna Fail.

Following the 2020 general election, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail agreed to enter coalition for the first time – a seismic move for two arch rivals founded from opposing sides of Ireland’s civil war of the 1920s. The Green Party led by Eamon Ryan joined as the administration’s junior partner.

The coalition deal saw Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin serve as taoiseach for the first half of the mandate, with Mr Varadkar retaking the position at the mid point of the government term.

Mr Varadkar’s detractors will point to Ireland’s ongoing housing shortages and chronic problems within the health service as major government failings during his time as premier.

The political establishment in Ireland has also been under increasing pressure on migration issues in recent times, with an influx of tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and asylum seekers from elsewhere in the world heaping further strain on state services and accommodation stock.

In his resignation speech, the outgoing Taoiseach said politicians were human beings who had their limitations.

“There are loyal colleagues and good friends contesting local European elections and I want to give them the best chance possible and I think they’ve a better chance under a new leader,” he said.

“I am standing aside in the absolute confidence that the country and the economy are in a good place and that my colleagues in government from all three parties – Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and the Greens – and the Oireachtas will continue to work hard for the nation’s best interests.

“On a personal level, I’ve enjoyed being Taoiseach, leader and cabinet member since March 2011. I’ve learned so much about so many things, met so many people who I’d never have got to meet, been to places I’d have never seen both home and abroad and I am deeply grateful for it. And, despite the challenges, would wholeheartedly recommend a career in politics to anyone who’s considering it.

“However, politicians are human beings and we have our limitations. We give it everything until we can’t anymore and then we have to move on.

“I will of course continue to fulfil my duties as Taoiseach until a new one is elected and will remain as consistency TD for Dublin West.

There’s never a right time to resign high office, however, this is as good a time as any

Leo Varadkar

“I know inevitably there’ll be speculation as to the quote unquote ‘real reason’ for my decision. These are the real reasons. That’s it. I have nothing else lined up, I have nothing in mind, I have no definite personal or political plans, but I’m really looking forward to having the time to think about them.”

Mr Varadkar said it was as “good a time as any” to step down.

“I know this will come as a surprise to many people and a disappointment to some, and I hope at least you will understand my decision,” he said.

“I know that others will, how shall I put it, cope with the news just fine – that is the great thing about living in a democracy.

“There’s never a right time to resign high office, however, this is as good a time as any.

“Budget 2024 is done. Negotiations have not yet commenced on the next one. Institutions of the Good Friday Agreement are working again and our trading relationship with the UK in the post-Brexit era is settled and stable.

“The new taoiseach will have a full two months to prepare for the local and European elections and up to a year before the next general election.”

Varadkar thanked his fellow coalition leaders and his party colleagues for their support.

“Most of all, I want to finish by thanking the people of Ireland for giving me the opportunity to serve them,” he said.

“And I’ll promise I’ll keep working for Ireland and my community in any way I can in future.”

Mr Varadkar was applauded by Fine Gael ministerial colleagues as he finished his speech and walked back into Government Buildings.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2024

**End of Document**



[*'Hello Stoke, Paris calling': Could Eurovision succeed where levelling up is failing?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661G-9231-F072-41J2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 28, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 33

**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** ANDREW NAUGHTIE

**Body**

For Britain to come second to Ukraine at Eurovision this year was no mean feat. It also put an end to one of the silliest myths about our dismal performance in recent years: that it's somehow All About Us.

By combining a decent enough song with a genuinely charismatic performance and an existing online fanbase, Sam Ryder proved we can still win this thing. Let this put an end to the sanctimonious idea that Britain was losing out year after year at Eurovision because of Brexit, or because of fatigue at our warmongering colonial arrogance, or something - a conceit every bit as Anglocentric as the idea that we somehow deserve to win.

The viewing public of Europe and beyond simply are not fixated on passing sombre judgement on us and our politics, and it's self-aggrandising of us to think so. For years, we sent Eurovision anything but our best, and we got the points we deserved (or rather, we never got the ones we didn't deserve).

Now, by taking on the mantle of hosting Eurovision while Ukraine suffers a continued pounding by the inept but still murderous Russian army, we have the chance to show our solidarity. Unfortunately, we'll also be calling attention to ourselves at the worst possible time to show off.

Hosting Eurovision isn't just expensive; it's also very exposing. The hosts can screw everything up spectacularly. Coming up with something to fill the excruciatingly long gap during the voting is almost as challenging as pulling off an Olympic opening ceremony - but without anything like the budget or lead time. And overshadowing it all is the task of putting on your best national face.

So, where's it going to be? Glasgow and Manchester, of course, are straight out of the gate as the top contenders. Classic British thinking: for all that truly great music, live and recorded, emanates from every corner of the union, there isn't a long list of non-London cities that outsiders associate with both inclusive fun and musical excellence. The go-to stand-ins for the entire North and the whole of Scotland are, as ever, the thunderingly obvious choices.

Neither is the worst possible option, self-image wise, but the fact that they're leading the pack already does signal a lack of imagination. Maybe we could be a bit more honest and invite this international circus deeper into the heartland. We could even think of it as an unexpected boost for the depleted levelling-up agenda: yes, HS2 has been hacked to its bones and the North has now fallen behind the English public spending average, but there's always the option of bringing Eurovision to Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent or the Northern Echo Arena in Darlington.

And given the condition of the country and the peeved mood of the mythical 2019 red wall voter, maybe it would behove everyone involved to think even bigger - or rather, smaller.

The ultimate example was set by Ireland in 1993, when an equestrian facility operator had the chutzpah to write in to RTE and pitch them on the idea of hosting the international contest in the County Cork town of Millstreet. Its nearby Green Glens Arena could seat nearly two-and-a-half times the population of the town, and the national broadcaster went for it.

So if we're serious about leaving no one behind, about building the "Global Britain" we were promised instead of a shrivelled remnant fast acquiring a reputation for complacent cruelty and broken promises, why not go the whole hog and point Eurovision's hundreds of millions of viewers at a part of the country now condemned as "left behind"?

Think a funding-deprived Victorian town hall, or the sort of seaside conference centre usually reserved for glum political party conferences. Or maybe we could go the whole hog and host it somewhere truly off the radar - a Working Men's Club in Grimethorpe, perhaps, or the Athletic Sports Club in Mexborough.

After all, in the face of non-existent growth and excruciating living costs, patronising grand gestures with no promise of delivery are apparently all we have left to offer. So for Eurovision to swoop in with a few days' worth of big money (much of it from EU countries) before vanishing again and leaving nothing behind would fit the spirit of the times just perfectly.

Funnily enough, Millstreet's Green Glens has since served a new purpose as temporary accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Popular in Ukraine though Boris Johnson might still be, it's hard to imagine a government led by him or his emotionally jaundiced party giving up even a modest privately owned rural events venue to shelter people fleeing a despicably violent conflict. Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest on Mariupol's behalf will have to do.

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*More than 100,000 refugees arrive in UK after fleeing war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661J-62P1-JBNF-W382-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 28, 2022 Thursday 9:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:6

**Length:** 758 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Some 104,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Monday, Government figures show.

**Body**

More than 100,000 people fleeing the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) have received sanctuary in the UK through its visa schemes, according to [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) figures.

Some 104,000 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes as of Monday, figures published by the Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration show.

The milestone was reached more than four months after the Government’s visa schemes were launched in March.

The Government thanked members of the public for their generosity in opening their homes to those seeking safety.

The total includes 31,300 people under the family scheme, and 72,700 people under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine sponsorship scheme.

Overall, there have been almost 200,000 visa applications, meaning just over half of those who have applied have arrived in the UK.

The figures show that, as of Tuesday, around 198,200 applications have been made for visas, and 166,200 visas have been issued.

These include 55,000 applications under the family scheme, of which 47,200 visas have been granted, and 143,200 applications under the sponsorship scheme, of which 119,000 visas have been granted.

You support us at every stage, spend your time and energy, pay attention and give care. I cannot put into words how grateful I am

Maria Kartashova, now living in Surrey with a host family

Overall, 62.6% of those who have been issued with visas under either scheme have reached the UK.

Just over half (52.5%) of those who have applied for visas under the schemes have arrived.

These allow those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine to come to the UK for up to three years.

The family scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their relatives to join other family already living in the UK, while the sponsorship scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their relatives to come to the UK if they have a sponsor who can provide accommodation.

From Thursday, the Government will consider new applications under the sponsorship scheme from unaccompanied children who wish to come to the UK without a parent or guardian, providing they have parental consent.

Maria Kartashova, who lives with her host in Surrey, said the UK public is giving “more than help” to Ukrainians.

She said: “You support us at every stage, spend your time and energy, pay attention and give care. I cannot put into words how grateful I am.”

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [*Greg Clark*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greg-clark) thanked everyone who has welcomed Ukrainians into their homes.

He said: “Behind this milestone however are 100,000 stories of pain – families split apart and forced to leave their fathers, sons and brothers.

“That is why we want peace and security in Ukraine so that its brave people can be safe at home again.”

Refugees minister Lord [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) said: “We would not be able to welcome 100,000 people from Ukraine to our shores without generous people around the country opening their doors.

“It is important that we recognise the selfless work of the public to help Ukrainians integrate into their communities.

“We understand families are having to make difficult decisions to leave their homes – which is why it is important we took the time to get this right to ensure we can continue offering safety to as many Ukrainians as possible.”

We remain concerned that proper support needs to be in place to make the schemes as successful as possible

Tamsin Baxter, Refugee Council

Tamsin Baxter, executive director of external affairs at the Refugee Council, praised the public’s “truly inspiring” generosity, but said the schemes have been beset by delays and bureaucracy.

“The public mood has often been ahead of Government policy, and we remain concerned that proper support needs to be in place to make the schemes as successful as possible,” she said.

“It is a matter of deep regret that there is a sharp contrast between the care and compassion rightly shown for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and other elements of the refugee and asylum system.

“As the first anniversary of the fall of Kabul approaches, thousands of Afghans remain trapped, split from their families either in hotels in the UK or in Afghanistan itself. The Government’s Rwanda scheme is cruel and inhumane.”

The Local Government Association said councils are working hard to help new arrivals, and sponsors have played an “incredible role” by opening up their homes.

Its chairman, councillor James Jamieson, said: “Both they and their guests need continued support to help people to start to rebuild their lives and plan ahead, and to ensure more people feel able to step forward to offer their help and their houses as arrivals continue.”

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Why the far right are on the rise again in Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK7-1XC1-DY4H-K4FT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2024 Monday 4:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1329 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** Germans believed their country had developed an immunity to nationalism after confronting past horrors. They were wrong

**Body**

When Sabine Thonke joined a recent demonstration in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) against Germany's far-right party, it was the first time in years she felt hopeful that the growing power of the extremists in her country could be stopped.

Thonke, 59, had been following the rise of the Alternative for Germany, or AfD, with unease. But when she heard about a plan to deport millions of people, she felt called to action.

“I never thought such inhuman ideas would be gaining popularity in Germany again. I thought we had learned the lessons from our past," Thonke said.

Many Germans believed their country had developed an immunity to nationalism and assertions of racial superiority after confronting the horrors of its [*Nazi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazi) past through education and laws to outlaw persecution.

They were wrong.

If an election were held today, the AfD would be the second largest party, according to polls.

But national polls camouflage an important division: the AfD has disproportionate support in the formerly communist and less prosperous eastern states of Germany.

After the fall of communism in 1989 and the unification of East and West Germany a year later, many people in the five eastern states lost not only their jobs but their collective past, leaving them disoriented and helpless in the capitalist system.

The AfD's rise has been propelled by anger over inflation and, above all, rising immigration. The EU received 1.1 million asylum requests in 2023, the highest number since 2015. Germany got by far the largest number of claims — more than 300,000 — mostly from [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) , [*Afghanistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghanistan) and [*Turkey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turkey). The country has also taken in more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** displaced by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion.

Voters in Germany and across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) are increasingly empowering far-right nationalist parties who promise to restrict immigration and, in some cases, constrain democratic freedoms of religion, of expression, of the right to protest. These forces have bubbled up in [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) , [*Italy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italy) , the Netherlands and [*Austria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/austria).

Lessons of the Second World War

After 1945, West Germans grew up with the guiding principle that there should “never again” be a dictatorship on German soil. West German leaders made visits to Israel and apologized to the countries occupied by the Nazis, while schoolchildren were taken to see concentration camps or Holocaust memorials.

But in the East, a self-declared anti-fascist society, young people were taught that they were only the descendants of the Nazis’ victims.

Thonke, who works at Berlin's water utility, grew up in [*Bavaria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bavaria) , which was part of West Germany before reunification in 1990. She said she did not speak much with her grandparents — the Nazi generation — about what happened during the Third Reich, but learned about Adolf Hitler’s rise to power and the Holocaust in school.

Today’s far right is using similar tactics, she said, exploiting people's fears to win their trust and their votes.

“I understand that many people are worn out from all these crises — the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the many migrants, inflation — and that they are afraid that things are going to get worse,” Thonke said. “But the solutions the AfD offers won’t solve any of these problems.”

Polls show the AfD as the top party in the eastern states of [*Saxony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saxony) and [*Thuringia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/thuringia) , with roughly 35% support in each. Both states have elections this fall, along with the eastern state of [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) , where the AfD is also expected to make strong gains.

The AfD's appeal is particularly strong among men and, increasingly, younger voters.

In the last state elections in Hesse and Bavaria in October, AfD made significant gains among voters 24 and younger, which experts attributed to young voters’ frustration with migration and the party’s savvy internet presence. About two-thirds of the party's voters are men.

The party has benefitted from voters’ deep frustration with Chancellor [*Olaf Scholz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olaf-scholz). His government came to power over two years ago with a progressive, modernizing agenda, but now is viewed by many as dysfunctional and incapable.

The AfD’s Thuringia branch is particularly radical and was put under official surveillance by the domestic intelligence service four years ago as a “proven right-wing extremist” group.

AfD’s Thuringia leader, [*Bjoern Hoecke*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bjoern-hoecke) , has at various times espoused revisionist views of Germany’s Nazi past. In 2018, he called the Holocaust memorial in Berlin a “monument of shame” and called for Germany to make a “180-degree turn” in the way it remembers its past.

“The AfD is a nationalist party, and nationalists want to be proud of their history, and anyone who wants to be very proud of German history must of course minimize, play down, or even deny the shame of the Nazi crimes in order to be able to tell the story of national greatness,” said Jens-Christian Wagner, a historian and the head of the Buchenwald Memorial, a former concentration camp in Thuringia, where the Nazis killed more than 56,000 people.

Attacks on the former concentration camp have stepped up massively in recent months: Wagner says this is because of the “revisionist, antisemitic and racist slogans” promoted by the AfD.

Wake-up call

Since January, a wave of protests against the far right has swept across Germany, triggered by a report that right-wing extremists met to discuss the deportation of millions of immigrants, including some with German citizenship.

AfD members were present at the meeting, along with Martin Sellner, a persuasive young Austrian with neo-Nazi links and convictions for violent extremism.

The meeting, in November, bore an eerie resemblance to the Wannsee Conference, when the Nazis agreed to the so-called “final solution" — the systematic round-ups that led to the murder of 6 million Jews.

Just like in the winter of 1942, when senior Nazi officials met covertly in a villa by a lake outside Berlin, the recent meeting also took place in secrecy at a villa not far from the German capital.

Week after week, millions of Germans have turned out to protest, attending events with slogans such as “Never Again is Now,” “Against Hate” and “Defend Democracy.”

Demonstrations in cities such as Berlin, Munich, Hamburg or Duesseldorf, have drawn hundreds of thousands of participants at a time — so many that authorities have had to end some marches early due to safety concerns with overcrowded streets.

People also turned out for protests in smaller towns and even held weekly vigils in their neighborhoods to express their frustration with growing support for far-right populism at the ballot box.

More than 2.4 million people have so far joined the anti-AfD protests which began in mid-January, according to the German interior ministry. The organizers of the demonstrations estimate more than 3.6 million people have participated.

Among them was Thonke, who went to two pro-democracy rallies in Berlin, relieved that the country was, as she put it, “waking up.”

“I no longer have this feeling of powerlessness that I had during the last years while watching the rise and success of the AfD," she said, adding that the government must do more.

“The government needs to find solutions for the migration crisis, otherwise the AfD will continue to exploit this topic for their own purposes and become even more powerful," she said.

Earlier waves of protests against the anti-Islam and anti-immigration movement [*PEGIDA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pegida) eventually ran out of steam, although they weren't as large as the anti-AfD movement that is building.

Still, the AfD is riding high. In December, it marked another milestone, when for the first time its candidate won a mayoral election in a midsized town: Pirna, in Saxony.

Now the party is setting its sights on elections for the European Parliament in June. If Thonke and her fellow protesters want to push back the far right, they will have to persuade their compatriots not just to protest, but to turn out in large numbers at the ballot box.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ireland ‘knows what it means to struggle for right to exist’, says von der Leyen*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670F-0CT1-DY4H-K12R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 1, 2022 Thursday 5:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 820 words

**Byline:** Michelle Devane

**Highlight:** The EU Commission president was speaking during a two-day visit to Dublin.

**Body**

Ireland knows what it means to struggle for the right to exist, the European Commission president has said.

[*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) added that Ireland had gone “above and beyond” in its support for Ukraine.

She made her comments during an address to a joint sitting of the Houses of the Oireachtas in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) to mark Ireland’s 50-year membership of the European Union.

Ms von der Leyen is on a two-day trip to Dublin, where she was meeting [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier Micheal Martin.

The two leaders discussed the war on Ukraine, the energy crisis, green transition and the [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) Protocol during her visit.

“This country knows what it means to struggle for the right to exist,” Ms von der Leyen said.

“Today, another European nation is fighting for its independence.

“Of course, Ireland is far away from the front line in Ukraine, but you understand better than most why this war matters so much to all of us.

“Just like our friends in [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) , you know that in Ukraine there’s more at stake than the future of one country only.

“Ukraine is fighting for freedom itself, for self-rule, for the rules-based global order and Ireland has gone above and beyond in its support to Ukraine.”

The European Commission president also told the joint sitting of the Irish parliament and senate that Ireland was a country of “proud Europeans” and that most Irish people believed that EU membership had made the country a better place.

Ireland shows Europe’s best face.Innovative and inclusive.Loyal to your history and traditions.Open to the future and the world.In 50 years of membership, Ireland has made Europe a better place. [*https://t.co/cB9Bk1MMDH*](https://t.co/cB9Bk1MMDH) — Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) [*December 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/vonderleyen/status/1598316667603341312?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “I do not feel like I have travelled to the edge of our union because, while that may be true geographically, Ireland lies at the heart of Europe in every other way,” Ms von der Leyen said.“This is a country of proud Europeans. Today, all other Europeans look up to Ireland because you show Europe’s best face, innovative and inclusive, loyal to your history and traditions, open to the future and the world.“This is the country that you have built indeed in one century of independence and half-a-century of European membership. It is the country your ancestors fought for and dreamt of.”Taoiseach Mr Martin said Ireland’s decision to join the EU 50 years ago had been “vindicated time and time again” and that membership had made the country “safer, stronger and more prosperous”.He told Ms von der Leyen, TDs, senators and visiting dignitaries in the Dail chamber that Ireland remained “unswerving” in its political support for Ukraine.Mr Martin said Russia’s “illegal and immoral aggression” against its “peaceful neighbour” had had a “devastating and truly shocking” impact on the Ukrainian people.The Fianna Fail leader also said the energy crisis and its impact on the cost of living was being “as keenly felt here in Ireland as it is in other countries across the European Union”.“The Irish people have, in the face of this destruction and devastation, opened our communities, our homes and our hearts to more than 65,000 Ukrainians who have fled to Ireland since the end of February,” Mr Martin said.“We remain unswerving in our political support for Ukraine, including in championing Ukraine’s path towards EU membership.”He added that the “people of Ireland stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ukraine”.Earlier, Ms von der Leyen thanked the Irish people for their “outstanding” support welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Speaking on the steps of Government Buildings in Dublin, she said: “I want to personally thank you (Micheal Martin) for the excellent co-operation we had in the last two-and-a-half years.“These were very eventful years indeed. As you said, first of all the pandemic.“You have steered very skilfully Ireland through the pandemic and out of the pandemic, and I highly appreciate how you’ve always been a strong supporter of our vaccine strategy.“You have presented an excellent national recovery resilience plan and the next generation EU where I had the honour and pleasure to be here to present it together with you.”A warm welcome to Dublin, President [*@vonderleyen*](https://twitter.com/vonderleyen?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) as we mark [*#EU50*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EU50?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*pic.twitter.com/bhlLob7lOq*](https://t.co/bhlLob7lOq) — Micheál Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*December 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1598346752255528963?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

She said everyone was feeling the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine, including the huge energy prices, and she thanked the Irish premier for his strong support for Ukraine to become a candidate member of the EU.

Mr Martin also paid tribute to Ms von der Leyen.

“I want to pay tribute to the leadership of the president over the last number of years, particularly during the pandemic, the war on Ukraine and managing the energy crisis that has resulted from that,” he said.

Ms von der Leyen also met Irish president Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina at Aras an Uachtarain in Dublin on Thursday afternoon.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Who is in Yousaf’s first Scottish Cabinet?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WK-6W21-DY4H-K1GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 3:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 980 words

**Byline:** Pa Scotland Reporters

**Highlight:** The new First Minister has appointed his top team.

**Body**

[*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) [*Humza Yousaf*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/humza-yousaf) has appointed his [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) on his first official day in the top job.

Those who sit around the top table will be charged with making some of the most important decisions in the country, and will be expected to wrangle with the biggest problems facing Scotland.

With some of Mr Yousaf’s choices making their first foray into the Scottish Government’s top table, here we take a closer look at Scotland’s new Cabinet ministers.

– Shona Robison: Deputy First Minister and Finance Secretary

The first appointment of the Yousaf administration, Ms Robison was given the post of Deputy First Minister and Finance Secretary.

She has been an MSP since the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999 and joined the Scottish Government when the SNP first came to power in 2007.

Ms Robison was promoted to the cabinet in 2014 by Alex Salmond, and became health secretary later that year after her friend and ally Nicola Sturgeon became first minister. However, Ms Robison quit the job in 2018 after facing a barrage of criticism over NHS waiting times and financial issues at NHS Tayside.

She rejoined the cabinet in 2021, and in her most recent role as social justice secretary she oversaw controversial reforms to the gender recognition process, which were passed by Holyrood in December but have been blocked by the Westminster Government.

– Neil Gray: Wellbeing Economy Secretary

Mr Gray was Mr Yousaf’s campaign manager in his SNP leadership election victory over Kate Forbes and Ash Regan.

Representing Airdrie and Shotts, he stood down from the same seat at Westminster to contest the 2021 Holyrood election, and was appointed a junior minister, as well as given responsibility for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** settling in Scotland.

The father-of-four was born and brought up on Orkney and previously worked as a journalist.

– Angus Robertson: Constitution Secretary

A senior figure in the SNP for more than two decades, Mr Robertson was previously the party’s leader at Westminster before losing his Moray seat to Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross in 2019.

Elected to Holyrood in 2021, Mr Robertson was immediately given the job of Constitution, Culture and External Affairs Secretary – a role to which he was reappointed by Mr Yousaf.

Mr Robertson was tipped as a potential first minister himself, but turned down the chance to run due to having a two young children.

– Angela Constance: Justice Secretary

The former drugs policy minister was elected in 2007 and has found herself in Government in a variety of roles for the majority of that time.

Her new role as Justice and Home Affairs Secretary is the eighth post she has held, including two stints in cabinet as education secretary, and training, youth and women’s employment secretary.

Born in Blackburn, West Lothian – near her current Almond Valley seat – Ms Constance worked as a social worker before entering politics.

– Michael Matheson: Health Secretary

Probably the Cabinet minister with the toughest task ahead of him, Mr Matheson will replace Mr Yousaf as Health Secretary, moving from the net-zero portfolio he held in the previous administration.

But he enters the portfolio with some experience, having spent three years as public health minister between 2011 and 2014, followed by a succession of cabinet posts.

Glasgow-born Mr Matheson has three children and was elected in the first wave of MSPs in 1999.

– Mairi McAllan: Net-Zero Secretary

Aged just 30, Mairi McAllan becomes the second youngest Cabinet Secretary in the Scottish Government’s history – after former finance secretary and SNP leadership contender Kate Forbes.

The Clydesdale constituency MSP is seen as a rising star in the SNP and went straight into a Government role as environment minister after being elected in 2021. Prior to this, she was a special adviser to Ms Sturgeon on the environment.

She has now been promoted to Cabinet as Net-Zero Secretary.

The former lawyer was a strong supporter of Mr Yousaf in the leadership election, appearing with him as he visited Lanark on the campaign trail.

– Mairi Gougeon: Rural Affairs Secretary

Mairi Gougeon remains in place as Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and the Islands.

The 37-year-old has represented Angus North and Mearns since 2016, an area she previously represented as a councillor.

She entered the Scottish Government in 2018, and in 2020 she took over as minister for public health and sport, following Joe FitzPatrick’s resignation due to rising drug deaths.

Farmers’ groups have urged her to provide clarity on support for the agricultural sector in the upcoming Agriculture Bill.

– Jenny Gilruth: Education Secretary

Jenny Gilruth was elected to Holyrood in 2016 and joined the Government in 2020.

In 2017, it emerged she was in a relationship with Kezia Dugdale, who at that point was the Scottish Labour leader. They married in a private ceremony in Fife in June 2022.

A former modern studies teacher, she now takes on the education portfolio.

– Shirley-Anne Somerville: Social Justice Secretary

Social Justice Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville is influential in the SNP and was deputy whip for the party’s Holyrood group.

She has previously worked as a parliamentary researcher, as well as at the Royal College of Nursing and at the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Ms Somerville was also the director of communities for the pro-independence campaign group Yes Scotland.

As education secretary under Ms Sturgeon, Ms Somerville she faced pressure from teaching unions during the long-running industrial dispute.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Elina Svitolina: Mentally I feel safer in Ukraine than anywhere else*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68JY-D3H1-DY4H-K1GP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 28, 2023 Wednesday 8:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** TENNIS,SPORT; Version:1

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Crooks

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian is making her return to Wimbledon next week after the birth of daughter Skai in October.

**Body**

[*Elina Svitolina*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elina-svitolina) makes a startling admission about her trips home to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The former world number three is discussing visiting her troubled homeland and how it fits in with life as a new mother.

Her husband, fellow tennis player [*Gael Monfils*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gael-monfils) , is, she reveals, “really worried” about her safety.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Elina Monfils (@elisvitolina)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CqOEnWgtSUr/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading) But Svitolina told the PA news agency: “Of course it’s unsafe because the country’s in a state of war. I have to plan it really well with the safety measures and be careful always. But mentally I feel safer in Ukraine than anywhere else in the world.”Russia’s invasion of Ukraine coincided with the early stages of Svitolina’s pregnancy – baby Skai was born in October – and she was absent from the match court for a year.As one of Ukraine’s most high-profile sportspeople, the hiatus gave her an opportunity to dive fully into doing what she could to support her compatriots.Alongside family snaps and pictures of her on-court exploits, Svitolina’s Instagram feed features images of her highlighting the heartbreaking damage caused to Ukraine and in meetings with president Volodymyr Zelenskyy. View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Elina Monfils (@elisvitolina)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cobw1G6tSkC/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading) Along with former Ukraine footballer Andriy Shevchenko, the 28-year-old is an ambassador for United24, the country’s official fundraising platform, while her own foundation, set up to support young tennis players, has widened its remit to provide relief for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Former boxer [*Vitali Klitschko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vitali-klitschko) made the switch from sport to politics and has a prominent role in Ukraine as mayor of Kyiv, but Svitolina is content with using her sporting profile to help her country.“I’ve been quite interested in politics, and especially this time when I was pregnant, I have lots of friends who have different positions in Ukrainian politics and many friends as well who know a lot about it,” she said.“But I never really wanted to go that way. I just want to be aware what is happening in my country, to learn and to understand how we can help at different levels for the people.Mentally I feel safer in Ukraine than anywhere else in the world.Elina Svitolina“I’m really happy with the position I have right now, using my platform, using my voice in every possible way through sports. This is my way and I feel I’m in the right place, and I want to use it as much as possible to help people.”Next week sees Svitolina return to [*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) , where her best performance was a run to the semi-finals in 2019.Svitolina’s ranking was not high enough to earn her direct entry into the championships but the All England Club awarded her a wild card.She will hope to make a similar impression to her emotional French Open return, where she followed up a WTA Tour title in Strasbourg by reaching the quarter-finals to propel her back into the top 100.“For sure it was a great step forward for me,” said Svitolina, who only returned to the tour in April.“I played really well in Strasbourg, Roland Garros was a great run for me, so I’m really happy I could find again this fighting spirit, playing well under pressure. Hopefully I can build on that. I’m really motivated to go back on the practice court and find again my good game and my good mindset.”Svitolina will hope, also, that the Wimbledon crowd are more generous should she face a Russian or Belarusian player after she was booed in Paris for sticking to the Ukrainian position of not shaking hands with opponents from the two aggressor nations.She knows she has work to do on grass, which is not such a natural surface for her, and her first match in Birmingham last week ended in a one-sided loss to Czech teenager Linda Fruhvirtova. View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Elina Monfils (@elisvitolina)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cty0ez2tq1j/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading) Svitolina now has to juggle training with life as a mother and managing the conflicting feelings of spending time away from Skai.“It’s not easy, especially a performance like (against Fruhvirtova), it makes you feel not great,” she says.“But me and Gael decided it’s going to be a better way for her as well to not travel so much because it’s very draining travelling, different zones. She will be coming to London if we both play there so it will be nice to spend some time together.“I think the hardest thing is for sure being away from the baby. Also finding the mindset again, playing matches. Physically I feel I’m there and I’m hitting fine but the mindset of being in the match and being focused from the start until the end, this has been the most challenging to me.” View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Elina Monfils (@elisvitolina)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CoXMrNvtfQE/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Always on her mind as well will be Ukraine and Svitolina is already thinking of when she might be able to return to her home city of Odesa.

“I’m looking to go back home in the near future,” she says. “I don’t know exactly when, maybe in a few months, maybe half a year. Obviously the tennis season is packed with tournaments but, as soon as I have the opportunity, I will definitely plan to go there.

“I want to see my grandmother, who is there, my dad was there as well for a couple of weeks. And just to see my friends, to go back to my home. I really miss my country and especially what is now happening, lots of damage to a lot of the cities that mean a lot to me.”

**Load-Date:** July 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Home Office plans to put migrants on barges and cruise ships*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WH-WP71-DY4H-K4D5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 7:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 938 words

**Byline:** Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** ‘Direction of travel’ towards using offshore vessels, as minister sets out plans to use RAF bases

**Body**

Migrants arriving in the UK via[*small boats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/small-boats) could be housed in ferries and barges as well as disused military bases under government plans to reduce the spending on hotels.

Immigration minister [*Robert Jenrick*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-jenrick) will announce the use of two RAF sites as he tries to reduce the £6.8m a day spends on hotel accommodation for [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0).

But the plans are likely to be controversial – with foreign secretary [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) having already criticised suggestions a base in his Essex constituency would be used.

The Home Office is looking at housing asylum seekers on giant barges used for offshore construction projects, according to The Times.

Other reports indicate ministers are also looking at disused cruise ships, including one from Indonesia. A government source said there is a “direction of travel” towards using ferries and barges as well but said “nothing has been bought”.

Deputy prime minister Dominic Raab described barges as “one possible option”, telling Sky News that the use of hotels was acting as a “perverse incentive” to encourage crossings.

He also told BBC Breakfast: “We will look at the whole range of options, low-cost accommodation, ex-Army barracks and – where it’s appropriate – as has been used elsewhere in Europe, and I think in Scotland as well, vessels, if they can safely and responsibly be used.”

Sources downplayed the likelihood of barges and ferries being used imminently, insisting that none had been purchased yet and plans were still at an early stage.

Home secretary [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) did not rule out the use of former cruise ships when she told MPs in December that “we are in discussion with a wide variety of providers”.

But it is not clear how the government would guarantee safety on old cruise ships or barges used for construction projects, and vessels may still have to be registered as hotels rather than detention facilities to avoid legal action.

Housing people in ships would partly replicate an approach by the Scottish government, which placed ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in two cabin ships docked in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Refugee Council said it was “deeply concerned” by the plans to use barges and cruise ships for detention, saying the ships were “entirely unsuitable” to the needs of asylum seekers.

Enver Solomon, the charity’s chief executive, said: “These sites are wholly inadequate places to house vulnerable men, women and children who have come to our country in search of safety. They are also unworkable and will add yet more cost and chaos to the system.”

Mr Jenrick will announce in the Commons on Wednesday that people who arrive in the UK after making Channel crossings on small boats will be housed at RAF Wethersfield and RAF Scampton.

But Mr Cleverly shared his frustration with the plans after reports first surfaced that RAF Wethersfield, near Braintree, could be used to accommodate around 1,500 asylum seekers. Braintree district council is also threatening legal action to stop the Home Office move.

“I highlighted the remote nature of the site, the limited transport infrastructure and narrow road network and that these factors would mean the site wasn’t appropriate for asylum accommodation,” he wrote on Facebook.

Former Tory minister Sir Edward Leigh has previously attacked the idea of using Scampton – the former home of the “Dambusters” squadron which sits in his Lincolnshire constituency.

Sir Edward, the MP for Gainsborough, raised concerns after a deal was struck to use it as part of a £300m regeneration project for the area.

The row comes as it emerged that £3.5bn, one-third of Britain’s international aid budget, [*is being spent on supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-hotels-migrants-aid-spending-b2309613.html%22%20title=%22Government%20spends%20a%20third%20of%20aid%20budget%20on%20asylum%20seekers%20in%20UK%20as%20hotel%20costs%20soar) -reducing support available for overseas disasters.

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) said while so-called “in-donor refugee costs” have ballooned in recent years, the UK’s response to floods in Pakistan and drought in Somalia has been delayed and “very limited”.

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) told his cabinet on Tuesday that the cost of using hotels and the pressure it puts on local areas meant it was not sustainable.

The PM later told MPs that children cannot be exempted from plans to detain and deport people who cross the Channel in small boats to prevent the creation of a “pull factor”.

Ministers have been urged to give “serious assurances” they will not return to the “barbaric days” of detaining children in immigration centres as part of the Illegal Migration Bill.

As a rebellion by Tory moderates brews on the legislation, amendments tabled by senior Tory MP Loughton have sought to ensure powers of indefinite detention in the Bill do not apply to children.

Mr Jenrick said the government does not want to detain minors, adding: “But the circumstances in which we would use this power are where you have an unaccompanied minor where there is an age assessment dispute.”

Appearing before the Commons Liaison Committee, Mr Sunak was grilled about The Independent’s exclusive report on [*the case of an Afghan war veteran*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghan-pilot-small-boat-deportation-rwanda-b2307456.html) who served alongside British armed forces and has been threatened with deportation to Rwanda.

The PM told senior Tory MP Caroline Nokes he could not comment on individual cases but if the details were sent to him: “I’ll happily make sure the Home Office have a look”.

Mr Sunak also downplayed suggestions that flights under the government’s stalled Rwanda policy would begin this summer.

A government spokesman said: “We continue to work across government and with local authorities to identify a range of accommodation options. The government remains committed to engaging with local authorities and key stakeholders as part of this process.”

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-5WN1-JBNF-W2V9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 2:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It is asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags;

Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-near-me-b2034477.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Common Ground, Oxford

Collecting from 8am to noon on Thursday, [*according to the organisers' latest Facebook post*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F736041287344299%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-near-me-b2034477.html). Clothes are not currently a priority but medical supplies and toiletries needed.

Address: 37-38 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HF

Westbury, Wiltshire

Seeking clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, children's toys, pet food and long-lasting dry food supplies like pasta and rice for delivery to a hostel in Zgierz and a volunteer centre in Lodz in Poland in order to pass on to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Address: Daykin Estates, Unit 4 Rockhaven Business Park, Commerce Close, Westbury BA13 4FZ

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland. However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to the collection point below.

Address: Unit 6, Phoenix Works, Windsor Road, Redditch, B97 6 DJ

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome barring clothing.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products until 7pm on Wednesday 2 March.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

In Dyce, local resident Paula Sledzinska has set up a collection point and has asked for flasks, hot water bottles, protein bars, bandages, dry foods like rice and pasta, sleeping bags, wet baby wipes, sanitary pads/tampons, first aid kits and pet food.

She has set up a Facebook page with more information, which currently reports that donations have had to be paused temporarily for lack of storage space.

Address: Craigievar House, Howe Moss Ave, Kirkhill Industrial Estate AB21 0GP

07578272767

There are also donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in the same county while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-near-me-b2034477.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-near-me-b2034477.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-near-me-b2034477.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Moldova: A fractured, fragile former Soviet republic struggling to avoid being sucked into Putin's Ukraine war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6504-BHJ1-DY4H-K0P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 3:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 1693 words

**Byline:** Borzou Daragahi

**Highlight:** The divided country could be the next state most at risk from Russia's invasion

**Body**

Along the bridge, the Russian soldier gripped his assault rifle tightly and aimed when a passing vehicle did not stop fast enough for his liking. Since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , there have been unusual outbreaks of political unrest in [*Transnistria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/transnistria) , the Kremlin-controlled breakaway region of [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

One woman said pro-Ukrainian "saboteurs" attempted to stage an anti-Russian protest, which was quickly suppressed, followed by a larger pro-Russian demonstration. Then came a public plea from nervous authorities: no more political displays.

Across the demarcation line, in Chisinau and other Moldovan towns, fears are also mounting as the struggling country, which is among the poorest in Europe, welcomes and shelters tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** flooding in from the war next door.

"The country is divided already," said Daniella Calmish, a journalist at the Moldovan weekly newspaper Ziarul de Garda. "Some people are in favour, and some are against Russia. There is an information war going on."

In a briefing with international journalists on Wednesday, Moldovan foreign minister Ninu Popsecu pleaded for financial and political support. "We are Ukraine's most fragile neighbour and our situation is complicated on all possible fronts," he said.

Like Ukraine, this former [*Soviet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet) [*republic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republic) has a popularly elected pro-European Union president brushing up against a significant Russian-speaking population that is sympathetic to the Kremlin and Russia's president Vladimir [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin).

Like Ukraine, it is partly under occupation by Russian and pro-Russian forces along its eastern flank, and it has suffered through a war - a 20-month conflict between pro-Russian and pro-western forces in the early 1990s, which left up to 2,000 people dead.

Moldova, like other former Soviet republics and satellite states, has also long been a target of Russian influence operations and political manipulation, and some fear the fragile nation could unravel.

"This is a big risk," Dan Perciun, a leading member of parliament, said in an interview. "And we have identified it from the very beginning."

Last weekend, US secretary of state Antony Blinken visited Moldova in a show of support for its president, Maia Sandu, who was elected in 2020 in a surprise victory over the pro-Kremlin incumbent. She has asked to speed up European Union accession talks, though Moldova insists it will not join Nato for fear of undermining the delicate political balance in the country.

Leading officials of both the government and the opposition have held talks in an effort to cool political tempers. "What we have had here for a long time, since independence, was a society that was not always very united when it comes to foreign policy preferences and political orientation," said Mr Popsecu.

Moldova has a population of around 2.7 million, with roughly a fifth living in and around the capital, Chisinau.

With a population of around half a million, Transnistria is a bit larger than Suffolk and a bit smaller than the American state of Delaware. Some 1,300 Russian soldiers are garrisoned in the hilly territory, which, at 120 miles away from the frontier with EU and Nato member Romania, could be seen as the Kremlin's westernmost outpost.

Run with an iron first by several former Soviet security officials, it is one of several Kremlin-backed nether states on the outer fringes of the former Soviet Union.

On Wednesday, during a surreptitious day-long visit to the enclave, The Independent spoke with residents about their fears. In the markets and cafes, there are hushed but passionate conversations about the war across the border in Ukraine. Roughly a third of Transnistrians are ethnically Russian, a third Ukrainian and a third Moldovan, with a smattering of others who settled here during the time of the Soviet Union and the chaotic years after its collapse.

"From a moral perspective, we are very troubled with what is happening in Ukraine," said a woman in Tiraspol, walking through the central square in the capital of the Transnistrian enclave, where a gigantic statue of Vladimir Lenin stands among war monuments that include a Russian tank. "We're worried. We are a multi-ethnic country. We love the fact that we have a lot of diversity here."

One woman in the covered marketplace in Bender said she has relatives in the Ukrainian city of Mykolaiv, the target of an ongoing Russian assault, and she has not heard from them since the war began.

"No matter how the war turns out, I am sure we here in Transnistria will pay a price," she said.

Already the war has disrupted the flow of goods from Ukraine, as well as dividing families and friends. "I cannot judge; some people say it's good and some say it's bad, but I cannot judge who is right," said Maria, a woman in her sixties selling hats and scarves at the Bender marketplace.

She added that her daughter lives near Ukraine's embattled northeastern city of Kharkiv, and she is terrified for her.

A 19-year-old man, sitting among a group friends in an upscale cafe in Tiraspol, the administrative capital of the Transnistria enclave, praised the Russian forces for killing Ukrainian "Nazis".

"I don't choose a side," said Mikhail, the 33-year-old manager of a restaurant in Bender. "In Transnistria, we live on both sides. This side is Moldova, this side is Ukraine. Over there is Russia. There are no problems."

He said he refuses to watch the news any longer, or even check social media, because he is unable to sleep afterwards. "Every year I used to go to the sea at Odesa," he said, referring to the Ukrainian Black Sea resort and port city now being menaced by Russian forces, less than two hours away. "I want everything to be like before."

Moldovans, in general, appear more strongly supportive of the Ukrainian cause. After Ms Sandu's narrow election victory in November 2020, her pro-EU party won 63 out of 101 parliamentary seats in elections in July 2021. A recent poll, conducted after the Russian invasion began, showed that 66 per cent of Moldovans support the country's integration into the EU.

"I'm against the war; I'm not with Russia," said Tatiana, a 46-year-old clerk at a bookshop in Chisinau. "I consider this war to be all Russia's fault. We already had war in this country, and I remember it well. I am afraid Transnistria might again trigger a conflict."

Unlike Ukraine - and Georgia, another former Soviet republic coveted by the Kremlin - Moldova's constitution enshrines neutrality in the east-west conflict, and Moldovan officials have said repeatedly that the country will not seek Nato membership.

"We see no reason why Moldova would be drawn into the fighting," said Mr Popsecu. "We are a neutral country. We haven't done anything that would justify an attack."

Still, Alexander Lukashenko, the president of Belarus and a key Kremlin ally, included Transnistria on a battle map of Russian assets in eastern Europe, a gesture that sparked even more worry.

Moldovans also share a language and history with Romania, and at least 40 per cent hold a passport of another EU member state. Since the war in Ukraine, long queues of passport applicants have formed at the three Romanian diplomatic outposts in Moldova as fears of instability rise.

Moldovan officials say the country needs to prepare for a fresh array of threats emanating from the conflict next door. These include gun-running and criminality.

"When you have a war in proximity, it's obvious the risks to public order and security are exponentially increased," Ana Revenco, Moldova's interior minister, said in an interview. "Having a war nearby where civilians are heavily armed increases the risk of cross-border trafficking of arms. There are luxury goods and cars left behind by people fleeing the war. That increases the risk of smuggling of goods."

Moldova is also being targeted by social media campaigns in Romanian and Russian, suspected Kremlin-backed disinformation operations apparently aimed at destabilising the country by whipping up hostility toward refugees and the west.

"We have seen an orchestrated campaign on social media [presenting] ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as thieves and unsavoury," said Mr Perciun, the member of parliament. "There is clearly an attempt to inflame public opinion."

Militarily, Moldova is weak, though Romania helped during the Transnistria war and could potentially back Chisinau in case of an attack. Artillery and air strikes may hit Moldova as the fighting inches closer to Odesa. On the other hand, Moldova's mountainous terrain would make it difficult for any invading force coming from Transnistria.

"You don't need a big military to try to cut them off and cut the entrances and approaches to Chisinau," said Nuno Felix, a former Portuguese army special operations officer who has participated in Nato exercises in the Balkans. "The road to go through to the capital is mountains and valleys. I don't think a move on Moldova would be something we would see easily. If Odesa falls, okay."

But the most powerful hedge against an incursion into Moldova may be greed. Transnistria's oligarchic rulers benefit from the largesse of Russia, Moldova and the EU, and they appear unwilling to risk their various enterprises, which have included smuggling of contraband, money laundering, and monopoly control over commerce, for the sake of what many in the post-Soviet world regard as Putin's vain fantasy of uniting Russian-speaking lands under Moscow's political authority.

Transnistria residents said that life had improved in recent years, and in the centre of Tiraspol lively new shops and cafes as well as luxury apartment complexes have flowered amid what even several years ago was a bleak landscape of decaying Soviet-era highrises and pock-marked roads.

"They are not ideologically motivated instruments of Russian expansion," said Mr Perciun, referring to the oligarchs. "They are very content with the status quo and don't share the broad narrative that Putin is putting forward. They don't want to risk the status and wealth that they've attained. And I don't see any underlying motivation for that to change."

Calin Drugaliov contributed to this report

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

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[*Moldova's struggle to stay safe from the war next door; The fractured former Soviet republic could be Putin's next target, finds Borzou Daragahi in Moldova and Transnistria*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-FG51-JCS0-D4MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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March 13, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1688 words

**Byline:** BORZOU DARAGAHI

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-C2D1-JBNF-W1WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 11:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It is asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags;

Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030638.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Common Ground, Oxford

Collecting from 8am to noon on Thursday, [*according to the organisers' latest Facebook post*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F736041287344299%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030638.html). Clothes are not currently a priority but medical supplies and toiletries needed.

Address: 37-38 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HF

Westbury, Wiltshire

Seeking clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, children's toys, pet food and long-lasting dry food supplies like pasta and rice for delivery to a hostel in Zgierz and a volunteer centre in Lodz in Poland in order to pass on to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

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Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

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Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome barring clothing.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products until 7pm on Wednesday 2 March.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

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Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

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Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

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01315563447

Aberdeenshire

In Dyce, local resident Paula Sledzinska has set up a collection point and has asked for flasks, hot water bottles, protein bars, bandages, dry foods like rice and pasta, sleeping bags, wet baby wipes, sanitary pads/tampons, first aid kits and pet food.

She has set up a Facebook page with more information, which currently reports that donations have had to be paused temporarily for lack of storage space.

Address: Craigievar House, Howe Moss Ave, Kirkhill Industrial Estate AB21 0GP

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There are also donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in the same county while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030638.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

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Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030638.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030638.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-TGX1-JBNF-W52T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 11:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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07858457164

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07919203069

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Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

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Other sites around the country include:

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Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donation-uk-near-me-b2030908.html).

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01633250647

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08438868235

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**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



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The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 6:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

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Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

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Polish Club, Bury

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Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

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07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

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Other sites around the country include:

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Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Common Ground, Oxford

Collecting from 8am to noon on Thursday, [*according to the organisers' latest Facebook post*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F736041287344299%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-refugees-uk-near-me-b2029409.html). Clothes are not currently a priority but medical supplies and toiletries needed.

Address: 37-38 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HF

Westbury, Wiltshire

Seeking clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, children's toys, pet food and long-lasting dry food supplies like pasta and rice for delivery to a hostel in Zgierz and a volunteer centre in Lodz in Poland in order to pass on to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Address: Daykin Estates, Unit 4 Rockhaven Business Park, Commerce Close, Westbury BA13 4FZ

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

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Address: Unit 6, Phoenix Works, Windsor Road, Redditch, B97 6 DJ

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome barring clothing.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products until 7pm on Wednesday 2 March.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

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01315563447

Aberdeenshire

In Dyce, local resident Paula Sledzinska has set up a collection point and has asked for flasks, hot water bottles, protein bars, bandages, dry foods like rice and pasta, sleeping bags, wet baby wipes, sanitary pads/tampons, first aid kits and pet food.

She has set up a Facebook page with more information, which currently reports that donations have had to be paused temporarily for lack of storage space.

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There are also donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in the same county while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-refugees-uk-near-me-b2029409.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

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Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-refugees-uk-near-me-b2029409.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-refugees-uk-near-me-b2029409.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-M9K1-DY4H-K15T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 9:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It is asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.

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Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

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Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

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07432113290

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Other sites around the country include:

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This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

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Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-near-me-donate-b2027458.html).

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01633961601

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01633250647

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Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

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Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-near-me-donate-b2027458.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-near-me-donate-b2027458.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Donations for Ukraine: UK drop-off points and the most useful items to give*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X1-5G81-JBNF-W4NX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 4:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1962 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

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Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

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Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

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Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

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Polish Club, Bury

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Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

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Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-drop-off-points-b2026687.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Common Ground, Oxford

Collecting until 4pm on Wednesday and then again from 8am to noon on Thursday, [*according to the organisers' latest Facebook post*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F736041287344299%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-drop-off-points-b2026687.html). Clothes are not currently a priority but medical supplies and toiletries needed.

Address: 37-38 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HF

Westbury, Wiltshire

Seeking clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, children's toys, pet food and long-lasting dry food supplies like pasta and rice for delivery to a hostel in Zgierz and a volunteer centre in Lodz in Poland in order to pass on to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Address: Daykin Estates, Unit 4 Rockhaven Business Park, Commerce Close, Westbury BA13 4FZ

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland. However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to the collection point below.

Address: Unit 6, Phoenix Works, Windsor Road, Redditch, B97 6 DJ

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome barring clothing.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products until 7pm on Wednesday 2 March.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

0131 556 3447

Aberdeenshire

In Dyce, local resident Paula Sledzinska has set up a collection point and has asked for flasks, hot water bottles, protein bars, bandages, dry foods like rice and pasta, sleeping bags, wet baby wipes, sanitary pads/tampons, first aid kits and pet food.

She has set up a Facebook page with more information, which currently reports that donations have had to be paused temporarily for lack of storage space.

Address: Craigievar House, Howe Moss Ave, Kirkhill Industrial Estate AB21 0GP

07578272767

There are also donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in the same county while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-drop-off-points-b2026687.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-drop-off-points-b2026687.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donations-drop-off-points-b2026687.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-8PN1-DY4H-K3JD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 2:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It is asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

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Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

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Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

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07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

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Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

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Other sites around the country include:

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This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

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Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donation-appeal-near-me-b2031980.html).

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01633961601

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Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

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Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

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Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donation-appeal-near-me-b2031980.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donation-appeal-near-me-b2031980.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



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The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 4:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

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Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

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Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

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07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

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Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

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Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Common Ground, Oxford

Collecting from 8am to noon on Thursday, [*according to the organisers' latest Facebook post*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F736041287344299%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030234.html). Clothes are not currently a priority but medical supplies and toiletries needed.

Address: 37-38 Little Clarendon Street, Oxford OX1 2HF

Westbury, Wiltshire

Seeking clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, children's toys, pet food and long-lasting dry food supplies like pasta and rice for delivery to a hostel in Zgierz and a volunteer centre in Lodz in Poland in order to pass on to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Address: Daykin Estates, Unit 4 Rockhaven Business Park, Commerce Close, Westbury BA13 4FZ

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

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Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome barring clothing.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products until 7pm on Wednesday 2 March.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

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Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

In Dyce, local resident Paula Sledzinska has set up a collection point and has asked for flasks, hot water bottles, protein bars, bandages, dry foods like rice and pasta, sleeping bags, wet baby wipes, sanitary pads/tampons, first aid kits and pet food.

She has set up a Facebook page with more information, which currently reports that donations have had to be paused temporarily for lack of storage space.

Address: Craigievar House, Howe Moss Ave, Kirkhill Industrial Estate AB21 0GP

07578272767

There are also donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in the same county while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030234.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030234.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-uk-charity-near-me-b2030234.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X6-FSH1-DY4H-K3P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 2:59 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 1958 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last week as their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many were caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than a million others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escaping the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university are [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) but no longer require food items. Instead, medical supplies, toiletries, hygiene products and clothes are needed.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWIf you are in Bloomsbury, you can also donate for Ukraine [*#SSEES*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SSEES?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Student Society led by [*@freyaproudman*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) has been doing an incredible job this week and there are over 100 boxes heading to Lviv [*https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH*](https://t.co/jYRXtz0sdH) [*@MetroUK*](https://twitter.com/MetroUK?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0W6MLrmd1u*](https://t.co/0W6MLrmd1u) - UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies (@UCLSSEES) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES/status/1498976672061833216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February and will continue to do so until at least 4 March (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It is asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags;

Painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/donations-ukraine-refugees-uk-near-me-b2027732.html).

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Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

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Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/donations-ukraine-refugees-uk-near-me-b2027732.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/donations-ukraine-refugees-uk-near-me-b2027732.html) in that region.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*King gives Duke of Edinburgh title to brother Edward to honour Philip’s wish*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RG-S9Y1-JBNF-W421-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2023 Friday 9:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 824 words

**Byline:** Laura Elston

**Highlight:** Sophie is now the Duchess of Edinburgh after Charles conferred the dukedom on Edward to mark his 59th birthday.

**Body**

The King has handed his late father’s title the Duke of [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) to his brother [*Prince Edward*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-edward) , honouring the late Queen and Philip’s wishes.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) conferred the title on the former Earl of Wessex in celebration of Edward’s 59th birthday on Friday.

Sophie, the former Countess of Wessex, is now the Duchess of Edinburgh and their 15-year-old son James, Viscount Severn is the new Earl of Wessex.

The couple’s first engagement as the new Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh was fittingly held in the [*Scottish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish) capital’s City Chambers, and Edward said the day had been “very overwhelming” for him and his wife.

Speaking at a reception recognising the city’s support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, some of whom attended, the duke told guests: “Thank you for welcoming us to Edinburgh today on, indeed, a very special and very overwhelming day for now my wife and duchess,” he joked, while looking at Sophie.

He added: “I also want to express my thanks to everybody who has worked so hard to make our Ukrainian friends so welcome.”

The development comes after another title change this week when the Duke and Duchess of Sussex began officially using the titles Prince and Princess for their children Archie and Lilibet.

Buckingham Palace said in a statement: “His Majesty The King has been pleased to confer the Dukedom of Edinburgh upon the Prince Edward, on the occasion of HRH’s 59th birthday today.

“The title will be held for HRH’s lifetime.

“The dukedom was last created for Prince Philip in 1947, upon his marriage to Princess Elizabeth, who held the title of Duchess of Edinburgh before acceding to the throne in 1952.

“The new Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh are proud to continue Prince Philip’s legacy of promoting opportunities for young people of all backgrounds to reach their full potential.”

The dukedom – which in the past has been hereditary – will not, however, pass down to the Edinburghs’ son James when Edward dies.

This paves the way for one of the Prince and Princess of Wales’s children to potentially be given the title in the future, with Prince Louis the most likely candidate.

James will become the Earl of Wessex and Forfar when the title of the Duke of Edinburgh reverts to the Crown, the Palace said.

Edward will also remain for his lifetime the Earl of Forfar, another of his titles, but will use the Duke of Edinburgh because it is the more senior Scottish title.

Philip had always wanted his youngest son Edward to inherit his title, but the decision ultimately was down to Charles as King.

When Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones married in 1999, they were given the titles the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

But Buckingham Palace also announced Edward would eventually one day succeed his father as the Duke of Edinburgh – but not until after the death of both Philip and the Queen.

The palace said at the time: “The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince of Wales have also agreed that the Prince Edward should be given the dukedom of Edinburgh in due course when the present title now held by Prince Philip eventually reverts to the Crown.”

In keeping with the Letters Patent issued when King George VI gave Philip the title in 1947, Charles inherited the Edinburgh dukedom when Philip died – but he did not use it.

On the death of the Queen six months ago, Charles acceded to the throne and the title merged with the crown and could be granted to someone else.

But despite agreeing to his father’s wishes in 1999, Charles was reported to be reluctant to hand the dukedom over to Edward when he became king.

He is known to be in favour of a slimmed-down monarchy.

Edward appeared to be aware of the uncertainty, hinting in a TV interview in the aftermath of Philip’s death: “It was sort of a pipe dream of my father’s… and of course it will depend on whether or not the Prince of Wales, when he becomes king, whether he’ll do that.”

To grant it to Edward, Charles will need to issue a new Letters Patent – a document from a sovereign issued under the Great Seal of the Realm.

Wishing the new Duke of Edinburgh a very Happy Birthday today!The King has conferred the Dukedom of Edinburgh upon his brother, Prince Edward, on his 59th birthday. [*https://t.co/Yxe8lDc3pe*](https://t.co/Yxe8lDc3pe) [*pic.twitter.com/EGQcqrTcKx*](https://t.co/EGQcqrTcKx) — The Royal Family (@RoyalFamily) [*March 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RoyalFamily/status/1634116939915186178?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Philip’s desire for Edward to have the title was in recognition of his son’s decades-long commitment to the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, the youth scheme which is one of Philip’s greatest legacies.

The late Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) held the courtesy title of Duchess of Edinburgh following her marriage, as did the Queen Consort when Charles inherited the title.

The changes were swiftly updated on the royal family’s website on Friday morning, just minutes after the official announcement.

Archie and Lili became a prince and a princess six months ago but the changes were only made on the list of succession page this week after the Sussexes used Lili’s new formal title for the first time.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Harris claims UK Government confirms ‘operating agreement’ for asylum seekers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXF-KRR1-DY4H-K15F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 30, 2024 Tuesday 3:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1367 words

**Byline:** By Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** The Cabinet approved emergency legislation to allow the UK to be designated as a safe country to enable asylum seekers to be transferred back.

**Body**

[*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier Simon Harris has claimed that the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) has confirmed there is an “operating agreement” to allow asylum seekers to be returned between both jurisdictions.

It comes as the Cabinet approved emergency legislation from the Minister of Justice Helen McEntee to allow the UK to be designated as a safe country to enable asylum seekers to be transferred back there.

The Taoiseach said a post-Brexit deal was struck in 2020 and allows asylum seekers whose applications are “inadmissible” to be “returned” to the UK and vice versa.

A High Court ruling in March deemed the legal basis for designating the UK as a safe country to “return” asylum seekers to as unsound under EU law.

Mr Harris said Ms McEntee has acted swiftly to address this High Court ruling.

A row has developed between Ireland and the UK over the weekend after Ms McEntee said there was a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland from across the Northern Ireland border.

After it was suggested the increase could be driven by migrants fearing the UK’s Rwanda plan, UK Prime Minister [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) said that showed the plan’s effect.

The policy aims to send asylum seekers to the east African nation to deter others from crossing the English Channel.

Mr Harris said on Sunday that Ireland will not “provide a loophole” for other countries’ migration “challenges”, while Mr Sunak said it was “not interested” in any returns deal if the EU does not allow the UK to deport asylum seekers who had crossed the English Channel to France.

However, Mr Harris said on Tuesday that the deal was put in place when the UK left the European Union, that would allow refugees to be “returned in both directions”.

He said this “operational agreements” are in place under the [*Common Travel Area*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/common-travel-area) (CTA).

The Department of Justice has refused to publish the wording of the arrangement which it says provides for reciprocal returns between Ireland and the UK after Brexit.

It said the written agreement was agreed in November 2020 but is not publicly available

A spokesman said: “We do not provide operational details of immigration procedures so as to avoid any impact on the effectiveness of such operations.”

In a statement issued on Tuesday afternoon, Ms McEntee said the agreement with the UK is a “reciprocal arrangement” in place since Brexit.

She said this is to ensure that “neither of our countries are a place for people to evade or obstruct” the immigration controls and processes of the other.

“To combat any abuse of the CTA, it is essential that we have mechanisms in place to return people to the UK where the UK is deemed to be the appropriate country to process any application for protection,” the minister said.

“It hasn’t been operational owing to a High Court judgment which identified a legal issue which had a bearing on the operation of that arrangement.

“The legislative changes that I will bring to the Houses in the coming weeks will ensure that the arrangement can be operationalised.”

The Irish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has been accused of displaying “incredible incompetence” over migration issues by the leader of opposition party, Sinn Fein.

Party leader Mary Lou McDonald told the Irish parliament: “At a time when we need calm and an assured response, we get panic. At a time time when we need competence and clear communication, we get contradiction.

“This has been a feature confirming the widespread view that your Government is not on top of issues relating to migration, that nobody competent is in charge.

The incompetence is off the charts!The government's chaotic approach to immigration hits another level.Confusion and contradiction within government – Justice Minister Helen McEntee says one thing and Tánaiste Micheál Martin says another.Confusion and contradiction between… [*pic.twitter.com/542qjk3g5y*](https://t.co/542qjk3g5y) — Mary Lou McDonald (@MaryLouMcDonald) [*April 30, 2024*](https://twitter.com/MaryLouMcDonald/status/1785315530984808781?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Scrambling around to turn hotels, B&Ss, office blocks into Direct Provision centres or having tents line the length of Mount Street in Dublin are not the hallmarks of a well-managed system.”

She added: “Ireland is a welcoming, compassionate country and there is no room for racism here.

“We know that there are those who would seek to exploit this serious issue to sow division and hatred.

“That is why clarity is so important. The truth is that your Government from the beginning has made a complete mess of the handling of this situation. We need an immigration system that is fair, efficient and enforced.

“Your government says that you have an agreement with Britain, the British government saying that you do not. Which is it? If you do have such an agreement, has the Irish state made use of this agreement?

“You’ve actually managed to spread this confusion now to between two governments, about an agreement which exists or does not exist. Which is it?”

Mr Harris denied there was any confusion, saying there is a Common Travel Area between the United Kingdom and Ireland.

“As you know, better than most I would imagine, that is a really important Common Travel Area,” Mr Harris added.

“It’s something we value and as you also know, that when Britain made the decision to leave the European Union there was an agreement put in place, one that indeed has been confirmed by the British Government today in relation to an operating agreement for migrants, for refugees to be returned in both directions.

“I have no intention whatsoever of this country being dragged into politics in Britain, I’m very well aware of politics in Britain, they can have their migration policy, and they can do what they wish in relation that.

“We have ours and ours is a rules-based firm migration system that endeavours to provide assistance to people in humanitarian need, but also one that has to make it clear to people that if they don’t have a right to be here, that they need to be asked and leave more quickly.”

Mr Harris added: “We also have every right when countries enter agreements, that those agreements are honoured. This is a country that honours our agreements and I’ve said very clearly that the British Government has acknowledged that there are operational arrangements in place. I welcome that fact.

“I’m very clear that those operational agreements are in place under the Common Travel Area. And I’m very clear that we’re going to legislate to have absolute clarity so that it can work. But I’m also really clear that it’s only one of a number of things we need to do.”

Labour leader Ivana Bacik said the Government’s immigration plan has “failed”.

“The clearest evidence of that failure is just around the corner. Hundreds of people sleeping in tents and makeshift shelters in desperately unsanitary conditions on Mount Street,” she added.

“I was there again this morning, meeting with some of those people, also speaking with local residents and traders who are sympathetic to the desperate plight of those in tents but also deeply frustrated at the deteriorating situation, with more and more tents each day.

“No access to sanitation, no sign of any action from government. It is inhumane and unsustainable.”

Ms Bacik also said that Ireland cannot force Great Britain or any other country to take back (international) applicants after the Irish state has turned them away.

“We’ve heard about an operational agreement but we need clarity on what that is and what obligation is on Britain,” she added.

She also said that Britain’s Rwanda Bill undermines the Good Friday Agreement.

There has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland in recent years, with up to 16,000 new arrivals projected to arrive every year, up from between 3,000-5,000 between 2015-2019.

As Ireland struggles to boost housing supply after falling behind during the economic crash, the influx has put more pressure on the State to house people as their asylum claim is processed.

The Irish government has implemented a number of migration policies in recent weeks, including paring back the offering to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are automatically granted asylum.

A makeshift camp has sprung up at the International Protection Office in Dublin city as more than 1,700 asylum seekers have been left without an offer of accommodation from Ireland.

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Greek's leader tells Congress democracy is tested by Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G6-KT21-DY4H-K42S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 4:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 822 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis says democracy is being tested with Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

[*Greek*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greek) Prime Minister [*Kyriakos Mitsotakis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyriakos-mitsotakis) delivered an address Tuesday to a joint meeting of Congress, highlighting democratic values as NATO allies confront [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) aggression in Ukraine.

Mitsotakis told lawmakers from the House and Senate that their shared values "are once again being tested."

"Our shared belief in freedom over tyranny, in democracy over authoritarianism, in the fundamental importance of respect for the rule of law over war and anarchy," he said to applause.

Flanked by Vice President Kamala Harris and House Speaker [*Nancy Pelosi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nancy-pelosi) , Mitsotakis was in Washington this week to mark a COVID-delayed commemoration of the bicentennial of the start of the Greek War of Independence that led to the ouster of the Ottoman Empire. His trip is aimed at reinforcing his country's strong energy and defense cooperation with the United States at a time of global unrest.

In inviting him to make the address, Pelosi noted the "unshakable bond" between the two countries as the U.S. founders drew on the ancient Greek ideals of liberty and democracy. "Our nations are key allies on the world stage," Pelosi said.

"As our world faces a pivotal moment in the fight between the forces of democracy and autocracy, the transatlantic alliance remains vital to the future of freedom in the world," she said.

But the celebratory moment was shadowed by the most significant fighting on the continent since World War II, and as Biden seeks to keep the West unified as it pressures Russia to end the war.

The Mitsotakis government has been outspoken in its criticism of the Russian invasion, now in its 12th week. The war in Ukraine, however, has also unsettled Greek policymakers as a possible source of wider regional instability and an opportunity for neighboring Turkey to seek diplomatic leverage from its major western allies.

President Joe Biden welcomed Mitsotakis to the White House on Monday and thanked for his country's "moral leadership" in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine as the two held talks about the ongoing conflict.

Biden praised Greece for showing "moral clarity" by quickly imposing sanctions against Russia following the Feb. 24 invasion, providing Kyiv with military assistance and taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the conflict.

"We're helping Ukrainians say no to Russian aggression," Biden said. "And we're saying no to tyranny, to the idea that autocracies will outpace democracies in the 21st century, because that's what is at stake here in my view."

As Europe looks to wean itself off Russian energy, Mitsotakis has pushed the idea of Greece becoming an energy hub that can bring gas, as well as renewable energies, produced in southwest Asia, the Middle East and Africa to eastern Europe.

"Greece plans to play an important role as a gateway for electricity produced from cheap, renewable sources," Mitsotakis said.

A new Greece-to-Bulgaria pipeline - built during the COVID-19 pandemic, tested and due to start commercial operation in June - is slated to bring large volumes of gas flow between the two countries in both directions to generate electricity, fuel industry and heat homes.

The new pipeline connection, called the Gas Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria, will give Bulgaria access to ports in neighboring Greece that are importing liquefied natural gas, or LNG, and also will bring gas from Azerbaijan through a new pipeline system that ends in Italy. Russia announced last month it was cutting off natural gas exports to Bulgaria and Poland over the countries' refusal to pay in rubles.

Greece, a fellow NATO nation, last week formally extended its bilateral military agreement with the United States for five years, replacing an annual review of the deal that grants the U.S. military access to three bases in mainland Greece as well as the American naval presence on the island of Crete.

Mitsotakis has expressed support for Finland and Sweden seeking membership in the NATO defense alliance, a development welcomed by much of the 30-nation group with the notable exception of Tukey, which remains locked in a decades-old dispute with Greece on sea boundaries and mineral rights in the eastern Mediterranean.

Mitsotakis, in an appearance on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" on Monday, expressed optimism that Turkey, in the end, won't hold up Finland and Sweden's bid to join NATO and addressed speculation that Erdogan might use the moment to win concessions from the Biden administration on weapons sales or other matters.

"This is not really the right time to use a NATO membership (application) by these two countries to bargain" for other issues, he said.

In addition to his address to Congress, Mitsotakis is scheduled Tuesday to be honored at a luncheon hosted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and will meet with members of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Associated Press writer Derek Gatopoulos in Athens contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ticketmaster website crashes as Eurovision final tickets sell out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PW-P3C1-JBNF-W52M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2023 Tuesday 1:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** TECH; Version:3

**Length:** 874 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** Some fans were met with a ‘500 – Internal Server Error’ message when they attempted to click through.

**Body**

Tickets to the grand final of the Eurovision Song Contest have sold out in just over half an hour.

Fans faced technical issues as the [*Ticketmaster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ticketmaster) website struggled with the number of people trying to secure tickets to the nine different live shows on Tuesday.

The dedicated website page appeared to crash shortly before tickets were due to become available, with issues continuing throughout the sale.

Some were met with a “500 – Internal Server Error” message when they attempted to click through to find tickets.

Tickets for the live Grand Final are now SOLD OUT.Tickets for other shows are still available but demand is high!— Eurovision Song Contest (@Eurovision) [*March 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Eurovision/status/1633084308977065984?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Others reported being ejected from the virtual queue after receiving a message saying their session had expired “due to inactivity”.At 12.36pm the official Eurovision account tweeted that all tickets to the grand final had sold out.Tickets to the remaining shows had sold out by 1.32pm.Ticketmaster has been contacted for comment.A spokeswoman for the [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) said: “As expected, demand for Eurovision Song Contest tickets was extremely high and tickets for all nine shows sold out in 90 minutes.“Congratulations to those who secured their seats to Liverpool Arena in May.“We are now looking forward to putting on a brilliant show for our global TV audience and those watching on BBC One and BBC iPlayer in the UK.”The international singing competition will take place at the 11,000-capacity Liverpool Arena later this year, culminating in the grand final on May 13.The event is being held in the city after the UK was chosen to host the competition on behalf of war-torn 2022 winner Ukraine.Tickets for the semi-final shows are priced from £30 to £290, with the cost increasing to between £80 and £380 for the grand final shows.Those who managed to secure tickets celebrated on social media while others commiserated online.Alexandra Kilcran, 27, a content designer from north London, was among those who managed to secure a ticket to the jury grand final.She told the PA news agency she would be attending by herself and her experience getting a ticket had been “fairly straightforward and easy”.She said: “I got tickets for the jury grand final and took about 20 minutes. I’m shocked I got anything at all! Delighted, I’ve always wanted to go.“My best friend [*James*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james) passed away last year and we were both obsessed with it so it’ll be strange going without him. I’ll have a drink for him when I get there.”She said she got standing “for the atmosphere and so I can mingle”.Megan Spencer, 27, from Leicester, spent £82 on her standing ticket to the second semi-final.I never thought I would see it in the UK with how bad our luck has been in the competition, I can tick it off my bucket listMegan Spencer, from LeicesterThe social media assistant, who will stay in nearby Southport and catch the train to save money, said she screamed when she secured the ticket.She told PA: “I’ve been a massive Eurovision fan since I was young, it’s like my second Christmas each year. I never thought I would see it in the UK with how bad our luck has been in the competition, I can tick it off my bucket list.”Lauren Winter, 30, from Carlisle, said: “We were booked to go to Rotterdam during Eurovision a couple of years ago but Covid changed our plans and (to) actually get tickets to see a show in the UK, especially up north, is most likely once in a lifetime. I still can’t believe we got lucky.”The cafe worker, who is attending the jury grand final show, booked a hotel from the Thursday to the Sunday before Liverpool was announced as the host city and prices spiked.Before the sale, Ticketmaster urged fans to register an account in order to ensure the process went smoothly.Fans were able to buy up to four tickets in a single order for the live shows and six in a single order for the preview performances.Eurovision is set to air on the BBC and will be hosted by singer and Britain’s Got Talent judge [*Alesha Dixon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alesha-dixon) , Ted Lasso actress [*Hannah Waddingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hannah-waddingham) and Ukrainian singer Julia Sanina, as well as returning favourite, comedian and talk show host Graham Norton.Congrats if you got tickets! If not don’t worry, the Euro Village is gonna be amazing. [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is gonna take over the whole city. See you soon Liverpool…. All aboard.. (2018 ref for you die hards). [*pic.twitter.com/IzLZKEFc5y*](https://t.co/IzLZKEFc5y) — R Y L A N (@Rylan) [*March 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Rylan/status/1633088093510090752?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

After the sale Rylan Clark, who also features on the presenting line-up, tweeted: “Congrats if you got tickets! If not don’t worry, the Euro Village is gonna be amazing. #Eurovision is gonna take over the whole city.

“See you soon Liverpool…. All aboard.. (2018 ref for you die hards).”

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in the UK through the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Extension Scheme will be able to apply for cheaper tickets.

It was previously announced the UK Government will make around 3,000 tickets available for those who were forced to flee their home country when Russian troops invaded last year.

The subsidised tickets will cost £20.

The semi-final evening preview kicks off at 8pm on May 8, with the grand final live show bringing the contest to an end starting at 8pm on May 13.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Senate leaders push for quick OK for fresh $40B for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65F5-2YM1-DY4H-K1TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2022 Thursday 6:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 778 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Leaders from both parties are trying to clear the way for Senate passage Thursday of an additional $40 billion for Ukraine and its allies

**Body**

Leaders from both parties tried clearing the way for [*Senate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senate) passage Thursday of an additional $40 billion for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and its allies, a package of military and economic aid that underscores U.S. determination to reinforce its role in countering the Russian invasion.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called on Republicans and [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) " to help us pass this urgent funding bill today." The only apparent stumbling blocks to quick approval seemed to be the demands of some Republicans for votes on proposals including having an inspector general scrutinize the new spending.

Passage by a strong bipartisan margin seemed certain soon. If the bill is not amended, that vote would mean final congressional approval for a measure that Democrats and most Republicans want to speed to President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) so weapons and supplies can continue flowing to the outnumbered Ukrainians.

"Republicans shouldn't block this bill," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "There is no reason, no reason whatever not to get Ukraine funding approved fast."

It was unclear how GOP lawmakers' demands for votes would be addressed, but they are often resolved at the last moment. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who is pressing for the inspector general role, told reporters, "I'm not allowing a speedy passage of the bill without having something fiscally responsible in the bill."

The House voted 368-57 on Tuesday to approve the measure. All Democrats and most Republicans backed it, though every "no" vote came from the GOP.

The bipartisan backing for Ukraine has been partly driven by accounts of Russian atrocities against Ukrainian civilians that have been impossible to ignore. It also reflects strategic concerns about letting Russian President Vladimir Putin seize European territory unanswered as his assault on his neighbor to the west grinds into its 12th week.

"Helping Ukraine is not an instance of mere philanthropy," McConnell said. "It bears directly on America's national security and vital interests that Russia's naked aggression not succeed and carries significant costs."

Biden administration officials have said they expect the latest aid measure to suffice through September. But with Ukraine taking heavy military and civilian losses and no sign of when the fighting might end, Congress will ultimately face decisions about how much more aid to provide at a time of huge U.S. budget deficits and a risk of recession that could demand added spending at home.

The latest bill, when added to the $13.6 billion Congress approved in March, would push American aid to the region well above $50 billion. For perspective, that would total $6 billion more than the U.S. spent on military and economic aid around the world in 2019, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.

The push toward passage came as Russia continued blasting Ukrainian forces and cities in southern and eastern portions of the country. Reflecting international concerns prompted by the assault, Finland's leaders announced their support for joining NATO and Sweden seemed not far behind.

Biden asked Congress for $33 billion two weeks ago. It didn't take lawmakers long to add $3.4 billion to his requests for both military and humanitarian programs.

The measure includes $6 billion for Ukraine for intelligence, equipment and training for its forces, plus $4 billion to help Kyiv and NATO allies build up their militaries.

There's $8.7 billion for the Pentagon to rebuild stocks of weapons it has shipped to Ukraine and $3.9 billion for U.S. troops in the region.

The measure also includes $8.8 billion to keep the Kyiv government functioning, more than $5 billion to provide food to countries around the world that rely on Ukrainian crops devastated by the fighting and $900 million to teach English and provide other services to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have moved to the United States.

The biggest hurdle to rapid approval of the assistance was cleared this week when Biden and Democrats dropped their demand to include billions more in the measure to bolster U.S. efforts to counter the coronavirus pandemic.

Republicans want separate COVID-19 legislation to be a battleground for an election-season fight over immigration that divides Democrats.

The aid bill lacks Biden proposals to help qualifying Afghan refugees to remain permanently in the U.S., and $500 million to pay U.S. farmers to grow more crops to compensate for Ukraine's curtailed food production. Also gone are Biden requests to help Russian scientists emigrate to the U.S., and to let the Justice Department transfer money to Ukraine that the U.S. has acquired by seizing Russian oligarch's assets.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Grandmother who fled Ukraine war on crutches now teaching refugees Romanian*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65F3-7XT1-DY4H-K4B0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2022 Thursday 8:17 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 714 words

**Byline:** Isobel Frodsham

**Highlight:** Milena Ivakova said she thinks fellow refugees have to help each other during the war.

**Body**

A grandmother has described escaping her home in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) on crutches after the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) broke out.

Using a pseudonym, Milena Ivakova, 61, said she fled her home in Odesa, a port city in southern Ukraine, while recovering from hip replacement surgery with her 40-year-old daughter and her three granddaughters aged 10, 17, 20 and 22.

She is now working at the same refuge centre as a translator and language tutor, helping her fellow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** learn Romanian so they can settle into their new home and find work.

The centre, which is run by four Romanian non-governmental organisations, has received support and donations from humanitarian aid charity World Vision.

World Vision is one of the Disasters Emergency Committee's (DEC) member charities working directly or through local partners in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries to help the humanitarian crisis.

Ms Ivakova and her family arrived in Iasi, a city in north eastern Romania and 200 miles north of the capital [*Bucharest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucharest) , on March 9, having fled their native country the day before.

They travelled by bus, car and walking before reaching their new home. The family left behind Ms Ivakova's son-in-law, who is a priest, and her two cats who he is looking after.

Emotionally, I am so grateful to Romanians as they've helped us so much and still are helping all our people. They gave us food, they gave us clothes, they gave us everything

Milena Ivakova

After arriving at a friend's flat in the city, Ms Ivakova went to the refuge centre to seek supplies, including hygiene products and food, also have a doctor check her hip following the surgery.

Speaking through a translator, Ms Ivakova told the PA news agency: "(Fleeing Ukraine) was stressful.

"It was just after my surgery.

"I really needed to have doctor's assistance to check my wound and to have special medication.

"I had no choice (but to flee after the surgery).

"I walked three kilometres with crutches (nearly two miles) and then flagged down a car which drove me to the border while the rest of my family walked 10 kilometres (six miles).

"I couldn't walk any longer than that."

Ms Ivakova said while the family is grateful to the help and support they have received from Romanians, their "hearts and souls" remain in Ukraine.

"We talk with my son-in-law every day," she said.

"It's still very dangerous and unsafe where he is now.

"Physically, I feel a lot better since my surgery as time is passing and my wound has closed, and now I can walk with just one crutch.

"Emotionally, I am so grateful to Romanians as they've helped us so much and still are helping all our people.

"They gave us food, they gave us clothes, they gave us everything.

"We care very much about everything which is happening back at home.

"We think about it daily, we check the news, we're here but our souls and hearts are still in Ukraine.

"Not just my son in law but my friends, my colleagues, my whole life is back there.

"I had a conversation with one of my friends the other day while she was standing on a balcony at her home and I was talking to her, I saw the airport runway (in Odesa) being demolished from the bombing.

"She stopped the conversation and hid in a shelter."

She said she and her family will remain in Romania for the time being but want to return to Odesa when it is safe to do so.

Since the end of March, Ms Ivakova, who is normally a language teacher in Ukraine, has been giving Romanian language lessons to her fellow refugees in the centre.

Explaining why she decided to do so, she said: "I believe that we do have to help each other.

"I still need help, I still receive help.

"We feel safe, we feel comfortable and I feel like we're cared for and protected in Romania.

"We feel like this place is our family.

"I don't feel like I come here as my work place, it feels like my home."

More than £300 million has been raised so far by DEC after it launched its Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal in March.

Some of the money raised has gone towards World Vision, which is providing shelter kits, temporary sanitation facilities, food, child friendly spaces kits, mental health psycho-support and training of local stakeholders in mental health psycho-social support and gender-based violence referrals for the refugees.

To donate towards DEC's appeal, visit: [*www.dec.org.uk*](http://www.dec.org.uk)

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Afghan-British couples kept apart by 'cruel and callous' rules on standard of English*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690D-YH11-JCS0-D04J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 21, 2023 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1113 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Afghan women stranded under Taliban rule are being barred from reuniting with their British husbands because they cannot meet the English language standards needed to come to the UK. MPs have warned that Afghan women face a huge language barrier in trying to get to Britain as a result of "bureaucratic" Home Office rules requiring them to prove a certain level of proficiency in English.

Women who are married to British men can apply for an exemption to the language requirements, but this is not easy to obtain. In Afghanistan, the Taliban has banned women's education, meaning that most cannot learn a language. They are also prohibited from travelling outside their home without a man.

Meanwhile, all English language test centres in Afghanistan have closed, meaning that Afghan women are only able to take the test if they are in another country, such as neighbouring Pakistan. In one case, a woman was denied a visa to travel to Pakistan - leaving her in an impossible situation.

There is no English language requirement for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, who have come to the UK in their thousands, and no equivalent requirement for family members or wives of Afghans who have been accepted into the UK under the government's two main resettlement schemes, ACRS and Arap.

One MP said that the women had had "bureaucratic block after bureaucratic block put between them and reaching safety with their families". Another said that the "cruel and callous inflexibility" of the language requirements was "putting vulnerable refugees in danger and tearing families apart".

In one case, a British-Afghan man has been unable to secure a visa for his wife and one-year-old daughter, who are stuck in Afghanistan, to travel to Pakistan to complete biometric tests necessary for the spousal visa. Prior to the Taliban takeover, the wife had been studying English and had taken the required test and failed. She has been unable to continue her education under the new regime.

Attempts by the husband to teach his wife English over the phone have also failed as the internet connection is too bad, he told The Independent.

The man, who was visiting his family in Afghanistan when the Taliban took over the country in August 2021, accused the government of "playing a game" with his family, adding: "I can't see my baby. I have paid around £7,000-8,000 in Home Office and solicitor's fees. A decision needs to be taken, because if something happens to my wife, who is going to be responsible?"

In another case, a British-Afghan father has been unable to find lawyers to help him apply for an exemption, and is concerned by government guidance that says his wife must meet certain English requirements. Hewaad Farhad said he is in despair at his situation and does not know how to get a spousal visa for his wife because she cannot speak English.

Mr Farhad, who lives in former prime minister Boris Johnson's former constituency in Uxbridge, said: "I grew up in the UK. My life - everything - is according to UK society. In Afghanistan, I don't have anything. I can't work, and it is dangerous being a British person living in Afghanistan."

Since the Taliban takeover, his wife is unable to access any teaching and is not allowed outside without a male companion. Her brother tried to teach her some English, Mr Farhad said, but she has not been able to make progress as she cannot read and write. "There are no English classes and no education for women," he said. "She hasn't been to school, and when she grew up she was living in a village far away from school and her father did not want her to go."

Speaking through an interpreter, his wife, whose name we are not publishing for safety reasons, said: "It is very stressful here, it is very depressing living with just the kids. The kids and myself miss him so much. We are scared that we are going to get into trouble, and I'm not safe here. Learning English is very difficult and challenging for me. Whatever it takes for me to get to the UK, I want to do it."

Caroline Lucas MP, who has constituents with wives and children stuck in Afghanistan, has written to immigration minister Robert Jenrick to ask for a review of decisions made on visas for those wishing to come here from Afghanistan. In one of her constituents' cases, a British father's wife and young children fled to a third country following the Taliban takeover.

The wife does not speak English and is unable to learn in the country she is in as she is illiterate and needs to take care of her children. The Home Office initially refused her spousal visa application, saying she had not met the English language requirement. But the decision was overturned after Ms Lucas's intervention.

Ms Lucas said: "The Home Office's cruel and callous inflexibility on English language requirements is putting vulnerable refugees in danger and tearing families apart. I have constituents with spouses and children stranded in Afghanistan, who are at risk from the Taliban, have had no formal education so face enormous language barriers, and have no support network. These exceptional circumstances cannot be met with an obstinate and uncaring bureaucracy."

Tan Dhesi, the Labour MP for Slough, has also been approached by constituents unable to reunite with their families. He said the government's record on supporting applicants in Afghanistan "has been abysmal". He added: "Both the Arap scheme and the ACRS have been beset with persistent failures from the start, leaving many in fear for their lives in Afghanistan.

"Since the Taliban's takeover, I have been approached by numerous Slough constituents in need, including those who simply want to reunite their families and ensure their safety. The government must address these serious concerns in this delicate and grave situation."

The chair of the all-party parliamentary group for Afghan women and girls, Wendy Chamberlain MP, said: "Afghan women were promised support by the government when the Taliban seized power, but instead we have seen bureaucratic block after bureaucratic block put between them and reaching safety with their families. The government must apply common sense and compassion to its policies - whether it is biometrics or language requirements."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to help at-risk people in Afghanistan and, so far, we have brought around 24,600 vulnerable people to safety. The English language requirement was introduced so that those coming to the UK are able to contribute and integrate into society. We expect applicants to take these tests whenever possible but we will consider details of any exceptional circumstances for those unable to do so."

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Sir Rod Stewart to dedicate anti-war song to Ukraine during upcoming tour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66P7-4VP1-JBNF-W02F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 24, 2022 Monday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 736 words

**Byline:** Naomi Clarke

**Highlight:** The rocker confirmed the shows will be the last time he plans to play his classic songs on tour.

**Body**

Sir [*Rod Stewart*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rod-stewart) has said he will dedicate an anti-war song to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) during his upcoming tour as he feels the conflict is “beyond belief now”.

The veteran singer-songwriter, 77, recently revealed he has been supporting a family of seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** by renting them a home and paying their bills.

Sir Rod said he broke his usual stance of not discussing his charitable work as he wanted to inspire others to help those in the war-torn country.

View this post on Instagram [*A post shared by Sir Rod Stewart (@sirrodstewart)*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cj26wIqtiql/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

The singer told the PA news agency he will perform his 1991 hit Rhythm Of My Heart, which he described as an “anti-war song”, during the tour which kicks off in [*Nottingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nottingham) on November 16.

“I dedicate that to the Ukrainians, and we bring up a Ukrainian flag and [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zelensky) (on the big screen),” he said.

Reflecting on how he plans to address the conflict, he added: “I use some vulgar words when describing Putin.

“And I try and say, ‘Listen this is not the Russian people’s fault’. A lot of people have been arrested and put in prison.

“This is a man and his regime so don’t blame all Russians. I’ve been to Russia many times and I’ve found the most friendly people on earth, I really have. So it’s not their fault, it’s this asshole.”

Sir Rod said he and his wife [*Penny Lancaster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/penny-lancaster) were inspired to take action after witnessing events of the war on the news.

“When the war started, in this household we were shocked beyond shock. Because I was born just after the war and so my family came through the Second World War, and to see another ground war with tanks, I never thought we’d say the day, it was just shocking and it’s just beyond belief now.”

After the war broke out, the singer and his family hired three trucks filled with supplies and had them driven to the border of Ukraine, before using the same vehicles to transport a group of refugees to safety in Berlin.

He said his family member Warren Cady had been “instrumental” in helping to organise the project and the home for the Ukrainian couple Rostylsav and Olena and their five children.

Sir Rod said he hopes that being vocal about these actions can inspire others to help in whatever way they can.

“I’m a knight, I’ve got to do something and I hope other people follow. My charitable work in the future will be quiet but I just wanted somebody else to pick up the flag and maybe rent a house for someone.”

He was knighted in the Queen’s 2016 birthday honours for services to music and charity.

The rocker said it has been “an honour to have entertained the British public since I was 19” but confirmed the upcoming shows will be the last time he plans to play his classic songs on tour.

Asked whether he still enjoyed touring after decades on the road, he told PA: “I love it but this will be the last go around.

“I can’t imagine I’m going to play in certain cities again doing these songs. So the end of next year I’m going to stop.”

He underlined that he is not retiring but he plans to focus on US classics from the Great American Songbook and his forthcoming album with Jools Holland of swing music.

The singer admitted it will be difficult to move on from his classic hits but jokingly added: “I don’t want to be singing Hot Legs when I’m 84. I said that when I was in my 30s about my 60s and I’m still singing it.”

Sir Rod and Lancaster are close friends of the new King, with the singer performing for the royal family on many occasions including the Platinum Jubilee concert in June for the late Queen.

The singer said he would be “honoured” to sing for Charles again, potentially at his coronation, but feels it will be a less lavish affair this time.

“I think they’re going to make it something very simple this time and I think that’s admirable, I think with the way the economy is in Great Britain, I think it would be somewhat foolish to see lavish expenses on a coronation”, he said.

He added that he wants the King to enjoy his time on the throne, saying: “He’s had a long apprenticeship and I don’t think William should take over just yet.

“I want Charles to enjoy this. This is what he’s lived for, this is what he’s trained for and he’s going to be very good at it.”

Next month will see Sir Rod kick off a string of UK arena dates, playing in cities including Nottingham, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Belfast, London, Birmingham and Manchester.

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Afghan women kept apart from British husbands by UK government’s ‘callous’ English rules*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-D0R1-DY4H-K1XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 20, 2023 Sunday 9:05 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1087 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Exclusive: MPs warned Afghan women face barrier getting to the UK due to ‘bureaucratic’ English language rules

**Body**

[*Afghan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghan) women stuck under [*Taliban*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taliban) rule are being barred from reuniting with their British husbands because they cannot meet the English language standards needed to come to the UK.

MPs have warned Afghan women face huge language barriers trying to get to Britain due to “bureaucratic” Home Office rules requiring them to prove a certain level of English.

Wives can apply for an exemption to the language requirements, but these are not easy to obtain. In Afghanistan, the Taliban has banned women’s education, meaning most cannot learn a language. They are also prohibited from travelling outside without a man.

Meanwhile, all English language test centres in Afghanistan have closed, meaning Afghan women would only be able to do the test if they are in a neighbouring country, like Pakistan. In one case, a woman was [*denied a visa to travel to Pakistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghans-arap-taliban-documents-mod-b2288164.html) – leaving her in an impossible situation.

There is no English language requirement for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have come to the UK in their thousands and no equivalent requirement for family members or wives of Afghans who have been accepted into the UK under the government’s [*two main resettlement schemes, ACRS and Arap*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghans-british-army-arap-rejected-taliban-b2348067.html).

One MP said the women had had “bureaucratic block after bureaucratic block put between them and reaching safety with their families”. Another said the “cruel and callous inflexibility” of language requirements was “putting vulnerable refugees in danger and tearing families apart”.

In one case, a British-Afghan man has been unable to secure a visa for his wife and one-year-old daughter, who are stuck in Afghanistan, to travel to Pakistan to complete biometric tests necessary for the spousal visa.

Prior to the Taliban takeover, the wife had been studying English and had taken the required test and failed. She has been unable to continue her education under the new regime. Attempts by the husband to teach his wife English over the phone have also failed as the internet connection is too bad, he told The Independent.

The man, who was visiting his family in Afghanistan when the Taliban took over the country in August 2021, accused the government of “playing a game” with his family, adding: “I can’t see my baby. I have paid around £7,000-8,000 in Home Office and solicitor’s fees. A decision needs to be taken, because if something happens to my wife, who is going to be responsible?”

In another case, a British-Afghan father has been unable to find lawyers to help him apply for an exemption and is concerned by government guidance that says his wife must meet certain English requirements.

Hewaad Farhad said he was despairing at his situation and did not know how to get a spousal visa for his wife because she cannot speak English.

Mr Farhad, who lives in former prime minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://indy-web-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) ’s former constituency in Uxbridge, said: “I grew up in the UK, my life – everything – is according to UK society. In Afghanistan, I don’t have anything. I can’t work and it is dangerous being a British person living in Afghanistan.”

Since the Taliban takeover, his wife can’t get access to any teaching and is not allowed outside without a male companion. Her brother tried to start teaching her some English, Mr Farhad said, but she has not been able to make progress as she cannot read and write.

“There are no English classes and no education for women,” he said. “She hasn’t been to school and when she grew up she was living in a village far away from school and her father did not want her to go.”

Speaking through a translator, his wife, who we are not naming for safety reasons, said: “It is very stressful here, it is very depressing living with just the kids. The kids and myself miss him so much.

“We are scared that we are going to get into trouble and I’m not safe here. Learning English is very difficult and challenging for me. Whatever it takes for me to get to the UK I want to do it.”

Caroline Lucas MP, who has constituents with wives and children stuck in Afghanistan, has written to immigration minister Robert Jenrick to ask for a review of decisions made on Afghanistan visas.

In one of her constituents’ cases, a British father’s wife and young children fled to a third country following the Taliban takeover. The wife does not speak English and is unable to learn in the country she is in as she is illiterate and needs to take care of her children.

The Home Office initially refused her spousal visa application, saying she had not met the English language requirement. But the decision was overturned after Ms Lucas’s intervention.

Ms Lucas said: “The Home Office’s cruel and callous inflexibility on English language requirements is putting vulnerable refugees in danger and tearing families apart. I have constituents with spouses and children stranded in Afghanistan, who are at risk from the Taliban, have had no formal education so face enormous language barriers, and have no support network.

“These exceptional circumstances cannot be met with an obstinate and uncaring bureaucracy.”

Tan Dhesi, Labour MP for Slough, has also been approached by constituents unable to reunite with their families.

He said the government’s record on supporting applicants in Afghanistan “has been abysmal”. He added: “Both the Arap scheme and the ACRS have been beset with persistent failures from the start, leaving many in fear for their lives in Afghanistan.

“Since the Taliban’s takeover, I have been approached by numerous Slough constituents in need, including those who simply want to reunite their families and ensure their safety. The government must address these serious concerns in this delicate and grave situation.”

The chair of the all-party parliamentary group for Afghan women and girls, Wendy Chamberlain MP, said: “Afghan women were promised support by the government when the Taliban seized power, but instead we have seen bureaucratic block after bureaucratic block put between them and reaching safety with their families.

“The government must apply common sense and compassion to its policies – whether it is biometrics or language requirements.”

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The UK has made an ambitious and generous commitment to help at-risk people in Afghanistan and, so far, we have brought around 24,600 vulnerable people to safety.

“The English language requirement was introduced so that those coming to the UK are able to contribute and integrate into society. We expect applicants to take these tests whenever possible but we will consider details of any exceptional circumstances for those unable to do so.”

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Live updates l Turkey plans for Russian tourists despite war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BY-CBR1-JBNF-W368-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 2, 2022 Monday 7:28 AM GMT

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**Length:** 826 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Turkey's president says the war in Ukraine shouldn't negatively affect the tourism season

**Body**

ISTANBUL - Turkey's president says the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) shouldn't negatively affect the tourism season.

After prayers marking the beginning of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, President [*Recep Tayyip Erdogan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/recep-tayyip-erdogan) said that Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) is "very sensitive" about [*Turkey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turkey) 's need for tourism revenue and has already pledged to give his support.

Turkey suffers from skyrocketing inflation and needs tourists' foreign currencies. Erdogan added Saudi tourists would also be arriving following his visit to Saudi Arabia last week.

In an interview with Greek state broadcaster ERT, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russian tourism brought revenue to neighboring Greece and Turkey and called this "blood money." Zelenskyy pointed to a double standard where Turkey acted as a meditator between Ukraine and Russia while preparing destinations for Russian tourists.

Erdogan said he'll speak with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week to discuss speeding up evacuations from the besieged Ukrainian city of Mariupol and to find a way for grain exports from Ukraine and Russia.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Evacuation of civilians from Ukrainian steel plant begins

- Pelosi, in surprise Kyiv trip, vows unbending US support

- Jill Biden to meet ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Romania, Slovakia

Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories on Russia's war on Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

LVIV, Ukraine - The British military believes more than a quarter of all troops Russia deployed for its war in Ukraine are now "combat ineffective."

The comment Monday came as part of a daily briefing on Twitter the British Defense Ministry has offered about the ongoing war in Ukraine. The British military believes Russia committed over 120 so-called "battalion tactical groups" into the war since February, which represents 65% of all of Moscow's combat strength.

The ministry said, "It is likely that more than a quarter of these units have now been rendered combat ineffective."

Combat ineffective is a term that refers to a military's ability to wage war. Losing soldiers to wounds and death, as well as having equipment damaged or destroyed, affects that.

The British military said that some of Russia's most elite forces, like the VDV Airborne, "have suffered the highest levels of attrition."

It added: "It will probably take years for Russia to reconstitute these forces."

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KYIV, Ukraine - Svyatoslav Palamar, deputy commander of the Azov Regiment that is helping defend the last section of Mariupol not occupied by the Russians, said he was glad evacuations had begun.

Palamar hoped the evacuations from the Azovstal steel mill continue until everyone in the plant, civilians and soldiers, has gotten out. It's been difficult even to reach some of the wounded inside the plant, he told The Associated Press in an interview from Mariupol on Sunday.

"There's rubble. We have no special equipment. It's hard for soldiers to pick up slabs weighing tons only with their arms," he said.

The Azovstal plant is strewn with mines, rockets, artillery shells and unexploded cluster ordnance, he said.

He said the presence of children and civilians makes it harder to fight, and there are many injured people in the plant. There's not enough water, he said, and the air smells of decomposing bodies.

The fighters in the plant will continue to resist until they receive an order not to, Palamar said.

\_\_\_

An explosive device damaged a railway bridge Sunday in the Kursk region of Russia, which borders Ukraine, and a criminal investigation has been started. The region's government reported the blast in a post on Telegram.

Recent weeks have seen a number of fires and explosions in Russian regions near the border, including Kursk. An ammunition depot in the Belgorod region burned after explosions were heard, and authorities in the Voronezh region said an air defense system shot down a drone. An oil storage facility in Bryansk was engulfed by fire a week ago.

The explosion Sunday caused a partial collapse of the bridge near the village of Konopelka, on the Sudzha-Sosnovy Bor railway, the report from Kursk said.

"It was a sabotage, a criminal case has been opened," said the region's governor, Roman Starovoit, according to the Russian News Agency TASS. He said there were no casualties, and no effect on the movement of trains.

\_\_\_

KYIV, Ukraine - Four civilians were reported killed and 11 more were injured by Russian shelling in the Donetsk region on Sunday, the Ukrainian regional governor said that evening.

The deaths and seven of the injuries were in the northern city of Lyman, governor Pavlo Kyrylenko wrote in a Telegram post. One person also died in the city of Bakhmut from injuries received in the Luhansk region, he said.

In the same post, Kyrylenko said that it was impossible to determine the number of victims in the bombed-out port city of Mariupol and the town of Volnovakha, which is controlled by pro-Kremlin separatists.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis praised for her handling of booing from Jimmy Kimmel Live audience*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KX-8291-DY4H-K2RT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 13, 2022 Thursday 5:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 772 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** Kunis was booed several times by the New York audience for her controversial opinions on pizza

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) has been praised for her response to being booed multiple times during a recent appearance on [*Jimmy Kimmel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jimmy-kimmel) Live.

Last week, New York-native Jimmy Kimmel returned to his hometown to host a series of shows at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Howard Gilman Opera House, where Kunis promoted her new Netflix film, [*Luckiest Girl Alive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luckiest-girl-alive). After Kunis spoke about a wardrobe malfunction that happened right before the show, Kimmel told the Black Swan actor: “You seem like you could be a New Yorker, but you’re not a New Yorker.”

“No, I’m not,” she confirmed, followed by a subtle boo from an audience member.

“What? Who booed?” Kunis asked the audience, before jokingly apologising to the New York crowd.

“Well, you won’t like the rest of this interview,” she added.

The Friends With Benefits star went on to share a story about her family’s brief stay in New York when they first moved to the United States from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

“I was born in Ukraine but when I came to the states, I came through New York,” she said, with cheers from the audience.

“Except, I think it was, like, Queens,” Kunis continued. “And then you’re put up in a hotel to go through your medical checks to make sure you can be entered into the country. But it’s next to a cemetery, this is what I remember.”

While Kunis could only recall a cemetery across the street from the “weird” hotel she was in with her family, she did remember that it was the first time she ever had a burger and Coca-Cola soda.

“What I recall is a cemetery across the street and this weird hotel that I was in, but I did have a burger for the first time in New york and a Coca-Cola,” she said.

Kimmel noted that Kunis had a “pretty great memory”, before asking whether she had pizza for the first time in New York as well.

“Are you ready?” Kunis said, anticipating more boos from the crowd of New Yorkers in the audience. “No.”

Kunis was then teased by the audience for her opinions on pizza, but tried to make up for it by sharing that her father worked as a Dominos Pizza delivery man when they moved to Los Angeles, California. However, that only elicited more boos from the audience, who suggested that New York pizza is superior to the pies in Los Angeles.

The That ’70s Show alumna went on to say that due to her father’s job, she grew to hate pizza because it was all her family ate at the time. Of course, the admission prompted a “symphony of boos” from the crowd, to which Kunis got up from her seat and jokingly said, “I’m out of here!” before sitting back down.

“I had it every day for a year, possibly more,” she explained. “It was too much. Because we were so poor, my dad would make us pizza for dinner, and he tried really hard to get creative but you can only be so creative.”

“My brother came out of it loving pizza and my mom and I to this day are like, ‘Ugh, pizza,’” she added. “I’ll choke it down because my kids like pizza, my husband likes pizza, but I’m never the person that goes, ‘You know what I feel like? Pizza.’”

However, Kunis’ husband and notorious prankster, Ashton Kutcher, decided to give his wife a pizza oven for their anniversary. “But here’s the irony, guys. My husband for our anniversary got me a pizza oven,” she said, laughing. “Now not only do I not like pizza, I make them!”

Mila Kunis is one of the funniest and most down to earth celebrities.Her whit is also impressive. I love her comedic timing when the crowd started the boo’s she handled it like a boss. Great interview. [*#jimmykimmel*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/jimmykimmel?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) — Jake Ryan ️ (@jakeryan2112) [*October 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jakeryan2112/status/1579241942541815808?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kunis’ appearance on Jimmy Kimmel Live was praised by fans online for her “comedic timing” and easygoing attitude when faced with boos from the crowd.If you boo Mila Kunis, you are not my people…— Sports Fan (@BroncosFanatix) [*October 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BroncosFanatix/status/1579070179568680962?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Mila Kunis is one of the funniest and most down to earth celebrities,” one fan wrote on Twitter. “Her whit is also impressive. I love her comedic timing when the crowd started the boo’s she handled it like a boss. Great interview.”

“If you boo Mila Kunis, you are not my people,” another fan tweeted.

Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher were married in 2015 and share two children – Wyatt, seven, and Dimitri, five. Earlier this year, the couple [*raised nearly $35m for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/zelensky-mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-b2040240.html) amid Russia’s ongoing invasion of the country.

Because of her humanitarian efforts, Mila Kunis was recently included on [*Time magazine’s list of 100 most influential people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/time-100-list-influential-2022-b2085518.html) of 2022.

Meanwhile, [*Luckiest Girl Alive viewers have urged Netflix to add a trigger warning to the start of the film. Released on Friday, the 15-certificate movie features intense scenes of sexual assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/luckiest-girl-alive-netflix-mila-kunis-triggering-b2199155.html).

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson wants first 'illegal' migrants flown to Rwanda in six weeks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6578-SBK1-JBNF-W1C5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 12:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 781 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** The Government is braced for its widely criticised plans to be challenged in the courts.

**Body**

The Prime Minister wants to see the first migrants handed a 'one-way ticket' to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) flown out in roughly six weeks as the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) battles to curb Channel crossings.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is reportedly keen for the first flight carrying those deemed to have arrived in the UK illegally - including those taking to the water to embark on the perilous journey in small boats - to leave late next month, marking the start of plans to move thousands within the next few years.

But the Government is braced for the widely criticised plans to be challenged in the courts, which could prove an obstacle to their progress.

[*Andrew Griffith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-griffith) , the director of policy at No 10, said it is hoped the scheme will be operational in "weeks, or a small number of months".

Asked when he expects the first person will be sent to Rwanda, the Conservative MP told BBC Newsnight: "It doesn't require new legislation - we think that we can do this under the existing conventions.

"And therefore this should be possible to be implemented and operationalised in weeks, or a small number of months. So we are ready to go in that sense."

But both the PM and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) have acknowledged the plans could be challenged in the courts.

The costs of the programme remain uncertain, but The Times reported that each migrant sent to Rwanda is expected to set British taxpayers back between £20,000 and £30,000.

The newspaper said this would cover accommodation both before and after the journey, as well as the cost of a seat on the flight itself.

It comes as the Home Secretary has struck a £120-million economic deal with Rwanda, and cash for each removal is expected to follow.

On Thursday, protesters wielding signs with the message "refugees welcome here" gathered outside the Home Office, declaring their intention to "fight back" against the move.

Charities condemned the plans as "cruel and nasty", claiming they would fail to address the issue and cause more "suffering and chaos", while criticising Rwanda's human rights track record.

But Mr Johnson insisted the scheme was not "draconian and lacking in compassion".

Giving a major speech in Kent, he said the agreement was "uncapped" and Rwanda would have the "capacity to resettle tens of thousands of people in the years ahead".

He said the partnership would be "fully compliant with our international legal obligations", while insisting Rwanda was "one of the safest countries in the world".

"But nevertheless, we expect this will be challenged in the courts," Mr Johnson added, as he hit out at what he called a "formidable army of politically motivated lawyers".

During a visit to the Rwandan capital of Kigali, Ms Patel said the Home Office was prepared for legal challenges, as she accused lawyers of "fleecing the British taxpayer".

I Stephanie Boyce, the president of the Law Society of England and Wales, warned there were "serious questions" about whether the plans complied with international law.

"It is particularly disappointing - this week of all weeks - the Government is repeating misleading suggestions that legal challenges are politically motivated," she said.

"If the Government wishes to avoid losing court cases, it should act within the law of the land."

... people of this country have been so, so much more generous than this Government

Nadia Whittome

Labour MP Nadia Whittome, who attended the protest outside the Home Office, said the "incredible" turnout showed the Government had "badly misjudged the mood of the country" on the issue.

She told the PA news agency: "I think people's response to Afghan refugees, to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***... people of this country have been so, so much more generous than this Government.

"I think most people that you know agree, it's not a Sudanese engineer who put up our energy prices by 54%. It's not a Syrian labourer who got rid of all our council homes and then didn't build any more.

"It's the fault of this Government that people are struggling. People don't have the lives that we deserve."

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer called the plans "unworkable", "extortionate" and an attempt to distract from Mr Johnson being fined for breaching his own pandemic laws.

The deal with Rwanda is understood to effectively be a fresh removals arrangement, where those deemed by the Government as inadmissible under UK asylum rules will be relocated.

It is thought the East African nation's government will process the claims and those who are successful will be provided Rwandan refugee status.

This would be different from plans to offshore processing of UK asylum claims, which would involve sending migrants to another country or location while their applications are determined and then returned once approved.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*We cannot solve the refugee crisis with a culture war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658C-5TR1-JCS0-D4KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 20, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 843 words

**Byline:** VINCE CABLE

**Body**

Over Easter, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke powerfully for Britain's committed Christian minority when he said that sending asylum seekers to Rwanda was "against the judgement of God".The response from critics has been, essentially, "what has this got to do with God?" The home secretary has invited God, through the archbishop, to come up with his own solution.

Both sides are talking at cross-purposes here. On one hand, refugee and human rights campaigners condemn the new policy as "inhumane". On the other, those who say or imply: "Of course it is inhumane. The point is to deter people from attempting dangerously to cross the Channel in dinghies."

My heart is with the archbishop, but I can't help but think that, for the secular majority of Britons, practical arguments about what works weigh more heavily than spiritual judgements or the government's attempts to stir up a culture war.

The politician who best captured a spirit of what I would call "enlightened practicality" was Yvette Cooper, Labour's shadow home secretary. She wisely refused to be drawn onto the moral high ground, to denounce the human rights abuses of the Rwandan government and our own, in interviews.

Instead she had technical but sensible proposals starting with the slow and difficult task of cooperating with the French authorities to track down and prosecute criminal trafficking gangs: this being more effective than sending asylum seekers to central Africa.

Much of the difficulty comes because the distinction between someone seeking asylum, and someone (supposedly less deserving) merely seeking a better life, is not nearly as clear as people make out.The cross-channel dinghies may well contain Afghans or Syrians, Eritreans or Somalis who are fleeing conflict and persecution but they are also fleeing hunger and the hopelessness of "safe" refugee camps.

In other words, the difference between "economic" and "political" refugees has therefore become largely meaningless. But decisions must be made as to who stays and who goes.

In the latest full year, 13,000 were given refugee status out of 48,000 seeking asylum (out of a net immigration figure of around 300,000).The numbers are relatively modest, but the public concern is that global demand is potentially almost infinite while the British supply of compassion is finite.

I don't buy the cynical view that the British public is irredeemably racist and must be constantly placated by organised nastiness. But I don't buy either the idealistic optimism of the Canterbury pulpit that there is unlimited goodwill towards those in desperate need.

The problem with British public opinion, and the politicians who are led by it, is that it is fickle and unpredictable, and has long been so.The considerable demand for a more open approach to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - embodied recently in The Independent's own campaign to which 250,000 readers have signed up - is a contrast with the general attitude that had prevailed over refugees fleeing from further afield.

A similar capriciousness was on display in the late 1960s when an exodus of Kenyan Asians prompted panic legislation to bar their entry and led to an outpouring of hostility towards non-white immigrants in general expressed in Enoch Powell's infamous "rivers of blood" speech. Three years later a Conservative government freely admitted Asians expelled from Uganda to apparent public approval. As an east African Asian by heritage, Priti Patel will be aware of the history, as I am through marriage.

There have been similar panics and reversals in attitudes towards refugees from Hong Kong, the former Yugoslavia and Syria and to economic migrants from the Commonwealth and latterly eastern Europe.

All this means that amidst the partisanship of British politics, there is now a rough consensus. Governments must demonstrate control over their borders.Some economic migration is necessary and desirable, but must be managed based on individual migrants' usefulness rather than their ethnicity or nationality or arbitrary net migration targets. Humanitarian crises, as in Syria, Afghanistan and - now - Ukraine should be met by rationed generosity.

There remains the issue of those who are trying to get here "illegally", claiming asylum, but for whom legal routes are largely blocked.The answers are not to be found either on high moral ground or in grubby, expensive gimmicks like the Rwanda scheme.

The real solutions lie in the mundane but apparently elusive work of cross-border law enforcement: a European-wide policy on asylum was a hated bogeyman of Eurosceptics before Brexit, but now looks a more useful idea than ever.

Sadly, the home secretary is more interested in the efficient expulsion of those who do not meet the government's mark, than in efficient recruitment of competent Home Office staff to process applications quickly and to mete out safe, humane treatment to those who do not qualify to stay.

Sir Vince Cable is the former leader of the Liberal Democrats and served as secretary of state for business, innovation and skills from 2010 to 2015

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis praised for her handling of booing from Jimmy Kimmel Live audience*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KB-0W61-DY4H-K2T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 10, 2022 Monday 3:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 776 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** Kunis was booed several times by the New York audience for her controversial opinions on pizza

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) has been praised for her response to being booed multiple times during a recent appearance on [*Jimmy Kimmel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jimmy-kimmel) Live.

Last week, New York-native Jimmy Kimmel returned to his hometown to host a series of shows at the Brooklyn Academy of Music’s Howard Gilman Opera House, where Kunis promoted her new Netflix film, [*Luckiest Girl Alive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/luckiest-girl-alive). After Kunis spoke about a wardrobe malfunction that happened right before the show, Kimmel told the Black Swan actor: “You seem like you could be a New Yorker, but you’re not a New Yorker.”

“No, I’m not,” she confirmed, followed by a subtle boo from an audience member.

“What? Who booed?” Kunis asked the audience, before jokingly apologising to the New York crowd.

“Well, you won’t like the rest of this interview,” she added.

The Friends With Benefits star went on to share a story about her family’s brief stay in New York when they first moved to the United States from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

“I was born in Ukraine but when I came to the states, I came through New York,” she said, with cheers from the audience.

“Except, I think it was, like, Queens,” Kunis continued. “And then you’re put up in a hotel to go through your medical checks to make sure you can be entered into the country. But it’s next to a cemetery, this is what I remember.”

While Kunis could only recall a cemetery across the street from the “weird” hotel she was in with her family, she did remember that it was the first time she ever had a burger and Coca-Cola soda.

“What I recall is a cemetery across the street and this weird hotel that I was in, but I did have a burger for the first time in New york and a Coca-Cola,” she said.

Kimmel noted that Kunis had a “pretty great memory”, before asking whether she had pizza for the first time in New York as well.

“Are you ready?” Kunis said, anticipating more boos from the crowd of New Yorkers in the audience. “No.”

Kunis was then teased by the audience for her opinions on pizza, but tried to make up for it by sharing that her father worked as a Dominos Pizza delivery man when they moved to Los Angeles, California. However, that only elicited more boos from the audience, who suggested that New York pizza is superior to the pies in Los Angeles.

The That ’70s Show alumna went on to say that due to her father’s job, she grew to hate pizza because it was all her family ate at the time. Of course, the admission prompted a “symphony of boos” from the crowd, to which Kunis got up from her seat and jokingly said, “I’m out of here!” before sitting back down.

“I had it every day for a year, possibly more,” she explained. “It was too much. Because we were so poor, my dad would make us pizza for dinner, and he tried really hard to get creative but you can only be so creative.”

“My brother came out of it loving pizza and my mom and I to this day are like, ‘Ugh, pizza,’” she added. “I’ll choke it down because my kids like pizza, my husband likes pizza, but I’m never the person that goes, ‘You know what I feel like? Pizza.’”

However, Kunis’ husband and notorious prankster, Ashton Kutcher, decided to give his wife a pizza oven for their anniversary. “But here’s the irony, guys. My husband for our anniversary got me a pizza oven,” she said, laughing. “Now not only do I not like pizza, I make them!”

Kunis’ appearance on Jimmy Kimmel Live was praised by fans online for her “comedic timing” and easygoing attitude when faced with boos from the crowd.

“Mila Kunis is one of the funniest and most down to earth celebrities,” one fan wrote on Twitter. “Her whit is also impressive. I love her comedic timing when the crowd started the boo’s she handled it like a boss. Great interview.”

“If you boo Mila Kunis, you are not my people,” another fan tweeted.

Mila Kunis is one of the funniest and most down to earth celebrities.Her whit is also impressive. I love her comedic timing when the crowd started the boo’s she handled it like a boss. Great interview. [*#jimmykimmel*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/jimmykimmel?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) — Jake Ryan ️ (@jakeryan2112) [*October 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/jakeryan2112/status/1579241942541815808?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) If you boo Mila Kunis, you are not my people…— Sports Fan (@BroncosFanatix) [*October 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BroncosFanatix/status/1579070179568680962?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher were married in 2015 and share two children – Wyatt, seven, and Dimitri, five. Earlier this year, the couple [*raised nearly $35m for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/zelensky-mila-kunis-ashton-kutcher-b2040240.html) amid Russia’s ongoing invasion of the country.

Because of her humanitarian efforts, Mila Kunis was recently included on [*Time magazine’s list of 100 most influential people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/time-100-list-influential-2022-b2085518.html) of 2022.

Meanwhile, [*Luckiest Girl Alive viewers have urged Netflix to add a trigger warning to the start of the film. Released on Friday, the 15-certificate movie features intense scenes of sexual assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/luckiest-girl-alive-netflix-mila-kunis-triggering-b2199155.html).

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Concerns Homes for Ukraine scheme is being ‘quietly phased out’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KY-DJJ1-DY4H-K4Y7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 13, 2022 Thursday 11:27 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 875 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Concern is growing that the Homes for Ukraine scheme is being ‘quietly phased out’, groups have said.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has been urged to “be part of the solution, not further trauma” for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** by ensuring they can find housing when they come to move on from sponsored placements.

Concern is growing that the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme is being “quietly phased out”, groups have said.

Hosts want to continue supporting the families they are sponsoring, but are concerned about the scheme’s future and worried that Government support will not increase to match the rising cost of living.

And refugees looking to move to their own accommodation are facing numerous obstacles.

The [*Local Government Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-government-association) (LGA) said it is “deeply concerned” about the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to their council.

The Government said the scheme is continuing and it is seeking to increase the number of new sponsors available.

To see many now facing homelessness, due to a lack of clear mechanisms for housing, is causing much grief

Lesia Scholey, Elmbridge CAN refugee charity

More than 30 organisations have written to the Prime Minister seeking public assurances that the scheme will continue to receive Government backing and financial support.

The open letter reads: “The UK has a proud history of leading the fight against tyrants and standing up for the oppressed.

“Homes for Ukraine sits firmly within that tradition, which is why we hope the Government will now make clear – to host families, and refugees alike – that their commitment remains unwavering.”

The groups – including More in Common, the [*Refugee Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee-council) and the Sanctuary Foundation – are calling for an extra winter payment to recognise hosts’ generosity during the cost-of-living crisis.

Hosts currently receive a £350 a month “thank you” payment, with Lord Richard Harrington lobbying for this to be doubled before standing down as refugees minister in September.

They are also calling for a rental scheme where councils act as guarantors for private landlords, and for a database to be created of landlords willing to rent to refugees.

And they want to see a new refugees minister appointed following Lord Harrington’s departure.

Lesia Scholey, a host who volunteers with the Elmbridge CAN refugee charity in Elmbridge, Surrey, said: “Since the day they arrived seeking refuge and safety in the UK, Ukrainian families, many of whom are mothers and young children, have been asking what will happen to them when a hosting agreement comes to an end.

The Prime Minister should now ensure that hosts and families receive the clarity and extra support they need to feel safe and secure during the coming winter and the year ahead

Luke Tryl, More in Common

“To see many now facing homelessness, due to a lack of clear mechanisms for housing, is causing much grief.

“The [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) must introduce a long-term plan for those on three-year visas and be part of the solution, not further trauma for displaced persons.”

Some 96,800 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme since it was launched in March, latest Government figures show.

The number of Ukrainian households which have become homeless or at risk of becoming so after arriving in England stands at 1,915 – the majority of which are families with children.

These figures, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, also include Ukrainians who arrived under the separate Family Scheme.

YouGov polling for the group More in Common, of 2,000 people in July, suggests the scheme remains popular, with around 70% of the public wanting it to continue, and 15% opposed.

Luke Tryl, UK director at More in Common, said: “As part of her bold commitment to stand by Ukraine and its people, the Prime Minister should now ensure that hosts and families receive the clarity and extra support they need to feel safe and secure during the coming winter and the year ahead.”

James Jamieson, LGA chairman, said it is crucial financial support for sponsors is increased.

He said: “As we approach the end of the initial six-month sponsorships, it is clear that increasing numbers are ending.

“We are deeply concerned at the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless to their council, and in particular the significant rise in the number of those who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.”

Labour’s shadow Levelling Up Secretary Lisa Nandy said: “We are facing the very real prospect of a homelessness emergency this winter as the six-month hosting period comes to an end.

“It would be shameful if Ukrainian families who fled the bombs and bullets of Putin find themselves homeless in Britain.

“The Government has had months to prepare for this but we still haven’t seen a proper plan to continue supporting people and avoid a crisis.”

A Government spokeswoman said: “The Homes for Ukraine scheme will continue as the UK Government and British people continue to go above and beyond to support those fleeing war. All arrivals have access to benefits and employment from day one.

“The majority of sponsors want to continue hosting for longer than six months. Where guests do move on they have a number of options including renting or finding a new sponsor.

“Councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their heads, and receive £10,500 per person to cover costs.”

**Load-Date:** October 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Concerns grow that Homes for Ukraine scheme is being ‘quietly phased out’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KW-GC01-DY4H-K4XB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 13, 2022 Thursday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 875 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** Concern is growing that the Homes for Ukraine scheme is being ‘quietly phased out’, groups have said.

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** October 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*On the Moldovan border... a humanitarian crisis not seen for decades in Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-JMN1-F072-41WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 20, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 9

**Length:** 720 words

**Byline:** ETHAN SCHWARTZ

**Body**

On the drive down from Chisinau, the sun was shining. I turned to one of my colleagues and pointed it out. In more than a week in Moldova, it was only the second time I'd seen sunshine.

When we got out of the car at Palanca the sky had turned grey; soft flakes of snow began to fall. The cold seeped through every layer, burrowing deep into my bones.

Palanca is a flashpoint in the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis Europe has seen in decades. It's also a grey, almost liminal, space. Deep in the Moldovan hinterland, yet only 30-odd miles from Odessa, brown mud and jagged, bare trees abound. Small communities try everything they can to help their neighbours, attempting to bring some measure of solace and support to a world suddenly ruptured.

We walked over to the big white and blue tent with the beer company logos. When we asked to set something up for mothers and babies, this was all they had. We had kitted it out well: heaters, chairs, a changing table, a raised platform with plastic grass for children to sit and play.

Still, it's not enough. Not enough space, not enough chairs, not enough warmth, not enough light. Every day, thousands of people cross the border here. The tents were at the crossing itself, down a small road, one lane each way. Quickly, this small cluster grew - more tents, more cars, more people coming, day and night.

This inevitably became a bottleneck, with government officials, local volunteers, relief workers, and journalists jostling for space with cars, vans, and buses. People were everywhere. There were no signs, no announcements. Families would wait in the tent for hours, unsure where to go, what to do, who to speak to, and who even knew they were waiting.

About three or four days after we first made it to the border, the president visited Palanca and instructed the local authorities to move everything - the tents, the food, the buses, the cars - to a field about three kilometres in. So, the next day, everything moved.

Our new teammates didn't believe me when I said it looked a lot better now. The cars and buses had somewhere to park. There were people calling out destinations like "Chisinau" and "Bucharest" - and on good days the new arrivals only had to wait a few minutes, or maybe an hour or two, before they moved on.

But how do they decide where to go? For those who don't have a clear destination in mind, there's precious little information available about what options are open. In the chaos and the cold, decisions have to be taken quickly. It's hard to guarantee the choices people make will keep them safe.

Some we met wanted to keep moving. Some just spoke about returning home. Others showed us videos of bombed-out buildings, their homes in ruin. Some wanted to help, offered to go around with us as we handed out blankets or information sheets with guidance on managing children's stress in times of crisis.

Many waited anxiously for news of relatives, friends, or distant acquaintances, still in line on the other side. Many held their children - or their pets - under blankets, shivering, trying to get warm.

The village after Palanca is Tudora. Many Tudora residents have opened their doors to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The local pastor organised volunteers to staff the mother and baby tent day and night. His church has become a warehouse, stuffed to the brim with diapers and blankets and other necessities. We worked together to make sure these local communities have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to provide support for as long as they are needed. This will go on for a long time.

Even if the war ends tomorrow, Palanca will still be here. The thousands of Ukrainians who have already passed through will still be here or in shelters in Chisinau or with relatives in Athens, Oslo or Berlin. What has been done in recent days and weeks by Vladimir Putin will take months or years to overcome.

I got back into the car and tried to warm my hands. I had heating and snacks. I had a warm bed in a Chisinau hotel. Our team will be here for at least a year, maybe three or four, but I'm able to go home. In the fog driving to the airport, I could barely see what was coming down the road.

Ethan Schwartz works for IsraAID, the international humanitarian aid NGO, as part of the emergency team in Moldova, responding to the Ukrainian refugee crisis

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Vladimir Putin's advisers scared to tell him the truth, says British spy chief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6543-CTT1-JBNF-W4P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 12:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 758 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The head of Britain's GCHQ spy agency said Russian troops were short of weapons and low on morale.

**Body**

Vladimir Putin's advisers are scared to tell him the truth about the progress of his [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) invasion but the extent of the Russian leader's "misjudgements" must be "crystal clear to the regime", Sir [*Jeremy Fleming*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-fleming) has said.

In a rare public address during a visit to Australia, the head of Britain's [*GCHQ*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gchq) spy agency said Mr Putin had "massively misjudged the situation".

And he warned China not to become "too closely aligned" with the Kremlin.

He said: "It's clear he misjudged the resistance of the Ukrainian people.

"He underestimated the strength of the coalition his actions would galvanise. He under-played the economic consequences of the sanctions regime. He over-estimated the abilities of his military to secure a rapid victory.

"We've seen Russian soldiers - short of weapons and morale - refusing to carry out orders, sabotaging their own equipment and even accidentally shooting down their own aircraft.

"And even though we believe Putin's advisers are afraid to tell him the truth, what's going on and the extent of these misjudgements must be crystal clear to the regime."

He added: "It's become his personal war, with the cost being paid by innocent people in Ukraine and increasingly, by ordinary Russians too."

Speaking at the Australian National University in Canberra, Sir Jeremy said western allies were making "deeply secret intelligence" public to get ahead of Mr Putin's information war, while also tackling cyber threats.

On China, he said the country's long-term interests are not well served by an alliance with a leader that "wilfully and illegally" ignores the international "rules of the road".

His intervention comes after Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) last week directly confronted President Xi Jinping over Beijing's stance on the conflict in Ukraine in what was described as a "frank and candid" discussion.

On Thursday, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will urge Indian prime minister Narendra Modi to work with other democracies to counter Mr Putin's aggression in Ukraine amid reluctance to publicly condemn the actions of Russia - a long-standing ally dating back to the Cold War.

India, which is heavily reliant on Moscow for arms imports, has abstained in a series of votes in the United Nations on the issue.

At home, the Prime Minister defended how quickly Ukrainians fleeing the conflict were being offered visas, as he was warned of the danger of refugee schemes turning into "Tinder for sex traffickers".

Mr Johnson said it was important that "checks both ways" were being carried out before ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** could come to the UK, both to ensure those in need were who they said they were, and also that those offering help were fit to do so.

Appearing in front of the Commons Liaison Committee, Mr Johnson said there had already been cases of "people coming from that war zone who may not be entirely who they say they are" after it was revealed just 2,700 visas have been granted to people wanting to come to the UK under the Homes For Ukraine scheme despite applications reaching 28,300.

The UN refugee agency said four million people have now fled Ukraine since Russia launched its war on February 24.

Mr Johnson said: "What I wanted was a system that was as light touch as possible and would enable people to come here, but would enable us also to do checks.

"We are outside the Schengen system, we have the advantage of being able to clarify people's status, (that) they're bona fide - that's not a bad thing if you want to have a programme that really works and commands confidence."

Dame Diana Johnson, the Labour chair of the Home Affairs Committee, told Mr Johnson that some anti-slavery and refugee groups had warned that the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship "risked operating as Tinder for sex traffickers".

He said: "I think that is one of the reasons why it is important to have as light touch as possible, but to have DBS checks and checks both ways to make sure we have a programme that is really working."

Defending the rate of progress in resettling refugees, the Prime Minister added: "These numbers are climbing."

New laws were also announced on Wednesday which aim to prohibit the maintenance of aircraft or ships belonging to sanctioned Russian oligarchs or their businesses.

The Foreign Office said the new powers, which have been laid in Parliament via a statutory instrument, had been used immediately to sanction Russian businessmen Eugene Shvidler and Oleg Tinkov.

Meanwhile, the finance, trade and shipping sanctions imposed in relation to Crimea have been expanded to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Only one in 10 applications to refugee scheme granted*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6543-S6C1-F072-41G2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 31, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 799 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ministers have been accused of preventing desperately vulnerable people from reaching sanctuary in the UK as it emerged that just one in 10 applications to the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been granted.

Government figures published yesterday show that 28,300 applications have been submitted under the sponsorship scheme since it launched nearly two weeks ago, of which 2,700 have so far been allowed. However, when asked how many Ukrainians had arrived in the UK under the scheme, refugees minister Richard Harrington declined to give a figure, saying it was "too early" to publish the data.

Meanwhile, Labour ministers have sent a letter to home secretary Priti Patel and levelling up minister Michael Gove, urging them to address the "shameful" situation that is leaving refugees waiting "in limbo" before they can reach safety.

The letter, sent jointly by shadow ministers Yvette Cooper and Lisa Nandy, states: "The shameful scale of bureaucracy is preventing desperately vulnerable people from reaching sanctuary in the UK. While the response of the British public has been overwhelming, with more than 150,000 families signed up to open their homes, the system you have created is squandering that generosity and failing to deliver the support that our country rightly wants to provide."

It adds: "The government has known for months about the potential invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It is therefore unacceptable that, more than a month on from the start of the conflict, there has been so little progress, and there are so many people waiting in limbo before they can reach some security and support."

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is designed to allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to Britain and be hosted by members of the public, who will be paid £350 per month for doing so. More than 150,000 people have so far registered their interest in hosting.

Responding to the figures, Sonya Sceats, chief executive at Freedom from Torture, said: "In a month where people across the country signed up to welcome more refugees than the government has in 10 years, these woeful numbers prove why visa-based schemes are an unsuitable gateway for refugees fleeing Ukraine to reach safety here in the UK.

"Increasing reports of horrendous sexual violence against Ukrainian women and girls make it all the more urgent for the government to cut the red tape, so that survivors can get here quickly and access services from specialist trauma services like Freedom from Torture."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Alistair Carmichael described the government's response as "appallingly slow and chaotic, leaving thousands of Ukrainians in limbo trying to get a visa". "Ministers need to work harder and faster to match the compassion shown by the British public. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** should be allowed to come to the UK now, without first having to apply for a visa," he added.

Refugees minister Lord Harrington said: "The response of the British public has been incredible, opening their hearts and homes to the people of Ukraine, and we must do everything we can to make the most of this extraordinary generosity. We are starting to see progress because of changes the Home Office made to streamline the visa process and put additional resources into the system. However, we need to do more and will be making further improvements to bring people to the UK as quickly as possible."

Meanwhile, dozens of refugees who have come to the UK under the scheme have registered as homeless within days of arriving, prompting concern that hosting placements are already breaking down. James Jamieson, chair of the Local Government Association (LGA), told MPs in the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee yesterday that 36 Ukrainian households on the sponsorship programme had presented as homeless to councils.

According to the LGA survey results he was citing, a further 44 Ukrainian families who have arrived under the family scheme have approached local authority homelessness services, while 64 whose status is unknown have also done so. In total, 144 Ukrainian refugee households have presented as homeless since the start of the war across 57 councils. Fewer than two-thirds of all councils responded to the survey, so the true figure is likely to be higher.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Harvard students' site helping Ukraine refugees find housing*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6556-1761-JBNF-W23G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 6:23 AM GMT

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**Length:** 725 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Two Harvard University freshmen have launched a website designed to connect people fleeing Ukraine to those in safer countries willing to take them in

**Body**

Two Harvard University freshmen have launched a website designed to connect people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to those in safer countries willing to take them in - and it's generating offers of help and housing worldwide.

Moved by the plight of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** desperate to escape Russian bombardment across the former Soviet republic, Marco Burstein, 18, of [*Los Angeles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/los-angeles) , and Avi Schiffman, 19, of [*Seattle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/seattle) , used their coding skills to create UkraineTakeShelter.com over three frenzied days in early March.

Since then, more than 18,000 prospective hosts have signed up on the site to offer assistance to refugees seeking matches with hosts in their preferred or convenient locations. On a recent day, Burstein and Schiffman logged 800,000 users.

"We've heard all sorts of amazing stories of hosts and refugees getting connected all over the world," Burstein said in an interview on the Harvard campus. "We have hosts in almost any country you can imagine from Hungary and Romania and Poland to Canada to Australia. And we've been really blown away by the response."

Five weeks into the invasion that has left thousands dead on both sides, the number of Ukrainians fleeing the country topped a staggering 4 million, half of them children, according to the United Nations.

Schiffman, who's been taking a semester off to work on several projects, said from Miami he was inspired to use his internet activism to help after attending a pro-Ukraine rally in San Diego.

"I felt that I could really do something on a more global scale here," he said. "Ukraine Take Shelter puts the power back into the hands of the refugee ... they're able to take the initiative and find the listings and get in contact with hosts by themselves instead of having to freeze on a curb in Eastern Europe in the wintertime."

Among those who have taken in refugees through the website is Rickard Mijarov, a resident of the southwestern Swedish city of Linkoping who's sharing his home with 45-year-old Ukrainian evacuee Oksana Frantseva, her 18-year-old daughter and their cat.

Mijarov and his wife signed up at an embassy indicating they'd help, but then stumbled upon the Harvard students' site and registered there as well.

"The next morning, I had a message from Oksana asking if we had place for them," he said in an interview via Zoom. "It became reality quite fast."

"I was surprised how quickly Rickard answered to me," Frantseva said in halting English. Five days later, she, her daughter and their pet were at the front door.

Burstein and Schiffman designed the platform with combat refugees' particular concerns in mind. They worked to make it as easy to use as possible so someone in immediate danger can enter their location and see the offers of help that are closest to them.

On the hosting side, they also gave prospective hosts the opportunity to indicate what languages they speak; how many refugees they can accommodate; and any restrictions on taking in young children or pets.

To help avoid human trafficking and other hazards that vulnerable refugees face, the platform encourages evacuees to ask hosts to provide their full names and social media profiles, and request a video call to show what accommodations they're offering.

"We know that this is potentially a dangerous situation, so we have a lot of steps in place to ensure the protection of our refugees," Burstein said. "We have a detailed guide that we give to all refugees to help them verify the host that they're talking to - make sure that the person that they may be speaking with on the phone is the same one that they're meeting up with in person."

The two students say they're trying to arrange a meeting with officials from the U.N. refugee agency, and they are also looking to work with Airbnb, Vrbo and other online vacation rental companies.

So far, they've borne all the expenses - a hardship for college students - for web hosting and Google Translate costs. But they're determined to continue as long as possible and are looking into registering as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit so they can apply for grants.

Back in Sweden, Mijarov admits it was a bit unnerving to open his home, but he has no regrets.

"It's the first time we are doing something like this," he said, seated next to Frantseva. "But they're very nice people. So, yeah, going along well."

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Follow Rodrique Ngowi on Twitter at [*https://twitter.com/ngowi*](https://twitter.com/ngowi)

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Why Nigel Farage’s immigration plan would be bad news for the economy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6P-TW71-JBNF-W0MD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 8, 2024 Saturday 5:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1527 words

**Byline:** James Moore

**Highlight:** COMMENT: All the parties are promising curbs on immigration but the Reform leader has gone even further, saying he wants to cut net migration to zero. What would this do to the British economy? James Moore reports

**Body**

Could Britain cope with [*Nigel Farage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nigel-farage) ’s “net zero” [*migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migration) without an economic meltdown? Privately, employers are running scared, not just of Farage but of the [*promises made by Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/politics-explained/tax-labour-party-election-keir-starmer-b2558158.html) and the [*Tories, both desperate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/rishi-sunak-nigel-farage-keir-starmer-election-clacton-b2556459.html) to neutralise [*the threat posed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/nigel-farage-clacton-milkshake-reform-uk-election-b2556291.html) by the Reform Party leader.

They are well aware that Britain needs migrant workers to cope with the [*labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) shortages that bedevil its economy.

Official figures show that the number of job vacancies in the UK outstripped the number of unemployed people available to fill them as recently as the summer of 2022. An improving economy could easily deliver a repeat of that. UK business relies on immigration to keep the wheels of commerce turning. But by how much?

[*Madeleine Sumption*](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/about/people/madeleine-sumption/) , director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, says it is hard to quantify the costs and benefits because “different types of immigration have very different economic impacts, and the economic impact isn’t always the decisive factor when making policy decisions”.

“***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are not expected to have a net positive impact and that is not why they were admitted,” she says. “For some categories, like work visas, the economic impacts are the main consideration. One of the challenges here is that there is no single metric to help policymakers decide which workers to admit.”

However, she adds: “Given the recent increases in salary thresholds in the private sector to £38,700 [for visas], the large majority of private-sector workers would now be expected to make a net positive contribution to public finances, for example. This implies that further restrictions beyond this point would likely have a negative fiscal impact.”

Immigration also has an outsized impact on certain important economic sectors. Take hospitality. Trade body UK Hospitality is keen to stress that 75 per cent of the industry’s workers hail from the UK. But that means 25 per cent come from overseas. In London, that number is much higher.

Will MPs be as keen to talk about migration curbs if there are no baristas to serve them their coffee? Or pull pints in the House of Commons’ many (taxpayer) subsidised bars?

[*Kate Nicholls*](https://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/action-on-growth-investment-and-jobs-critical-in-2024/) , the boss of UK Hospitality, says: “While we recognise the need to control migration, this debate cannot be arbitrary and divorced from economic reality. There needs to be a serious debate about a pragmatic and stable [*employment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/employment) plan that balances investment in skills and training, including reform of the apprenticeship levy, with sensible access to work visas.”

Construction is another industry that has had to call upon overseas workers to cope with labour and skills shortages, which have been made worse by an ageing British workforce and EU staff returning home.

“Putting arbitrary limits on skilled immigration on key roles before a plan for upskilling beds in could stifle economic growth. To that end it is unhelpful to take a broad brush approach to migrant workers given the way it impacts a number of sectors,” says [*Liz Drummond*](https://www.cic.org.uk/about/governance/meet-the-team) from the Construction Industry Council.

These are the uncomfortable realities policymakers beating the anti-immigration drum will face if and when they take power.

The [*latest migration figures*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/net-migration-small-boats-sunak-election-b2550073.html) show that net migration – the difference between the numbers of people arriving in the UK and those leaving – stood at 685,000 in the year to December 2023. That was a 10 per cent fall on the same figures the year before, but are still at historically high levels.

At the last election, net migration was around a third of current levels – and the Tories pledged they would cut it from that number.

In this campaign, both Labour and the Conservatives have said they want to bring down migration but neither has committed to a figure. Only Farage has said he wants net migration to be brought down to zero, with the number of visas for new arrivals affected by the numbers choosing to leave the country.

[*Matthew Percival*](https://www.cbi.org.uk/about-us/our-people/leadership-team/matthew-percival/) , future of work and skills director at the CBI, says it is time for “a more honest conversation about immigration”, recognising that demand for immigrant labour is a symptom of shortages.

“Further restricting visas won’t deliver growth or public services,” he says. “Demand for immigration can be reduced by investment in technology, innovation and skills, and by action to help more people return to work. Businesses want to see all parties at this election put forward credible plans to ease labour shortages and support growth, starting with how they will boost public and private investment.”

Where should those plans focus, bearing in mind that most of the main parties agree that the UK desperately needs economic growth and that labour shortages (as Fell says) will only impede it.

While we recognise the need to control migration, this debate cannot be arbitrary and divorced from economic reality

Kate Nicholls, UK Hospitality

One way of reducing the demand for overseas labour would be to improve the productivity of the existing workforce. In terms of the G7 group of the world’s biggest economies, UK plc is ranked in the middle of the productivity pack, behind the US, Germany and France but ahead of Italy, Canada and Japan.

In 2022 the average UK worker produced roughly 16 per cent less per hour than their German or American peers. So there is clearly room for improvement. However, there are no indications of that changing anytime soon. A House of Commons briefing paper published last month warned that productivity growth has slowed from its 2 per cent trend level in recent years.

Changing this would require heavy investment in skills and training, which all the business leaders I spoke to (including the many who felt immigration was too much of a hot potato for them to touch) would support.

Telecoms billionaire John Caudwell, formerly a big donor to the Conservatives under Boris Johnson, blasted the Tories’ record on investment in a recent Financial Times interview while calling on Labour to be “bold” when it came to investment. The party will need to be, if Keir Starmer is to realise his [*stated ambition to reduce immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/foreign-workers-immigration-keir-starmer-b2555855.html) without damaging the economy.

Another way to reduce labour shortages would be to better utilise the domestic labour force and get more people classed as “economically inactive” into work. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that economic inactivity is running at record levels. Those tarred with this unflattering designation include students, carers, retired people and those incapacitated through health conditions and/or disabilities (also running at record levels).

Prime minister Rishi Sunak recently railed against what he called [*Britain’s “sick note culture”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/disabled-dwp-mel-stride-rishi-sunak-sick-note-culture-scope-b2532721.html) , even though UK rates of absence are actually lower than in the US or Germany. His ally [*Mel Stride*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mel-stride) , at the Department for Work and Pensions, has sought to expand the “fit note” programme and says he wants to see more disabled people working.

The trouble is, says disability charity Scope, the labour market is not a friendly place for them. Director of strategy [*James Taylor*](https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/leadership) says disabled people often face exclusion from the workplace. Employers are often to blame.

“The most common reasons include employer attitudes, lack of flexibility and inadequate support. As a result, the disability employment gap has stubbornly remained at around 30 percentage points for over a decade,” he says.

He also criticised the current welfare system for “forcing disabled people who are too unwell to work into unsuitable jobs by threatening to cut their benefits”.

[*Tony Wilson*](https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/staff/tony-wilson) , director at the Institute for Employment Studies, also criticised the coercive approach and described the labour market as “ailing” in a recent blog post. He urged government to “build a system that is focused on helping more people find better work, on what you can do not what you must do, and on building meaningful partnerships.”

But there is little sign of that at present. Even if it changes, and Britain suddenly enjoys a leap in productivity, the need for some level of immigration will remain, particularly in sectors such as the NHS and social care.

However willing, disabled people aren’t going to be suitable to work as carers. They are more likely to need them. Nor are people who have taken early retirement likely to be keen to take up this sort of work. NHS workers, meanwhile, require extensive training.

It is worth noting that when [*Mishal Husain put Farage under pressure*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nigel-farage-reform-election-immigration-bbc-b2556262.html) in a BBC interview – something few broadcasters have been willing or able to do – the net zero target wobbled a bit.

But Farage’s presence means Labour and the Tories are likely to have to continue to talk about the issue, probably without any reference to the economic impacts of any promises they make.

Unfortunately, as Unison’s general secretary [*Christina McAnea*](https://www.unison.org.uk/author/christinamcanea/) has said: “Until there are sufficient homegrown health and care workers, who are paid enough to keep them in their jobs, the UK is reliant on the overseas staff who choose to come here. Any slowdown is bad news.”

An incoming government of whatever stripe will have to deal with that hard reality once the rhetoric of the general election campaign is over.

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Anyone can see the double standards in how the media covers Ukraine and Palestine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653F-VNW1-JCS0-D07R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 28, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 25

**Length:** 833 words

**Byline:** RAFEEF ZIADAH

**Body**

Like everyone watching the news over the last month, I have been deeply moved by scenes of refugees fleeing the violence in Ukraine, and the destruction visited upon Ukrainian towns and cities.

As someone who has worked with refugees all my life, such images are unfortunately not unfamiliar to me. The biggest surprise, however, has been how such appalling events are reported.

Not long ago, refugees from countries like Iraq and Syria were attempting to cross the English Channel live on British television. This dehumanising spectacle was accompanied by senior politicians competing for who could sound "'toughest" in the face of this "threat".

Now, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being offered the dignified media coverage they undoubtedly deserve - coverage that has long been denied to those coming from countries which may be further away, but where British institutions and arms companies have been and currently are very much present.

I am Palestinian and, like so many other Palestinians, I have been astonished at the contrast in media coverage. Indeed, this topic of conversation comes up almost daily among Palestinians watching events unfold in Ukraine.

We know what it's like to be invaded, bombarded and occupied - we also know what it's like to mobilise, resist, and appeal for solidarity. What we have not experienced, particularly from western media outlets, is comparable supportive coverage.

A year ago, Palestinians were out in the streets of Jerusalem, raising their voices and putting their bodies on the line in protest at plans to expel yet more Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah.

Over the following weeks, Israeli occupation forces brutalised Palestinians in Jerusalem's Old City and inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound - and then, in the Gaza Strip, as high-tech missiles and bombs rained down on the occupied, blockaded and fenced-in enclave.

Palestinians have seen multiple, devastating offensives such as this. For those on the receiving end, it is an overwhelming horror. For those watching from a distance, there is the trauma of watching video clips of destruction - and anger at the dehumanisation of the occupied.

The Israeli army's talking points - created purely to justify and excuse killing and destruction - are uncritically repeated, rather than being treated with the derision they deserve.

Even when the Israeli army's talk of "human shields" or "targeting terrorists" is called into question, western media so often frames the events as two "equal sides" trapped in a "cycle of violence". But just because Israeli authorities have developed reams of legal-sounding excuses for bombing families as they sit in their homes, this doesn't diminish the atrocity of what is happening.

In the western media's coverage of the war in Ukraine, there is a clear framework of invader and invaded, occupier and occupied. Every particular development - from Russian military actions to Ukrainians taking up arms - is reported on through this basic framework.

But when it comes to Palestine, and a decades-old, exhaustively documented regime of colonialism, military rule and apartheid, we hear the same tired refrain of "this is too complicated".

This double standard has not just been played out in the media, of course. Palestinians have also watched as states and institutions have leapt to impose sanctions and other punitive measures against Russia - including the same politicians who stigmatise our appeals for boycotts as counterproductive and the same universities who dismiss our calls to end complicity in Israeli apartheid.

Indeed, the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions compares favourably - with respect to its careful, complicity-focused moral integrity - to some of the confused steps taken by way of protesting Russia's invasion.

Palestinians already know all too well the extent to which we are dehumanised and our narrative marginalised or mocked in western media - but watching the Ukraine coverage has served as a truly stark reminder of the disparity and double standards.

As has been widely noted on social media, the disparity in coverage of Ukraine versus Palestine (and other countries) has actually been highlighted - uncritically and unintentionally - by a number of western journalists in explicitly racialised terms. War is callously described as something inherent to the Middle East - atrocities happen over there, not here.

But it is not just about skin colour and Ukrainians "looking like Europeans". The double standard is also a reflection of western foreign policy, and the ways in which such policies and priorities can be reflected in media coverage.

While my thoughts continue to be with all refugees fleeing violence, I hope that Palestinian demands - of governments and of journalists - will now be heeded to end complicity in Israeli apartheid and cover, compassionately and fairly, our struggle for freedom.

Dr Rafeef Ziadah is a Palestinian poet and a lecturer in politics and public policy at King's College London

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin 'failing' in Ukraine, Boris Johnson says as he promises more arms shipments*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652K-K5K1-JBNF-W3XM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 12:57 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 749 words

**Byline:** Jon Stone

**Highlight:** But prime minister has been snubbed from second part of major gathering of world leaders in Brussels

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has said [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) is "failing" in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as he unveiled a new military support package for the country's defenders.

Britain is to provide 6,000 new defensive missiles and £25m for the Ukrainian armed forces in a bid to help push back the Russian invasion.

It comes as Mr Johnson is set to meet with [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) leaders at a summit in Brussels on Thursday, with the focus of discussions on how to bring an end to the conflict.

Mr Johnson has promised to use the meeting to push for extra support for Ukraine's military. Other issues on the agenda include humanitarian assistance for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and sanctions on Russia.

Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelensky is also expected to speak to leaders at the gathering. Mr Johnson also spoke to Mr Zelensky on Wednesday afternoon ahead of the summit.

Kicking off the meeting on Wednesday Nato secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said the alliance was "concerned" over Russia potentially using chemical weapons in the country.

And he said Mr Putin's government "must stop its nuclear sabre-rattling", branding the approach "dangerous and it is irresponsible".

"Russia must understand that it can never win a nuclear war," Mr Stoltenberg added on the eve of the summit - a major gathering which EU officials in Brussels are describing as an "extravaganza".

But Mr Johnson faces an apparent snub as he arrives in the city, facing exclusion from the second part of the gathering of world leaders.

US president Joe Biden has been invited join the 27 EU presidents and prime ministers for a European Council meeting in the same city on the same day, where discussions about the conflict are expected to continue following the Nato summit.

But despite reports that Mr Johnson wanted to attend the second meeting, he was not invited and will miss the second part of day's proceedings.

The lack of an invitation raised speculation that the prime minister's comments over the weekend, comparing the war in Ukraine to Brexit, played a role in the snub.

Those words sparked fury in Brussels and other EU capitals, with former council president Donald Tusk branding them "offensive" to Ukrainians, British people, and even "common sense".

Officials in Brussels are however downplaying any link between what Mr Johnson said and the lack of an invitation.

A senior EU official noted that European Council president Charles Michel had had "a long phone call with Prime Minister Johnson on Monday" and that this took place after Mr Johnson's remarks.

The official said Mr Johnson would have another opportunity to meet EU chiefs at a meeting of G7 leaders.

"The feeling was that we invite the president of the United States to the European Council, but we are not repeating the formats that we have had around the day," the official added.

Britain was automatically allowed to attend the European Council as a member of the EU, but no longer has a seat on the body, which meets four times a year in the Belgian capital.

Speaking ahead of his attendance at the Nato leg of the gathering, Mr Johnson said: "Vladimir Putin is already failing in Ukraine. The Ukrainian people have shown themselves to be extraordinarily brave and tenacious in defending their homeland, in the face of an unprovoked onslaught.

"But we cannot and will not stand by while Russia grinds Ukraine's towns and cities into dust. The United Kingdom will work with our allies to step up military and economic support to Ukraine, strengthening their defences as they turn the tide in this fight.

"One month into this crisis, the international community faces a choice. We can keep the flame of freedom alive in Ukraine, or risk it being snuffed out across Europe and the world."

A Downing Street spokesperson confirmed Mr Johnson had spoken to Mr Zelensky and said he was updated on the latest developments on the ground.

"The prime minister reiterated his admiration for the bravery of the Ukrainian armed forces and their success in repulsing Russia's onslaught," the spokesperson said.

"He said the bombardment of civilian areas, including the siege of Mariupol, is unconscionable and demands a response from the international community.

"The prime minister set out his intention to use tomorrow's G7 and Nato meetings to increase the pressure on Vladimir Putin's regime and work with partners to substantively increase defensive lethal aid to Ukraine. Leaders would look to address Ukraine's requests and ensure President Zelensky is in the strongest possible position in ongoing peace talks."

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland's warm welcome to Ukrainians hides a dark truth about its asylum policy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-WJC1-JCS0-D4G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 27, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 792 words

**Byline:** ALICE MURPHY

**Body**

Ireland, the Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes, has been lauded the world over for opening its arms to desperate Ukrainians fleeing the murderous mania of Vladimir Putin.

Famed for their friendliness and natural inclination for craic, the Irish trade on a reputation for being one of the most hospitable countries on Earth, greeting strangers with smiles and a willingness to help however, whenever we can.

The beaming faces of thousands of Ukrainians safe and well in scenic spots across the Republic strengthen this stereotype in the purest way possible. But a peek under the rug of the state's ignoble asylum seeker policy suggests such warm céad míle fáiltes are exclusively reserved for a certain kind of people.

Widely considered as modern Ireland's greatest shame, Direct Provision was established in 1999 as a short-term solution to a sharp uptick in the influx of people seeking asylum in the country.

In most European countries, people in need of international protection receive financial assistance which enables them to live in that country while their application is pending. Under Direct Provision, however, this is not the case.

Ireland's accommodation system shunts vulnerable arrivals into Soviet-esque centres in remote areas, where they are served set meals in a canteen at fixed times and handed the princely sum of Euro 38.80 (£29) per adult and Euro 29.80 (£22) per child each week. That's a maximum "allowance" of just Euro 5.50 (£4) a day.

The bulk of these glorified prisons were built in rural backwaters, with limited transport links and little to no support services. Each one has a chequered past; a convent in Waterford, a Midlands trailer park, abandoned Celtic-Tiger-era hotels.

Residents who come from far-flung lands - from North Africa and the Middle East, to southeast Asia and the Balkans - live in communal settings, with single adults sharing rooms with up to eight others of different backgrounds and nationalities. Some centres house only men, some only women. Many have no shared language and many have lived through extreme trauma, having fled torture, trafficking, and tragic conflict.

Before being granted such luxuries, those unlucky enough to find themselves at the mercy of this framework can spend up to six months in cramped city hotel rooms, where they must wait to receive a coveted temporary residence certificate, a lifeline without which asylum seekers cannot claim expenses or obtain a social security number. All they are left with is time.

Arguably unique in its psychological cruelty, Direct Provision prevents people from living in the community, thereby stripping them of their independence and any ability to integrate into Irish society. Until 2018, Direct Provision residents had no right to work. Even now, they must wait six months and that right remains limited.

There are currently 8,205 people - 2,658 of them children - in DP and emergency accommodation facilities across Ireland, according to the latest data. The average length of stay is 24 months, but some languish in the system for as long as 12 years.

The malevolent undertones of Direct Provision are more pronounced by the fact that big business is making bank on the existence of such a system. The majority of centres are managed by private, for-profit contractors on behalf of the State. Aramark, a US catering conglomerate that runs some of Ireland's most iconic cafes and turned over a cool $14.6bn in 2017, is one of them.

Years of criticism from international organisations and tireless activism from human rights groups including the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland has led to small-scale improvements, with asylum seekers now entitled to a driving licence, broader access to education, and a bank account in their own name.

The Irish government last year caved to pressure and pledged to end Direct Provision by 2024, but fears are now mounting that myopia regarding the plight of Ukrainians could scupper that goal.

Just as the Dail granted Ukrainians the right to live and work as EU citizens in Ireland, the body of an elderly woman, believed to be from Zimbabwe, was found in a Cork Direct Provision centre. She had been dead for several days before anyone noticed.

Ireland expects to have welcomed 20,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into the state by the end of this month, which will be five weeks since Russia's invasion began. There they can work, study, and live just as any citizen of the Republic is entitled to live.

While there is no question that my homeland is doing right by the people of Ukraine, such support should be extended to every man, woman and child fleeing war and persecution from every corner of the world. It should not be conditional on geography, geopolitics or how "European" they may appear to be.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



# [*Our scuba-diving royals have badly misjudged the moment*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652M-4H31-JCS0-D3FC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 24, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 33

**Length:** 817 words

**Body**

While war rages in a European country, I find it hard to understand how a future king and queen of England can leave for a royal tour in the Caribbean.

While William and Kate go scuba diving, people are dying in Ukraine. Even though the UK is not involved in the conflict at present, it seems like bad judgement and responsibility on their part to indulge in leisure pursuits in the sunshine instead of remaining at home to monitor events.

Another reason why the monarchy is in its last throes.

Peter Fieldman Madrid

<strong>Energy security</strong>

The contents of the government's energy security strategy remain speculative, but one thing is for certain. It will have major implications for how the UK generates, stores, and consumes energy.

Make no mistake, the UK is in desperate need of a homegrown clean-energy system that simultaneously breaks our dependence on volatile international markets and lessens the financial burden on UK households.

This, however, cannot be achieved through imposition. We welcome the business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng's comments about loosening planning permission, which in truth, was needed years ago and would have helped to save consumers from the sky-high prices they are seeing today.

And while the push back from cabinet now is understandable, it is beholden upon ministers and MPs alike to inform and explain the rationale to their constituents, and to make the connection in the hearts and minds of communities. Early public engagement is absolutely fundamental and goes hand in hand with support.

It is time for the UK to be braver and bolder. To cast the net wider and take a holistic view of the whole energy network. To reinvent the whole energy system. I hope these plans move ahead swiftly so we can begin building the infrastructure that will power the UK for years to come.

Phil Thompson CEO, Balance Power

<strong>Nationality and Borders Bill</strong>

I read Jon Stone's article (Borders bill will mean UK is 'most anti-refugee' country, yesterday) with dismay but no little surprise. The home secretary Priti Patel and her department are, I believe, behind the curve of public opinion and this will come back to haunt them.

The national outpouring of support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been a flashing signal to the government that the public want a fair and transparent way of dealing humanely with displaced men, women and children.

It is shameful that the reasonable House of Lords amendments did not see the charitable light of day and it is draconian business as usual.

Desperate people fleeing heinous regimes should not be penalised or criminalised by harsh strictures. I agree with the charities and Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, that Britain is indeed better than this, but you wouldn't know it from this government in their negation of the fundamental necessity to align oneself with desperate people and walk in their shoes for a change.

Judith A Daniels Great Yarmouth

<strong>Political expediency</strong>

Since the lifting of all restrictions, the number of reported Covid cases has been steadily rising. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising.

Whilst currently the number of deaths has not risen dramatically, that could all be about to change. Meanwhile, of course, dying from the virus is one thing, but many of those who are infected suffer from long Covid afterwards which can be incredibly debilitating for many months - if not years.

That it was unwise of the government to scrap all the restrictions is a very contentious point. Certainly, many scientific experts were - understandably - extremely dubious about doing so.

For Boris Johnson, given the choice of not scrapping restrictions and having to face a no confidence vote in Parliament or scrapping them and remaining prime minister it was a no-brainer.

Suddenly, easing the continuing pressure on the NHS is not important anymore, despite it being a major priority from the beginning of the pandemic and the main reason behind the lockdowns. Those likely to unnecessarily suffer from long Covid are likewise irrelevant from his perspective just as long as he, Boris Johnson, keeps his job.

Linda Evans London

<strong>Fairer voting</strong>

Sean O'Grady succinctly explains why Britain needs a Dissolution and Calling Bill in order to aid a fairer voting structure (Johnson could soon gain a huge electoral advantage, yesterday).

This current Tory party is, by anyone's (other than their) standards, morally corrupt. They have paid lip service to the needs and desires of the British people while using various nefarious methods to achieve their aims.

I have, when younger, voiced the opinion that the Lords needs to be at least reorganised, if not scrapped, but now I feel that they are the last bastion of sanity.

If the present government is not corralled by law, morality, empathy or common sense, then what hope is there for Britain in the future.

Keith Poole Basingstoke

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Black girl's strip-search is a scandal too far for the Met*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651B-P481-F072-40WB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 18, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 34

**Length:** 772 words

**Body**

The clearly racist treatment by Metropolitan Police officers of a black 15-year-old schoolgirl in a Hackney school was truly shocking.

Those officers, and the teaching staff who stood by as the poor girl was subjected to the most unspeakably humiliating strip search should be ashamed of themselves. That the girl's mother was not informed, nor given the opportunity to attend the young girl's ordeal, makes the police and teachers' behaviour even more disgraceful.

The fact that the search found absolutely no drugs merely adds to the unforgivable event. I am glad to see that Hackney Council leaders and London mayor Sadiq Khan are taking up this utterly disgusting case. The Metropolitan Police can hardly withstand yet another significant scandal.

I look forward to confirmation that those responsible will be sacked without delay. The young victim deserves nothing less, and an apology would be adding insult to injury.

Patrick Moore Norwich

<strong>In Nazanin's corner</strong>

Boris Johnson has been quick to claim credit for the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliife, even though his cack-handed comments in parliament contributed to the extension of the poor woman's detention, while Liz Truss has also eagerly seized a photo opportunity.

However, many people have worked towards Nazanin's release, and the politician who has done most is her MP Tulip Siddiq, who has campaigned tirelessly all these years. Oh wait - she's an opposition MP, isn't she? Must keep quiet about her contribution, then.

Sam Boote Nottingham

Is there a more balanced, brave and pragmatic man than Richard Ratcliffe? I have no doubt in my mind that he and his family will embark on this journey together, with the supreme tenacity and stoicism they have all shown during these long and torturous six years.

Yes, there will be problems and normal family life will be a struggle after all the trauma and setbacks. But he is correct, getting the basics right, enjoying reassuring family activities and placing their daughter Gabriella at the heart of their long and hopefully wonderful journey back, will see them through to the other side of this ghastly affair.

This indeed will be the start of a beautiful renaissance of their lives together, which was so cruelly interrupted.

Judith A Daniels Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

<strong>Dodgy deals</strong>

What a sad picture it was to see Boris Johnson courting the Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman in the pursuit of a ready solution to reduce reliance on Russian oil and gas.

Not just sad because of the individuals involved and what they represent, but because it is yet another example of where short-term expediency takes us away from the hard and gruelling task of doing what we know we need to do to wean ourselves off supposedly cheap energy resources, the price of which includes damage to people, to lands, to our climate and to future generations.

As the invasion of Ukraine has surely shown us, once again, that the search for just and sustainable solutions to many problems doesn't lie in our lazy and short-termist tendency to strike deals that deliver short-term solutions.

The answer isn't to turn our face from atrocity because over time, each failure to keep focus on the good only encourages those whose focus lies elsewhere. We know tyrants and dictators can strike those deals just as well as we can. We also know that what separates us from them is the drive to find answers that deliver to individuals within the context of common good.

It's easy to blame individual politicians when they fail to represent us. We can and do occasionally have a socially responsive moment, as has the desire to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** forced the hand of the government.

Let's not let it rest at that. Through local elections, through the next general election, through continued pressure applied to those who deliver public and private services, the burden is now on us to show that we will no longer accept a binary fight between good and bad, between what suits us now and the right actions aimed at the future.

Let's force our politicians to realise that we want more than that, and that if they do not deliver, then they need to make way for others who will.

Gary Wiltshire Scallastle, Isle of Mull

<strong>Red-faced</strong>

I see that ex-unelected bureaucrat and former whisky salesman, David Frost, who once railed against unelected EU bureaucrats and was vocal in promising less red tape after Brexit is now admitting, although only for touring musicians at present, that his deal actually increased red tape.

If this scenario played out on a third-rate TV sitcom I'd probably be laughing by now.

Robert Boston Kent

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*10 years after EU's 'never again' tragedy, little's changed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67FC-PTT1-JBNF-W49X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 31, 2023 Tuesday 8:20 AM GMT

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**Length:** 930 words

**Byline:** Lorne Cook

**Highlight:** Almost a decade after a tragedy that many thought would reshape the European Union's approach to migration, little of substance has changed

**Body**

A decade ago this year, the head of the European Union’s executive branch stood, visibly shaken, before rows of coffins holding the corpses of migrants drowned off the [*Italian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italian) island of Lampedusa. Some of them, small and bone-white, contained the bodies of infants and children.

“That image of hundreds of coffins will never get out of my mind. It is something I think one cannot forget. Coffins of babies, coffins with the mother and the child that was born just at that moment,” Jose Manuel Barroso, then president of the European Commission, said in 2013.

More than 300 people died on Oct. 3, 2013 after a fire broke out on a fishing boat that had set off from Libya on the world's deadliest migration route. The boat, which carried almost 500 people looking for better lives in Europe, capsized only hundreds of meters (yards) from shore.

“The kind of tragedy we have witnessed here so close to the coast should never happen again,” Barroso said. The EU must boost “our surveillance system to track boats, so that we can launch a rescue operation and bring people back to safe grounds before they perish," he added.

Nothing of the sort will be considered by EU leaders at a summit next week. Indeed, almost a decade on, little has improved.

About 330,000 attempts were made to enter Europe without authorization in 2022 — a six-year high. The International Organisation for Migration says more than 25,000 people have died or gone missing trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea since 2014.

The search and rescue mission launched in response to the Lampedusa tragedy was shut down a year later over concern that the Italian navy ships only encouraged people to set out in the hope of being plucked from the sea.

Civilian boats run by charities have been hounded and impounded by governments for trying to save lives. The EU provides vessels and equipment to the Libyan coastguard to prevent people leaving, and Turkey and several other northern African countries get financial support.

At their Feb. 9-10 summit, the EU’s 27 heads of state and government are set to renew a call to beef up borders and pressure the often-impoverished countries that people leave or cross to get to Europe, according to a draft statement prepared for the meeting, seen by The Associated Press.

The leaders will give “full support” so that the border and coastguard agency [*Frontex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frontex) can deliver “on its core task, which is to help Member States protect the external borders, fight cross-border crime and step up returns” – the EU's euphemism for deportation.

The EU will “enhance cooperation with countries of origin and transit through mutually beneficial partnerships,” said the text, which could change before the summit. It did not list the ways the partnerships might be beneficial for those countries, only the means of persuasion that could be used on them.

The EU's aid budget should be put to “the best possible use” to encourage countries to stop people leaving, it said. Those that don’t accept their nationals back would find it harder to get European visas. Bangladesh, Gambia, Iraq and Senegal are already being monitored.

After a meeting last week of interior ministers, the EU’s Swedish presidency said that “both positive incentives and restrictive measures are required. We must make use of all relevant policy areas in this regard, such as visa policy, development cooperation, trade and diplomatic relations.”

Border fences are back on the table, even though the European Commission previously declined to help member countries pay for them, arguing they were not in line with “European values.” Several EU countries, notably Hungary, Austria and Slovenia, have erected border fences after well over one million migrants entered Europe in 2015, most of them war refugees from Syria and Iraq.

A Dutch government position paper circulating in [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels) said that “all types of stationary and mobile infrastructure should be part of a broader package of border management measures, while guaranteeing fundamental rights as enshrined in EU and international law.”

The land border between EU member Bulgaria and Turkey, from where many migrants set out, is of particular concern. Asked about it last Thursday, Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said only that there isn’t enough money to help countries build fences.

The commission wants to speed up asylum processing at the bloc’s borders, and has named a “Returns Coordinator” to expedite deportation. More than 900,000 people applied for EU asylum last year, sparking a border backlog.

In a letter to the leaders, President Ursula von der Leyen said that pilot testing will be done in coming months on “an accelerated border procedure,” including the “immediate return” of those not permitted to stay.

This “Fortress Europe” approach has evolved because of the EU's failure to agree on the answer to a vexing question: who should take responsibility for migrants and refugees arriving in Europe, and should other members be obliged to help?

The question has rarely arisen over the last year as millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were welcomed into Europe amid an outpouring of good will, notably from countries like Hungary or Poland that are staunchly opposed to helping take care of migrants from Africa or the Middle East.

The commission’s Pact on Migration and Asylum, unveiled in 2020, was supposed to resolve the problem but little progress has been made. Now, EU officials say that members might endorse the reform plan before the 2024 elections usher in another commission.

\_\_\_

Raf Casert in Brussels and Mike Corder in The Hague contributed.

**Load-Date:** January 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Borders bill will make UK 'most anti-refugee' country*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-JP61-JCS0-D2VC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 23, 2022 Wednesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 825 words

**Byline:** JON STONE POLICY CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Priti Patel's new Nationality and Borders Bill will make the UK "one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world", a leading international charity has said. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), which employs over 35,000 personnel across 70 countries, branded Commons votes last night "shameful" after Tory MPs ripped out amendments proposed by the House of Lords.

Just four Conservative MPs ultimately voted against the government, despite reports of a brewing rebellion over the home secretary's most extreme policies. The votes come as 3 million people have fled Ukraine following the Russian invasion, joining others seeking sanctuary from authoritarian regimes and war zones across the world. Opposition MPs warned that the bill could criminalise Ukrainians fleeing war, and branded the new laws a "trafficker's charter".

Last night Tory MPs reinserted clauses that would allow the government to send refugees offshore and detain them indefinitely - a policy that aid groups say caused "terrible suffering" when tried by Australia. Following the votes, the bill will also give the government new powers to punish refugees for the means by which they arrive in the UK. Proposals by peers to give people a safe route to join their families in the UK were also ripped out by the Conservatives.

MPs have failed in a bid to halt Ms Patel's plan to send asylum seekers abroad for processing, even as ministers abandoned the most likely location. A small group of Conservative rebels joined opposition parties in trying to defeat the controversial move - but the government won the vote easily, with a majority of 70. Earlier, the Home Office ruled out "offshoring" refugees on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic, following a feasibility study, and were unable to name any other possible site for a processing centre.

One senior Conservative claimed that failing to implement the government's promised crackdown on asylum seekers crossing the Channel would have a "catastrophic effect on race relations".

"It's shameful that the government has rejected these moderate, sensible changes, which would have removed some of the cruellest elements of the Nationality and Borders Bill," Sophie McCann, MSF's UK advocacy officer, said. "In its current form, the bill will enshrine the UK as one of the most anti-refugee countries in the world, at a time when the devastating impact of war and conflict is absolutely evident."

The charity is urging ministers to reconsider the plans, which it says will criminalise people seeking safety. "The government cannot be serious about this bill - it is unworkable, exorbitantly expensive, and inhumane, targeting some of the most vulnerable people in the world," Ms McCann said. "There is nothing 'fair' about criminalising, detaining, pushing back and imprisoning refugees in offshore detention centres simply because of how they arrive in the UK.

"Closing off routes to the UK will only push people into the hands of criminal gangs and into more dangerous methods of attempting the journey."

The UK has faced international criticism in recent weeks for its response to the millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion - and is practically the only European country not to have implemented an "open door" policy. Pauline Chetcuti, head of policy at the charity Oxfam, said the bill "flagrantly undermines our obligations under international law".

"The Ukrainian conflict painfully illustrates how innocent civilians everywhere have no choice but to flee conflict, persecution and violence. We need an asylum system that is based on the principle of protection, not punishment," she said. "This bill flagrantly undermines our obligations under international law to give all those who seek sanctuary a fair hearing.

"Amendments introduced by the House of Lords that would have rejected the worst elements of this bill - including removing the clauses that punish refugees based on how they arrive in the UK, and removing offshore processing - have unfortunately been voted down in the House of Commons today, leaving some of the most harmful parts in place. The UK government needs to urgently provide adequate, safe routes for people fleeing violence and bloodshed in Ukraine, Yemen or elsewhere."

Home Office minister TomPursglove defended the bill in the Commons yesterday, telling MPs: "There can be no doubt about the strength of feeling on these important issues. There could also be no doubt that as a house we stand united in our desire to support vulnerable people in accordance with our long-standing tradition of welcoming those in need of protection.

"We perhaps just disagree on how that is best achieved. But it's frustrating, I have to say, that often criticism is made, but that isn't matched with a credible alternative." But Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, said: "At a time when British people have made clear we must help Ukraine, this is truly shameful. Our country is better than this."

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Borders bill will mean UK is 'most anti-refugee' country*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-JP61-JCS0-D2SP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

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**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach challenges reports Zelensky criticised Ireland over EU Ukraine support*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-TMD1-DY4H-K4SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 2:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 811 words

**Byline:** Sam Hancock

**Highlight:** During speech to European leaders, Ukrainian president suggests Ireland 'almost' there in terms of support

**Body**

Micheal Martin, Ireland's taoiseach, has rejected suggestions that Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky singled out Ireland as being less supportive of his country's fight for survival than other EU members.

Addressing an EU leaders' summit in Brussels via videolink, the wartime leader praised Poland and the three Baltic nations - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia - for their full-on support since Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February.

When it came to Ireland, though, Mr Zelensky was not so sure. "Lithuania stands for us. Latvia stands for us. Estonia stands for us. Poland stands for us," he told his European counterparts. "Luxembourg - we understand each other. Cyprus - I really believe you are with us. Italy - thank you for your support! Spain - we'll find common ground. Belgium - we will find arguments. Austria, together with Ukrainians, it is an opportunity for you. I'm sure of it."

Then he added: "Ireland - well, almost."

There was no explanation given for what appeared to be criticism of the Republic of Ireland and the help it has offered to Ukraine, leaving many bemused.

But asked about the remarks on Friday -the second day of European Council meeting -Mr Martin played down their conviction, insisting he did not agree that Ireland had been "singled out".

"I wouldn't have taken the same slant as some may be taking from it," he told reporters. "[Mr Zelensky] was actually talking in terms of the European perspective."

The taoiseach went further, saying his conversations with the Ukrainian president Zelensky had so far been good and positive. "I spoke to him last week and he was very strongly in praise of the Irish contribution, both from a humanitarian perspective, in terms of our clear support for Ukraine's application to join the EU, and he thanked me personally for my own personal commitment to that."

And Mr Martin added: "I'm not going to surmise in terms of whatever particular take you would take from the use of the word 'almost' or 'practically' - and I wouldn't overstate that, to be frank."

Ireland, while fully backing the Ukrainian push for EU membership, has not abandoned its position of military neutrality in the face of the Russian assault.

"Obviously we're a militarily neutral country, but we explained that we facilitated the EU peace facility which has been of enormous support to the Ukrainian people," he said on Friday.

As well as committing millions of euros in non-lethal aid to Ukraine, Ireland has also taken in more than 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with thousands more expected to arrive after Mr Martin's government removed any need for visas.

Mr Zelensky's speech was his third of the day to Western leaders gathered in Brussels for an unprecedented day of Nato and EU summits, all dedicated to discussing the war in Ukraine.

Exceptional display of solidarity and unity yesterday between the EU, US, and others in support of the people of [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Biden and President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) gave open appraisal of situation to [*#EUCO*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EUCO?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) leaders.Today we focus on energy prices and security. [*pic.twitter.com/YNc3jhSpqW*](https://t.co/YNc3jhSpqW) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 25, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1507297440369627138?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He said he was grateful for the sanctions imposed so far, but suggested that if they had come earlier, Russia may not have decided to invade Ukraine at all.

"These are powerful steps, but it was a little late," he said. "Because if it had been preventative, Russia would not have gone to war. At least, no-one knows for sure. There was a chance."

Citing his country's bid to join the EU, Mr Zelensky also urged European leaders not to delay. "Here I ask you, do not delay. Please. For us this is a chance."

EU officials have so far resisted the call to accelerate the accession of Ukraine to the bloc, with German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock stressing last month that joining the 27-nation group is not something that can be done in a couple of months.

Pointing to the events of the last month, during which time Russian president Vladimir Putin has bombarded Ukrainian cities and communities, Mr Zelensky urged his peers to reconsider. "You have seen that Ukraine should be in the EU," he said, "in the near future."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'It changed me forever': London cabbie leads taxi convoy to transport refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652T-R171-DY4H-K4GD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 657 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** 'I can't comprehend what they've been through,' Matt Westfall said.

**Body**

A [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) taxi driver who led a convoy of black cabs transporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) has said the experience changed him forever.

Matt Westfall, 52, raised more than £11,000 to get six black cabs, one car, and one van across to Poland to deliver humanitarian aid to refugee camps set up near the Ukrainian border, and transport refugees trying to reach cities across Europe.

Mr Westfall, who has been a taxi driver in London for 11 years, arrived home on Wednesday and said "there are no words" to describe the four-day trip.

"I've not got a big enough vocabulary to tell you how I felt," the 52-year-old from Buckhurst Hill, [*Essex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/essex) told the PA news agency.

"Pain, heartbreak, relief... It changed me forever.

"I can't comprehend what they've been through, all I can do is try and smile and do what I can for them... There's no words."

Mr Westfall decided to launch a [*GoFundMe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gofundme) for the cause when he saw a video online of a Ukrainian father saying goodbye to his family as he left them to enlist in the military.

With the help of more than £6,700 donated by strangers on the fundraising site and contributions from the London Taxi Drivers' Association and Eclipse Rent-A-Taxi, Mr Westfall set off on Sunday with a group of taxi drivers he had recruited for the task.

The group drove 13 hours to [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , Poland where they delivered aid such as sanitary products, baby food, nappies, and toilet roll, and picked up two families per vehicle to drive back across the continent.

"I had a mum and daughter in my cab, they were going to Munich... Three families were going to Hamburg where they have family and friends," Mr Westfall explained.

"There were two ladies, I didn't know where they were going... We didn't want to be too intrusive in their lives."

"And one (driver) is in Dunkirk now, they're waiting on visas... they've got sponsors, family in Notting Hill, so (he is) waiting until they've got a visa and he will drive them to Notting Hill either today or tomorrow."

We asked the lady in our taxi, 'Do you think you'll go back?' and she said, 'To what? My flat is gone.

Matt Westfall

With money donated to the GoFundMe, Mr Westfall was able to pay and put a few of the refugees they transported up in a hotel, allowing them to wash and eat.

He described the emotional conversation he had with a Ukrainian mother he took to Munich.

"We asked the lady in our taxi, 'Do you think you'll go back?' and she said, 'To what? My flat is gone, I've got nothing to go back to - I don't know what to do.'

"She said, 'I would love to go back to my country, I really want to go back but I have nothing to go back to.'

"She has family in Munich and that's where she is now, so I think they're going to be starting a new life in Germany."

Mr Westfall also spoke about the moment that will "live with (him) forever" when transporting the woman and her young daughter.

"This little dot, she didn't want to talk... She looked very grey and pasty and tired," he said.

"Her mum said, 'I'm quite worried really, she's not eaten, not drunk anything.'

"So my mate got down on his knee and said: 'I know what all kids like... McDonalds'."

"Her little eyes just lit up like switching on a light and it was just amazing... Her little face lit up and all of sudden we had a different little girl on our hands.

"It was amazing moment that summed up the journey, it was worth it just for that one little moment."

The group stopped at McDonalds on the way to Berlin, after which the young girl fell asleep on her mother as Mr Westfall continued to drive the pair to the German capital.

"It was just lovely... She slept all the way to Berlin, 12 hours, she must have felt safe."

"We put them in a hotel and my mate just had a message from the mum and the daughter, they're with their family now in Munich, they sent us a picture."

Mr Westfall hopes to make the journey again when he is able to.

To donate to Mr Westfall's GoFundMe, go to: [*www.gofundme.com/f/cabbie-relief-for-ukraine*](http://www.gofundme.com/f/cabbie-relief-for-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Scotland and Wales want to be Ukrainian refugee 'super sponsors'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-25F1-JBNF-W2XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 772 words

**Byline:** Dan Barker

**Highlight:** Nicola Sturgeon and Mark Drakeford have written to Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove with their proposals to take in more refugees.

**Body**

[*Nicola Sturgeon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nicola-sturgeon) and [*Mark Drakeford*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-drakeford) have said both Scotland and [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) were willing to become "super sponsors" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) is set to launch a scheme where individuals and organisations can sponsor refugees to come into the country, but the Scottish and Welsh first ministers told [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , the Levelling Up Secretary, they wanted to "maximise" their contribution and act as "super sponsors".

In a letter to Mr Gove, they also renewed their calls on Westminster to waive all visa requirements for Ukrainian nationals trying to get into the UK.

Ms Sturgeon said she wanted Scotland to play its "full part in welcoming Ukrainians seeking sanctuary from war" and criticised the UK response as one "beset with bureaucracy and red tape".

The governments in Holyrood and Cardiff said super sponsorship would enable Ukrainians to get clearance to enter each country quickly and be housed temporarily while they work with local partners to provide longer term accommodation, safeguarding and access to services.

The Scottish First Minister said: "We are still awaiting full details of the proposed community sponsorship scheme.

"If the UK government is still unwilling to waive visa requirements, it is essential that this scheme works efficiently and effectively and allows people to come to the UK as quickly as possible.

"However, I am very worried that if people have to be matched with an individual sponsor before even being allowed entry to the UK, it will prove slow and cumbersome."

"That is why the First Minister of Wales and I have made the 'super sponsor' proposal. We are proposing that our governments act as initial 'super sponsors' to allow large numbers to come to our respective nations quickly."

In the first wave, the first ministers said Scotland would expect to take in 3,000 and Wales 1,000. Under the plans more would be welcomed in later waves.

In the letter to the Levelling Up Secretary, both first ministers said it was "neither reasonable nor morally acceptable to expect people fleeing war to go through complex bureaucratic processes in order to reach safety within the UK".

They added: "The UK Government should be following the example of European countries including the Republic of Ireland by waiving all visa requirements for any Ukrainian nationals seeking refuge in the UK, as well as implementing the temporary protection regulations."

Both Ms Sturgeon and Mr Drakeford also called for clarity on funding arrangements to support local governments, and said a per head funding arrangement similar to the Syrian and Afghanistan schemes to support resettlement and integration costs was needed.

"We are absolutely committed to playing our full part in responding to this crisis and are seeking the maximum flexibility to develop clear plans, based on evolving what has worked in the past," the letter said.

"The Scottish and Welsh Governments, working with local authorities and other partners, are best placed to deliver and to ensure the arrangements put in place are safe, sustainable and offer true sanctuary to those fleeing war."

Mr Gove said the "crisis in Ukraine has sent shock waves across the world as hundreds of thousands of innocent people have been forced to flee their homes, leaving everything they know and love behind".

Next week, the UK Government will roll out the uncapped Homes for Ukraine scheme, with a website gathering expressions of interest from sponsors set to open on Monday.

Launching the scheme Mr Gove said the UK "stands behind Ukraine in their darkest hour and the British public understand the need to get as many people to safety as quickly as we can".

"I urge people across the country to join the national effort and offer support to our Ukrainian friends. Together we can give a safe home to those who so desperately need it."

There is no need for the refugees to have family ties to the UK, and the scheme will allow people in the UK to nominate a named Ukrainian or a named Ukrainian family to stay with them in their home, or will allow them to offer a separate property.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said it would also be working to enable communities, the voluntary sector and organisations such as charities and religious groups to sponsor groups of Ukrainians.

Ukrainians who have sponsorship will be granted three years leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

Those offering accommodation will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

Sponsors who provide homes or a spare room rent-free for a minimum stay of six months will receive £350 per month.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK targets Russian oligarchs, politicians and 'propagandists' in fresh sanctions*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-8MP1-JBNF-W2Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 2:59 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 799 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Liz Truss said the country was going 'further and faster than ever in hitting those closest to Putin'.

**Body**

Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) has pledged to continue to hit hard those close to [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) for their "complicity in Russia's crimes in Ukraine" as she announced a fresh round of sanctions aimed at those linked to the Kremlin.

More than 300 new listings have been made under the UK's sanctions regimes, targeting those well-connected with Russia's leader.

An update to the Gov.uk website on Tuesday said that 350 new listings had been made under the Russia sanctions regime.

The [*Foreign Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-office) later said Ms Truss was to announce more than 370 "Russian and Belarussian sanctions", bringing the total number of individuals, entities, and subsidiaries put under strict measures to over 1,000 since the invasion of Ukraine began.

It is understood the new additions will bring the UK in line with restrictive measures already announced by the European Union and by other allies.

The list of those sanctioned has been expanded to include a further 51 Russian oligarchs and their families, plus a raft of politicians and "propagandists".

These include Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and former President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev.

Vladimir Putin's Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov and Russian Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova are also on the list, as is internet 'troll farm', the Internet Research Agency.

Russian oligarchs now subject to UK sanctions include Mikhail Fridman, Pyotr Aven, and German Khan. The Foreign Office said the oligarchs sanctioned on Tuesday have a combined estimated worth of more than £100 billion.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said: "We are going further and faster than ever in hitting those closest to Putin - from major oligarchs, to his Prime Minister, and the propagandists who peddle his lies and disinformation. We are holding them to account for their complicity in Russia's crimes in Ukraine.

"Working closely with our allies, we will keep increasing the pressure on Putin and cut off funding for the Russian war machine."

Earlier, Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said he welcomed Western sanctions but they "are not enough" to end the Russian aggression, calling for a full trade embargo.

Boris Johnson, who was hosting a meeting of the Joint Expeditionary Force nations in London which was addressed by Mr Zelensky via video-link, said: "I hear your point very loud and clear about the economic sanctions that we need to tighten, where we need to go harder on the banks, on Swift."

Further general economic sanctions were also announced on Tuesday, with the export of high-end luxury products to Russia being banned and import tariffs hiked on hundreds of goods, including vodka.

But Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesperson Layla Moran said: "This is shutting the door after the private jet has bolted. The Government has finally got their act together - but we should have been in this position weeks ago. This delay has given Putin's cronies a priceless window to fire-sale their assets.

"Now we need to go further. There are still too many associates of Putin getting away with it as we speak.

"The fix to sanctions legislation is good news - but it means we can merely copy what our allies do. Liz Truss should bring proposals to Parliament to strengthen the legislation even further, so we can truly lead the way in clamping down on Kremlin-linked oligarchs."

It comes as the Home Office said 4,600 visas had been issued so far under the Ukraine Family Scheme, while nearly 90,000 British households had put themselves forward to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Some 88,712 households had registered for the Homes for Ukraine scheme by Tuesday morning, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said.

Earlier, Foreign Office minister [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) said he was "actually quite proud" the website allowing Britons to volunteer had crashed within the first few minutes of going live on Monday.

He said he was "glad the website crashed, because it is a reflection of that generosity of the British people".

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -15 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/aNa33WPBRi*](https://t.co/aNa33WPBRi) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/lrw4wxDvxL*](https://t.co/lrw4wxDvxL) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1503613213006565377?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

No 10 said it would "encourage" those willing to provide accommodation to fleeing Ukrainians to offer longer than the minimum stipulation of six months. But Downing Street said most refugees would "want to return home as soon as possible".

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "The Ukrainian ambassador to London, the Ukrainian government has been clear that the vast majority of those forced to flee will want to return home as soon as possible, so at this stage it is hard to predict what length of time people may want to stay."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach challenges reports Zelensky criticised Ireland over Ukraine support*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-0CP1-DY4H-K4H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 3:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 808 words

**Byline:** Sam Hancock

**Highlight:** During speech to European leaders, Ukrainian president suggests Ireland 'almost' there

**Body**

[*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) 's [*taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) Micheal Martin has rejected suggestions that Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) singled out Ireland as being less supportive of his country's fight for survival than other EU members.

Addressing an EU leaders' summit in Brussels via videolink, the wartime leader praised Poland and the three Baltic nations - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia - for their full-on support since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on 24 February.

When it came to Ireland, though, Mr Zelensky was not so sure. "Lithuania stands for us. Latvia stands for us. Estonia stands for us. Poland stands for us," he told his European counterparts. "Luxembourg - we understand each other. Cyprus - I really believe you are with us. Italy - thank you for your support! Spain - we'll find common ground. Belgium - we will find arguments. Austria, together with Ukrainians, it is an opportunity for you. I'm sure of it."

Then he added: "Ireland - well, almost."

There was no explanation given for what appeared to be criticism of the Republic of Ireland and the [*help it has offered to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-live-weapons-putin-peace-b2043842.html) , leaving many bemused.

But asked about the remarks on Friday -the second day of the European Council meeting -Mr Martin played down their conviction, insisting he did not agree that Ireland had been "singled out".

"I wouldn't have taken the same slant as some may be taking from it," he told reporters. "[Mr Zelensky] was actually talking in terms of the European perspective."

The taoiseach went further, saying his conversations with Mr Zelensky had so far been good and positive. "I spoke to him last week and he was very strongly in praise of the Irish contribution, both from a humanitarian perspective, in terms of our clear support for Ukraine's application to join the EU, and he thanked me personally for my own personal commitment to that."

And Mr Martin added: "I'm not going to surmise in terms of whatever particular take you would take from the use of the word 'almost' or 'practically' - and I wouldn't overstate that, to be frank."

Ireland, while fully backing the Ukrainian push for EU membership, has not abandoned its position of military neutrality in the face of the Russian assault.

"Obviously we're a militarily neutral country, but we explained that we facilitated the EU peace facility which has been of enormous support to the Ukrainian people," he said on Friday.

As well as committing millions of euros in non-lethal aid to Ukraine, Ireland has also taken in more than 10,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with thousands more expected to arrive after Mr Martin's government removed any need for visas.

Mr Zelensky's speech was his third of the day to Western leaders gathered in Brussels for an unprecedented day of Nato and EU summits, all dedicated to discussing the war in Ukraine.

Exceptional display of solidarity and unity yesterday between the EU, US, and others in support of the people of [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Biden and President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) gave open appraisal of situation to [*#EUCO*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EUCO?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) leaders.Today we focus on energy prices and security. [*pic.twitter.com/YNc3jhSpqW*](https://t.co/YNc3jhSpqW) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 25, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1507297440369627138?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He said he was grateful for the sanctions imposed so far, but suggested that if they had come earlier, Russia may not have decided to invade Ukraine at all.

"These are powerful steps, but it was a little late," he said. "Because if it had been preventative, Russia would not have gone to war. At least, no-one knows for sure. There was a chance."

Citing his country's bid to join the EU, Mr Zelensky also urged European leaders not to delay. "Here I ask you, do not delay. Please. For us this is a chance."

EU officials have so far resisted the call to accelerate the accession of Ukraine to the bloc, with German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock [*stressing last month*](https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-eu-membership-zelenskiy/31728332.html) that joining the 27-nation group is not something that can be done in a couple of months.

Pointing to the events of the last month, during which time Russian president Vladimir Putin has bombarded Ukrainian cities and communities, Mr Zelensky urged his peers to reconsider. "You have seen that Ukraine should be in the EU," he said, "in the near future."

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**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The Tories must stop passing the buck on the refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6514-SJM1-JCS0-D0X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 17, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 34

**Length:** 805 words

**Byline:** ANDREW GRICE

**Body**

The public's remarkable response to the scheme to take ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into their homes, with more than 120,000 people registering on the Homes for Ukraine website, shows how out of touch the government was in its slow, grudging reaction to the migration crisis.

A blame game is now underway inside the government. Ministers blame civil servants, notably at the Home Office, while officials rightly reply that the culture is set at the top by the politicians. In fact, both groups should have prepared for this emergency, since the US and UK had been warning them for weeks that Russia planned to invade Ukraine.

Priti Patel's initial response was poor and reflected the "keep them out" mindset of the Brexiteers, which translated on Ukraine into "keep the numbers down" - harsh and totally wrong in a war.

Some Tory MPs believe ministers suspect the generous public mood in the heat of the Ukraine battle might not last, and that they fear Boris Johnson's strategy of never being outflanked on the right might be in danger. Indeed, Nigel Farage is back on the scene; he never really went away. Although he is focusing on net zero and fracking for now, he could easily reissue his immigration hit. A study by the centre-right Onward think tank found that a "Faragist Newkip" party could potentially cost the Tories 53 seats at the next election, wiping out their majority.

The problems are not only Patel's fault. When the home secretary tried to correct her mistake and allow many more Ukrainians in through a new humanitarian route, allies say her plan was vetoed by Steve Barclay, the new Downing Street chief of staff. Whitehall insiders tell me there is chaos behind the scenes - hardly the reset moment Johnson wanted from his new No 10 team as he tried to draw a line under Partygate.

While his Tory critics will not try to push Johnson out during the Ukraine crisis, they are not dead, merely sleeping. So his machine needs to perform better if he is to prevent a return to domestic hostilities when the real fighting stops.

"Ministers are still fighting like rats in a sack," one Whitehall source said. "There is no overall plan; they are competing for headlines." Michael Gove, the levelling up secretary, was handed control of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a sign of Johnson's frustration with Patel.

Her allies insist she has suffered from the same under-performance from officials which cost previous home secretaries Amber Rudd and Charles Clarke their jobs. "The Home Office has got form on this, it has developed a habit of saying what it shouldn't, couldn't and won't do rather than finding quick solutions to problems," said Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory leader.

Yet Patel has form too. She kept her job even though she was found to have broken the ministerial code by bullying staff. When she was floundering over migrants crossing the Channel in small boats last year, she invoked the words of another predecessor, John Reid, to describe her department as "not fit for purpose".

True, there are institutional problems at an inflexible Home Office, where the "we always do it this way" mentality delayed the recognition that a different approach was needed on Ukraine. Yet the buck should stop with the politicians. The default position for ministers is to blame the civil service "blob".

Incredibly, they somehow still manage to blame today's problems on the last Labour government. Gove claimed that Labour invented the "hostile environment" strategy on illegal immigration; yes, the words were uttered in 2007, but it was the Tories who embraced them as a culture. The department responsible for both crime and immigration instinctively regards migrants as criminals; sadly, that will be entrenched by the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Johnson blames the looming energy crisis on Labour's failure to invest in nuclear power. Today, Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, blamed an obstructive House of Lords for the years-long delay in bringing in legislation making it easier to sanction oligarchs. Yet it was ministers who repeatedly delayed an Economic Crime Bill. The Intelligence and Security Committee told Johnson "urgent action" was needed over Russian money more than two years ago. It has become law now only because of the war.

After almost 12 years in power, it's about time Tory ministers start to accept some responsibility, not least for their own legacy of 10 years of austerity - clearly one factor in an overstretched, under-resourced Home Office machine.

Johnson, after nearly three years in office, can no longer get away with the trick of claiming his administration is "new". He lost valuable public goodwill during Partygate, probably forever. So there will be a ceiling on his wartime recovery in the opinion polls. And one day, the voters will surely tire of hearing the Tories blame someone else.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian strikes hit Lviv as Vladimir Putin makes only 'minimal progress'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651C-BST1-JBNF-W4H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 10:30 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 760 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** British armed forces minister James Heappey said Moscow had failed to take Ukrainian territory for 'a week or so'.

**Body**

Russia expanded its missile strikes to [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) in the west of Ukraine as [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) intelligence suggested Vladimir Putin's invasion had made only "minimal progress" this week.

Armed forces minister James Heappey said on Friday the early-morning attack on the city that has swelled with people sheltering from elsewhere in Ukraine showed Russia was broadening its strikes.

Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said several missiles hit a facility for repairing military planes near the city's international airport and also damaged a bus repair site.

Shelling around the capital of Kyiv also continued as the number of refugees estimated to have fled exceeded 3.4 million.

In other developments:

- Ofcom revoked Kremlin-backed broadcaster RT's UK licence with immediate effect after the regulator said it was not "fit and proper".

- Russia was accused of "dirty tricks" after two Cabinet ministers including Defence Secretary Ben Wallace were targeted with hoax calls from an impostor posing as Ukraine's prime minister.

- More than 150,000 people have registered interest in the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Mr Heappey said indiscriminate shelling on cities were "very probably" war crimes and said the Russian President bears the ultimate "culpability" for atrocities.

"The areas of Ukrainian territory that have been taken by the Russians haven't changed for a week or so. The Russians are way behind in their plan; they are failing to achieve their military objectives and that may be some cause for optimism," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -18 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/tVB01HziYQ*](https://t.co/tVB01HziYQ) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/CGXYNXHMWC*](https://t.co/CGXYNXHMWC) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1504701568565886999?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"But what that doesn't show is that in the cities that are besieged, Mariupol, most concerningly, but Kharkiv, Sumy and others as well there is just this incredible weight of artillery fire being used indiscriminately to flatten those cities irrespective of who is beneath the shells as they fall."

No causalities were immediately reported in the strikes on Lviv, which has had its population swelled by some 200,000 people seeking refuge from attacks across Ukraine.

Mr Heappey said that "it's very much a part of war that you would go after each others' supply lines but clearly the airstrike on an airbase in western Ukraine last week and strikes on to Lviv airport last night show that the Russians are start going after Ukrainian depth as well".

An intelligence update from the Ministry of Defence said that Ukrainian forces were continuing to "frustrate" Moscow's attempt to encircle cities despite heavy shelling.

"Russian forces have made minimal progress this week," it added.

Western officials have described the advance on Kyiv as remaining "bogged down" amid questions over whether [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) would still mount an assault on the city, which had been its main objective.

"An ill-judged ground assault on a city as well-prepared as Kyiv with really determined and committed defenders would be a very costly business," one official said.

"I think there comes a point where even Russia has to count the cost of casualties."

There was fresh outrage at the alleged war crimes being committed under Mr Putin after an attack on a theatre in Mariupol where hundreds of civilians were said to have sheltered.

Mr Heappey warned that "every single person" in the military chain of command could be prosecuted for war crimes as he hit out at the "barbaric tactic" of trying to destroy a city forces have been unable to seize militarily.

"The evidence being gathered points very much towards war crimes being committed in Ukraine. The culpability for war crimes sits absolutely with the leader of the Russian government, the man who decided to do all of this in the first place," he told Sky News.

"It is not just Putin who ends up being responsible for war crimes as and when the evidence is gathered and people are held to account.

"They too are involved in the prosecution or war crimes in Ukraine. This is a stain on the Russian nation."

He said the UK was training Ukrainians to use the Starstreak anti-aircraft missile system that Britain is supplying and which will arrive in the country "imminently".

The Home Office said it has issued 6,500 visas under the Ukraine family scheme as of 5pm on Thursday, an increase of 400 in a day.

A total of 27,000 applications have been made, according to provisional data published on the department's website.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rejoining the EU is the common sense thing to do*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-PTG1-JCS0-D06D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 14, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 28

**Length:** 776 words

**Body**

It was with delight that I read Jon Stone's article on the Liberal Democrat's roadmap to rejoin the European single market (News, yesterday). Oh, happy days. Why the UK left the EU is beyond me - probably through some skullduggery on behalf of the Conservative Party and Brexiteers. But to read that there are still sane people, even though they are politicians, in our midst was encouraging.

Britain has lost lots since leaving the EU: our standing in the world, trade with the EU, easy access to security data, free movement of people across borders and various health and welfare standards for people and animals. Britain has gained nothing by leaving the EU; self-government and immigration benefits have not materialised.

It's refreshing to hear that we may once again be a member of the largest trading group in the world, with the safeguarding of people's human rights in all countries involved in the "club". We have lost so much that there is bound to be a reaction. Hopefully, this is the start of the return to sanity.

Keith Poole Basingstoke

<strong></strong>

<strong>Why rejoin the EU? Trade is important but not, I believe, a major reason for rejoining. There would be more cooperation with neighbours - united we stand. The time that needs to be taken to redraft laws and regulations would be better used in other ways. There would be less paperwork with European and Northern Irish trade. </strong>

<strong>In the EU, it would not be so easy for a government to take actions that ultimately lead to a loss of freedom. As the old adage goes: "Better inside the tent pissing out, than outside pissing in."</strong>

<strong>Rob Alliott Cambridge</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>Second and third homes</strong></strong>

<strong>I sincerely hope our MPs will lead the way by housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their second (and, in some cases, third) homes.</strong>

<strong>Nigel Groom Witham, Essex</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>Unisex toilets</strong></strong>

<strong>It seems to me that every time there is an argument about who is actually a woman (or a man, for that matter), the issue of safe toilets is brought up.</strong>

<strong>Might I suggest that the answer is simply to have unisex toilets like those that exist in other countries? The downside of course is that we men would have to join the long queues for the cubicles. But maybe if that were to happen, something might be done to increase the provision of adequate facilities for all.</strong>

<strong>G Forward Stirling</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>The west cannot win this war</strong></strong>

<strong>I read Kim Sengupta's article with great interest (Zelensky says Russia can only take Kyiv if it destroys it, News, yesterday). I am concerned that civilian lives are being placed at unnecessary risk in Ukraine to satisfy the egos of political leaders and Nato nations. By arming Ukrainians and encouraging them to fight to the bitter end without directly intervening, we in the west are complicit in permitting their mass murder.</strong>

<strong>President Biden correctly stated that a third world war must be prevented. Perhaps it is time the west encouraged Ukrainian politicians to strongly consider the Russian terms to a cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of its forces, even if it means significant political compromises for Ukraine, including a temporary halt to Nato admission and granting limited autonomy to the Donbas region.</strong>

<strong>The west cannot win this particular battle, but its principles and resourcefulness can win the geopolitical war against autocracies in the long term, without making a mass grave in Ukraine inevitable.</strong>

<strong>Dr Priyad Ariyaratnam Sheffield</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>We should be doing more</strong></strong>

<strong>In Whitehall yesterday, a single individual who appeared to be a self-proclaimed evangelist was blasting out music on a portable speaker at the gates of Downing Street. On the opposite side of the road, a group of Ukrainian supporters with families there were assembling to highlight what is happening in their country.</strong>

<strong>At the start of the assembly, the organiser whose parents are in Kyiv told the group she wanted to play the Ukrainian national anthem. But she had been told that playing music was not allowed. The group proceeded to sing without accompaniment. It was moving and humbling. But it is a sign, once again, of how out of touch the government and the Metropolitan Police are. It is shameful that we are not doing more to support the people of Ukraine.</strong>

<strong>Gordon Ronald Hertfordshire</strong>

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*William and Kate sip cocktails with well-wishers ahead of coronation concert*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685X-7CJ1-JBNF-W2C2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2023 Sunday 3:50 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 918 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** The unannounced appearance came as the King and Queen were said to be ‘deeply touched’ by the nation’s celebration of their historic day.

**Body**

The [*Prince*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince) and Princess of Wales sipped homemade cocktails with royal fans as they soaked up the atmosphere in [*Windsor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor) ahead of Sunday’s star-studded coronation concert.

William and Kate surprised well-wishers when they went on a 40-minute walkabout in the town’s famous Long Walk, and also came across special coronation ale dedicated to the King.

The unannounced appearance came as Buckingham Palace said the King and Queen were “deeply touched” by the nation’s celebration of their coronation on Saturday.

More than 18 million people in the UK tuned in to watch the ceremony on TV, compared with 26.5 million for the late Queen’s funeral in September.

With a few hours to go before Take That, Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and others take to the stage in Windsor for a musical extravaganza, William and Kate chatted to picnicking families who were enjoying the summer sunshine.

When the couple stopped to talk to Sue Watson and her friends, who all wore knitted yellow crowns and coronation T-shirts, they offered the future King a drink.

Ms Watson told BBC News: “We’ve got a homemade cocktail with us called Purple Rain, which we made ourselves out of gin and blue curacao and lemonade and grenadine, I think.

“We offered him some, we gave him a cup and he poured himself a little drink and had some. He liked it, said it was really nice and he offered some to Kate, she had some and thought it was very nice as well.”

The prince was fascinated by cans of Return Of The King coronation ale which the group had brought, and holding one asked: “That’s from Windsor?”

During the walkabout the public swarmed around the couple and William and Kate crouched down to talk to children with their parents, and they both posed separately for group photographs and selfies.

At one point, Kate comforted a little girl who appeared overcome with emotion at meeting her.

She gave the teary youngster, who was wearing a headband with union flag deely boppers and a navy dress covered in patriotic motifs, a long hug and the girl burst into tears.

The princess, who had crouched down to speak to her, continued chatting to the girl, who nodded her head and gave a small shrug as Kate patted her back.

One woman in the crowd complimented Kate on the headpiece, by Jess Collett x Alexander McQueen, she wore for the coronation, telling her: “I loved your headpiece.”

The item featured silver bullion, crystal and silver thread work three-dimensional leaf embroidery, and in response Kate touched the woman on the shoulder as if to say “thank you”.

Before they left William told one group of well-wishers: “Enjoy the concert tonight.”

The walkabout came shortly after Buckingham Palace issued the first public statement on behalf of Charles and [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) since they were crowned.

A Palace spokesman said the King and Queen were “profoundly grateful” for all those involved in organising the celebrations and ceremony, and the spectators who attended the day.

“Their Majesties were deeply touched by the events of yesterday and profoundly grateful both to all those who helped to make it such a glorious occasion – and to the very many who turned out to show their support in such numbers in London and further afield,” he said.

The King, Queen and royal family will join around 20,000 members of the public at the musical extravaganza.

Heir to the throne William is to take to the stage to deliver a speech during the event in the grounds of Windsor Castle, with Kensington Palace sharing behind-the-scenes footage of the prince during rehearsals.

The show, hosted by Downton Abbey and Paddington actor Hugh Bonneville, will see Hollywood star Tom Cruise, Dynasty actress Dame [*Joan Collins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joan-collins) , adventurer Bear Grylls and singer Sir Tom Jones appear via video message.

The series of pre-recorded sketches will reveal little-known facts about the monarch and include moments from beloved literary character Winnie the Pooh – seemingly echoing the famous moment Paddington Bear drank tea with the Queen during her Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

There will also be performances by Paloma Faith, Olly Murs, veteran singer Steve Winwood – whose grandson Arthur Eliot was one of Camilla’s pages of honour – and Nicole Scherzinger of The Pussycat Dolls.

Classical acts including Andrea Bocelli, Welsh bass-baritone Sir [*Bryn Terfel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bryn-terfel) and Chinese pianist Lang Lang will perform too.

The Royal Ballet, the Royal Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal College of Music and the Royal College of Art will come together for the first time to create a one-off performance featuring Sex Education and Doctor Who star Ncuti Gatwa and Olivier Award nominee Mei Mac.

Thousands of street parties have been held across the country with people encouraged to come together for the Coronation Big Lunch.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife, Akshata Murty, hosted a lunch in Downing Street, inviting volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and youth group members.

Meanwhile. Camilla asked for her coronation bouquet of English spring flowers to be placed on the Grave of the Unknown Warrior in the coronation church, Westminster Abbey.

The simple posy, including auriculas, the late Queen’s favourite lily of the valley, and one of Charles’ favourites hellebores, by the King and Queen’s go-to florist, Shane Connolly, was laid at the memorial.

Royal brides traditionally send their bouquets to be placed there the day after their weddings in a tradition started by the Queen Mother.

Camilla did not carry the flowers on Saturday as it was a coronation not a wedding, the Palace said.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel announces changes to Ukrainian visa scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-RTK1-JBNF-W1GM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 11:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** David Hughes

**Highlight:** Home Secretary Priti Patel said the system will allow Ukrainians with passports to apply online.

**Body**

Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has promised a streamlined online visa application system for Ukrainians seeking to flee the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in response to criticism of her approach to the crisis.

She told [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) the changes will come in from Tuesday following assurances from the security services that the UK can still be protected from Russian efforts to infiltrate the country by posing as ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The Home Office has come under pressure from opposition and Tory MPs - as well as the Ukrainian government - to simplify the system which allows family members of people settled in the UK to join their relatives.

In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come here fully online from wherever they are and will be able to give their biometrics once in Britain

Priti Patel

Ms Patel said: "From Tuesday, I can announce that Ukrainians with passports will no longer need to go to a visa application centre to give their biometrics before they come to the UK.

"Instead, once their application has been considered and appropriate checks completed, they will receive direct notification that they're eligible for the scheme and can come to the UK.

"In short, Ukrainians with passports will be able to get permission to come here fully online from wherever they are and will be able to give their biometrics once in Britain.

"This will mean that visa application centres across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) can focus their efforts on helping Ukrainians without passports."

More than two million people have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion.

The fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II is happening now. More than 2 million people have already fled war in Ukraine. Please donate to help these refugees: [*https://t.co/ZvSmvCXUl7*](https://t.co/ZvSmvCXUl7) [*pic.twitter.com/SyawslpQyg*](https://t.co/SyawslpQyg) - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency (@Refugees) [*March 9, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Refugees/status/1501694570161180679?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) While the European Union allows visa-free travel for Ukrainians fleeing the fighting, the UK insisted they are necessary to guarantee security.Ms Patel told the Commons: "I am in daily contact with the intelligence and security agencies who are providing me with regular threat assessments."What happened in Salisbury showed what (Russian President Vladimir) Putin is willing to do on our soil. It also demonstrated that a small number of people with evil intentions can wreak havoc on our streets."Ms Patel said she was able to change the visa regime following security agencies' fresh advice.Shadow home secretary [*Yvette Cooper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yvette-cooper) - whose urgent question resulted in Ms Patel's appearance in the Commons - said the Government's approach had been "shameful".The current visa route is restricted to family members of people settled in the UK. NOW OPEN - The UK's Ukraine Family Scheme: Extended family members can now apply to the scheme. To apply: [*https://t.co/DRXZ4nv3jl*](https://t.co/DRXZ4nv3jl) For assistance, call the free 24/7 helpline:+44 808 164 8810- Home Office (@ukhomeoffice) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1499750327926546435?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Another promised route - allowing individuals and companies to sponsor Ukrainians to come to the UK - has not yet been established.

Ms Cooper said: "Is this still just being restricted to those with family? Are they still going to have to fill in multiple online forms, or would she now say that all those who want to come to the UK who have fled the fighting in Ukraine can now come here without having to fill in loads of online forms or jump through a whole load of hoops?

"This has just been shameful, making vulnerable people push from pillar to post in their hour of need - week after week we have seen this happen.

"It is deeply wrong to leave people in this terrible state. Our country is better than this. If she can't get this sorted out, frankly she should hand the job over to somebody else who can."

Figures from Downing Street on Wednesday showed Britain has granted just 957 visas.

Ukrainians have faced a series of bureaucratic hurdles and difficulties in obtaining appointments to complete the necessary paperwork.

Armed forces minister James Heappey said British troops could assist in processing claims.

Ukrainian ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko called for an end to the "bureaucratic red tape" restricting refugees from seeking sanctuary in Britain.

He told BBC's Question Time: "I just wanted to tell you that most of our men are staying behind and fighting, so ... most of the people you will see are just women with children, which I totally hope they're not posing any threat, especially a terrorist threat to the UK.

"So that's why I hope and I beg that the procedures will be dropped and every bureaucratic red tape should be cancelled."

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said plans were under way in his department to take "100,000 children ... into our schools".

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US: Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians forced to Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66BD-TJ81-JBNF-W46Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 8, 2022 Thursday 1:48 AM GMT

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**Length:** 960 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The United States says it has evidence that “hundreds of thousands” of Ukrainian citizens have been interrogated, detained and forcibly deported to Russia

**Body**

The U.S. said Wednesday it has evidence that “hundreds of thousands” of Ukrainian citizens have been interrogated, detained and forcibly deported to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in “a series of horrors” overseen by officials from Russia’s presidency.

Russia immediately dismissed the allegation as “fantasy,” calling it the latest invention in a Western disinformation campaign.

The charge came during a Security Counil meeting called by the United States and Albania to discuss Russia’s “filtration operations.”

That involves Ukrainians voluntarily fleeing the war in their homeland and those forcibly being moved to Russia passing through a series of “filtration points” where treatment allegedly ranges from interrogations, data collection and strip searches to being yanked aside, tortured, sent to a detention center in Russia and never seen again.

US. Ambassador [*Linda Thomas-Greenfield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/linda-thomas-greenfield) said estimates from a variety of sources, including the Russian government, indicate that Russian authorities have interrogated, detained and forcibly deported between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainians. She said they are sent to Russia, often to isolated regions in its far eastern regions.

“These operations aim to identify individuals Russia deems insufficiently compliant or compatible to its control,” Thomas-Greenfield said. “And there is mounting and credible evidence that those considered threatening to Russian control because of perceived pro-Ukrainian leanings are `disappeared’ or further detained.”

Russia’s presidency is not only coordinating filtration operations but is providing lists of Ukrainians to be targeted for filtration, she added.

She said estimates indicate thousands of children have been subject to filtration, “some separated from their families and taken from orphanages before being put up for adoption in Russia.” According to U.S. information, “more than 1,800 children were transferred from Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine to Russia” just in July, she said.

Russia’s U.N. ambassador, [*Vassily Nebenzia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vassily-nebenzia) , accused the West of trying to besmirch his country.

He said more than 3.7 million Ukrainians, including 600,000 children, have gone to Russia or Russian-controlled separatist areas in eastern Ukraine, but they “aren’t being kept in prisons.”

“They are living freely and voluntarily in Russia, and nobody is preventing them from moving or preventing them leaving the country,” he said.

Nebenzia said those Ukrainians went through “a registration rather than filtration procedure” similar to that for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland and other countries in the European Union.

He said that since “we’ve wasted time talking about the latest conjectures and fantasies” Wednesday, Russia is proposing that the Security Council hold a meeting Thursday “on real threats to international peace and security caused by the supply by foreign states of arms and military goods to Ukraine.”

French Ambassador Nicolas De Riviere, the current council president, said he would consult council members on Russia’s request.

No session was immediately scheduled, but it was expected to be held Thursday afternoon and would be the third consecutive Security Council meeting on Ukraine. On Tuesday, the council held a meeting at Russia’s request to hear about the situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southeastern Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia have accused each other of shelling the facility and threatening a possible nuclear catastrophe.

Thomas-Greenfield said the United States knew Russia would deny using filtration, “but there’s a simple way to know if any of this is true.”

“Let the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) in,” she told Nebenzia and other council members. “Give the independent observers access. Give NGOs access. Allow humanitarian access. Let the world see what Is going on.”

U.N. political chief Rosemary DiCarlo called for investigations of the “extremely disturbing" and persistent allegations “of forced displacement, deportation and so-called `filtration camps’ run by the Russian Federation and affiliated local forces.”

She called for U.N. access to Ukrainians living in Russian-controlled areas and reiterated that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine “must have unimpeded access to all individuals detained in relation to the ongoing war.”

“This includes access to places of internment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and detainees in the Russian Federation,” she said. “Both sides to the conflict must fully abide with their obligations under international law.”

Ilze Brands Kehris, the U.N. assistant secretary-general for human rights, urged Russia to provide her Geneva-based office access to all places of detention. She added that any adoptions of Ukrainian children in Russia would violate the Geneva Convention prohibiting the change of a child’s personal status including its nationality.

Kehris said the U.N. human rights office “has verified” that Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups subject civilians to “filtration” security checks, which according to credible reports it received result in numerous human rights violations, including the rights to liberty, personal security and privacy.

The human rights office has documented that Russian troops and their affiliates subject Ukrainians to body searches that sometimes include nudity, interrogations about their personal background, family ties, political views and allegiances, and examinations of mobile devices, Kehris said.

The office has also documented that men and women perceived to having ties to Ukraine’s military or government, or as having pro-Ukrainian or anti-Russian views “were subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and forced-disappearance” and were transferred to penal colonies, Kehris said.

**Load-Date:** September 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US is 'looking very hard' at whether Russia is 'deliberately' targeting journalists*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-K621-JBNF-W135-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 5:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 756 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** At least three journalists have been killed and several more injured by Kremlin forces in Ukraine in the last few days alone

**Body**

US Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) has said the US is "looking very hard" at whether [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is "deliberately" targeting [*journalists*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/journalists) covering the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , after at least three have been killed and several more injured by Kremlin forces in the last few days alone.

Mr Blinken told NPR in an interview that aired on Wednesday that US officials are "documenting" Russia's attacks and that, if they determine Vladimir Putin's troops are intentionally targeting journalists, this will be treated as a "war crime".

"We are looking very hard at the targeting that the Russian forces are doing, including whether they are deliberately, intentionally targeting civilians, journalists or anyone else," he said.

"This is something we're looking hard at, we're documenting. Others are looking at this. The deliberate targeting of civilians, journalists and others would constitute a war crime."

The secretary of state said that the world is "seeing journalists in the crossfire, people doing their jobs to bring the truth to the world".

[*Follow live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/zelensky-speech-congress-ukraine-russia-b2036624.html)

Since Sunday, an American journalist, a Fox News cameraman and a Ukrainian freelancer working for Fox News have all died in Ukraine as they reported on Russia's assault.

Award-winning American journalist and filmmaker Brent Renaud was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin on Sunday while on an assignment for TIME magazine.

The 50-year-old was in a car on route to report on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to evacuate when the vehicle was ambushed by Vladimir Putin's troops, according to Ukrainian officials.

TIME confirmed later that the filmmaker had been "in the region working on a TIME Studios project focused on the global refugee crisis".

A second American journalist Juan Arredondo was also shot in the attack but survived. A third journalist also traveling in the same car was also wounded, according to Ukrainian officials.

The following day, a Fox News team was ambushed while news-gathering close to the capital city Kyiv.

Fox News cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski and Ukrainian journalist Oleksandra "Sasha" Kuvshynova, who was working as a freelancer for the network, both died in Monday's attack as the vehicle they were traveling in was struck by incoming fire in the field.

Fox News State Department correspondent Benjamin Hall, a British-American journalist who has previously [*written for The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/benjamin-hall) , was also injured in the attack.

On Wednesday, his colleague Bill Hemmer announced that Mr Hall had been evacuated from Ukraine and was "alert and in good spirits" recovering from his injuries.

Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott added in a statement that Mr Hall is receiving "the best possible care in the world" and that the network remains in close contact with his family.

Mr Blinken referenced the attack on the Fox News team, saying he knows Mr Hall "very well".

"We've seen a Fox team that has had two of its members killed, one injured -someone I know very well," he said.

"This is Ben Hall. He's someone who travels with me when I travel around the world. Someone I have great, great affection for, who's a tremendous reporter who asks me a lot of tough questions every place we go.

"I'm very much hoping and praying that he'll be back on the job as soon as possible. But meanwhile, two of his colleagues lost their lives.

"And another very prominent filmmaker lost his life just the other day," he added, in reference to Mr Renaud.

Since the start of the war, Mr Putin's forces have targeted journalists showing the world his assault on the Ukrainian people all the while trying to censor coverage of the war back in Russia.

Back on 1 March, Ukrainian journalist and cameraman Yevhenii Sakun was one of five people killed when Russian forces shelled a TV tower in Kyiv.

Days later, two journalists for Sky News were shot by Russian forces but survived.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'If you are genuine it shows'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-4083-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 731 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT

**Body**

More than 100,000 British people have registered their interest in allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in their homes. But what is it like sharing your home with someone who has fled war? Rachel and Nigel Poulton have been welcoming refugees into their north Yorkshire home for five and a half years, and are hoping to house a Ukrainian family soon.

Rachel's advice to anyone considering taking a refugee into their home is simple: "A warm welcome goes a long way." She continues: "We just try and give them a warm, calm welcome. We don't ask questions and I always tell them that I'm glad that they are here."

The Poultons are already housing a number of unaccompanied child refugees at the moment, but have a spare room that they are hoping to offer to a Ukrainian family. Ms Poulton said: "We have a large family room that we built onto the side of our house, originally to look after ageing parents. It's got an en suite, and space for children and a cot, and we're hoping to use it soon."

They have signed up to welcome a Ukrainian family through the charity Sanctuary Foundation, and through the government scheme. "I feel like I'm learning the whole time," said Ms Poulton, "and I'm sure we do make mistakes. But people shouldn't feel like they need all the answers. If there is compassion that comes from the heart, people can sense that. If you are genuine it shows."

Rachel Poulton and her husband, who works as CEO of a children's charity, have taken in unaccompanied child refugees from Eritrea, Syria, Afghanistan and a number of other countries over the past few years. They work with the local council and social workers to make sure that their new lodgers get settled into the community before they move on.

"I always tell them that I want them to feel safe," Ms Poulton said. "If it was one of our kids in their situation - in a foreign country, with no money, who couldn't speak the language, and who had gone through desperately hard circumstances - I would want someone to open their doors and be kind to them."

She often writes a welcome card for her guests when they arrive. "Those little things can mean more than we realise," Ms Poulton said. "There was one time when a young man was moving on, having been with us for a couple of years. He was quite a tough, cool guy, and I was helping him pack, and he put the little card in. I was so surprised he still had it. He said that it had been really important to him when he first came, so he had kept it."

The best bit about sheltering refugees is being there when good things happen in their lives, she said. "Last night we went out to celebrate the birthday of one of the refugees who used to live here, and it was such a joyful evening," Rachel added. "It's also a joy to see people learn to drive, achieve at school, and learn new skills like the piano and swimming."

Her two young children, who are still at home, have also learnt to get along well with their new housemates. But as well as the positives, the people Rachel and Nigel take in have experienced a lot of trauma before they stay with them.

"They have dealt with so much on their journeys to the UK, in the countries that they come from, and also in the ongoing news they see through their mobiles. This will be true of Ukrainians too. They will experience ongoing trauma when they look at the footage and keep up with the bad news."

She is worried that many Ukrainians fleeing the war will see Britain as too difficult to get to, too slow at processing documentation, and too far away. She also has concerns about how they will be transported from Ukraine or the Polish border to the homes in Britain that are keen to accept them.

Levelling up secretary Michael Gove told MPs that Ukrainians with no family links would be allowed to come to the UK under the new scheme, and that there would be "no limit" to the number who can benefit. They will have to have a "sponsor" in the UK who is willing to provide them with a home for a minimum of six months.

"If you don't know anyone who you wish to sponsor, you may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups, or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals," the government guidance said.

Some 1.4 million children have now fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion began on 24 February, meaning nearly one child a second has become a refugee, the UN said yesterday.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Thousands of Ukrainians in UK treated as 'second-class citizens' as they are blocked from bringing family*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6503-63N1-DY4H-K1J1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 8:49 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 728 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Ministers accused of refusing Ukrainian workers 'basic level of humanity' by continuing to exclude them from visa scheme that would allow them to bring their relatives to safety in Britain

**Body**

Thousands of Ukrainians working in the UK are being treated as "second-class citizens", charities have warned, as they are blocked from bringing their family members fleeing Russia's war.

Ministers have been accused of refusing [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migrant-workers) a "basic level of humanity" by excluding them from the government's family visa scheme, designed to enable people escaping the conflict to seek sanctuary with their UK-based relatives.

The scheme, introduced last Friday, requires that the relative sponsoring a Ukrainian refugee must be "settled" in the UK - meaning thousands who are on temporary work [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) , as well as students and visitors, are not included.

Ukraine's ambassador to London told MPs on Wednesday that he planned to ask the home secretary why this cohort was excluded from the scheme.

The following day Priti Patel told the House of Commons that she was "looking at" the issue, but no change has been announced.

Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian lecturer at the University of Portsmouth, had hoped when Ms Patel announced the scheme that he would be able to bring his younger sister and mother, who have fled from their hometown Kyiv, to the UK where he can support them.

However, because he is on a work visa and not technically "settled" in Britain, he and his family are not eligible under the scheme.

The 30-year-old, who has lived in the UK for six years, told The Independent: "I struggle to see any rationale behind this policy. I'm working here. I could support my sister and mum if they came here.

"There are other Ukrainians in the UK who may not have the means to support their relatives, but they are still able to bring them here."

Mr Zharikov's sister Anna-Maria, 19, is currently staying with friends of his in Amsterdam, while his mother, 53, who left [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after her, leaving her husband to fight, is currently staying with a friend of a friend in Germany.

"The most important thing is that they are safe, but it is disappointing. It seems that my sister and my mum are not welcome here. They're now thinking about staying together in Germany," he added.

"I would send money across, but it would be a more straightforward option for them to come here. I work here, pay taxes here. I paid around £8,000 for my work permit, but it seems I don't get anything back."

A large number of Ukrainians in the UK are on seasonal worker visas, with almost 20,000 issued to Ukrainians in 2021 alone - two-thirds of all of those issued. Charities say this shows that people from the country are the "backbone" of the UK's agricultural sector.

Earlier this month, Ms Patel promised to extend their visas until 31 December 2022 - but this leaves them with no right to claim public funds and no ability to bring their loved ones to safety.

Andrei Savitski, a Ukrainian-speaking caseworker at the charity Work Rights Centre, who regularly assists Ukrainian migrants on seasonal worker visas, said: "Migrant workers are the backbone of the UK's agricultural sector, but are treated as second-class citizens.

"The majority of these visa-holders are Ukrainian. The UK's agricultural sector is reliant on them, but we're refusing them this basic level of humanity."

Around 1,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have so far arrived in the UK - of more than 20,000 applications submitted. More than 2.5 million people have fled the country as Russia continues its advance.

A government spokesperson said: "A new sponsorship route, which will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here is also being brought forward and all the measures we've put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners. We will keep our support under constant review."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Video reveals interior of Russian oligarch's £50m London mansion after break-in by squatters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K26J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 5:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 749 words

**Byline:** Lamiat Sabin

**Highlight:** The clip shows opulent furnishings and a grand piano - as would be expected in a luxury townhouse

**Body**

Squatters have posted a video tour of a Russian oligarch's mansion in London, which they say should be used to house refugees fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The anarchist group entered the luxury townhouse in [*Belgravia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgravia) - reported to belong to billionaire [*Oleg Deripaska*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oleg-deripaska) - in the early hours of Monday morning.

The clip shows the classically-decorated home with chandeliers hanging from high ceilings, long corridors and staircases, mezzanine floors, and multiple living rooms and studies lined with bookcases and huge mirrors.

The townhouse, thought to be valued at around £50m, also features a grand piano, cinema area, a marble bust in the hallway, and many plush cream-coloured sofas - but barely any signs of being lived in.

After occupying the property, in Belgrave Square, the group hung a banner that read "this property has been liberated" over a balcony that faces the street.

They also displayed a Ukraine flag and another banner with the words: "Putin go f\*\*\* yourself".

The activists occupied the building in protest against [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

The squatters called themselves the London Makhnovists, after Nestor Makhno, who led an anarchist movement that attempted to form a stateless society in Ukraine during the Russian Revolution of 1917-1923.

In a statement, the group said: "By occupying this mansion, we want to show solidarity with the people of Ukraine, but also the people of Russia who never agreed to this madness."

Eight people - the four inside the building, and four more that were outside - were arrested on Monday evening following a [*standoff with police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/met-police-oligarch-squatters-london-b2035403.html) lasting about seven hours.

Riot police - who had been waiting for hours in several vans parked outside - bust open the door at around noon.

The activists had sat on the balcony and refused to leave, while police stood on the platform of a JCB cherry picker to talk to them.

The demonstrators reportedly mocked the police's efforts by sipping whisky and iced tea, and singing 'The Time of My Life' from the film Dirty Dancing.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has questioned the proportion of the police's response to the squatting incident.

Speaking to LBC's Tonight With Andrew Marr programme, Mr Khan said: "I'm unclear what the police were responding to because we know no one's living there.

"But I'm not sure if there were concerns about any crimes being done to any neighbouring properties, so those are the questions."

When asked if he would raise the incident to Metropolitan Police commissioner Dame Cressida Dick, he said: "Or the number two, but someone in the police service - yes."

Mr Khan has also voiced concerns about the length of time the government is taking to seize property in London owned by Russian oligarchs with strong ties to Putin.

He said: "We know that there are many properties owned in London by people close to Putin.

"One of my concerns is, we've had a number of weeks now to seize those homes, to allow them to be used by refugees. They haven't.

"I don't condone the actions of the squatters but they've decided to take the law into their own hands."

Commentators on Russian "dirty money" have nicknamed he capital as the "London laundromat" - as its property market has allowed billions of pounds from Russia's economy to be used unchecked to buy huge assets in the UK.

About £1.5bn of UK property has been bought by Russians who have been accused of having links to the Kremlin, anti-corruption campaign group Transparency International has found.

More than two thirds of that amount is held in property owned through shell companies, based in tax havens, that obscure an owner's identity.

After the occupation of 5 Belgrave Square, the government said it is [*"looking at" the possibility of legislation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russian-oligarchs-homes-ukraine-refugees-b2035316.html) that would allow the UK homes of sanctioned Russian oligarchs to be used to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Mr Deripaska was one of seven oligarchs sanctioned by the UK government earlier this month over their alleged close links to the Kremlin. He has been under US sanctions since 2018.

Mr Deripaska, who reportedly owns 5 Belgrave Square, has insisted that he is not the beneficial owner of the property.

The title register lists the proprietor as Ravellot Limited, a company registered in the British Virgin Islands, the Financial Times reported.

Mr Deripaska's name doesn't appear on the title, but his spokeswoman said his family owns the house.

But a 2006 judgment in the High Court in London involving Deripaska had revealed he was the beneficial owner of the house.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fox News correspondent Benjamin Hall hospitalised after being injured in Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650K-4KC1-JBNF-W1WR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:5

**Length:** 818 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** British journalist was injured while news gathering near the Ukrainian capital, Fox News confirmed

**Body**

[*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) correspondent Benjamin Hall has been hospitalised after being injured while reporting on the ground near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , the network has revealed.

Anchor John Roberts announced live on air on Monday afternoon that the network's State Department correspondent Mr Hall is currently in hospital in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Few details are known about what happened, he said. The extent of Mr Hall's injuries and his condition are currently unclear.

This comes just one day after an American journalist was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin while on an assignment for TIME magazine.

Brent Renaud was in a car on route to report on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to evacuate from the area when the vehicle was ambushed by Vladimir Putin's troops, according to Ukrainian officials. A second American journalist was also wounded and taken to hospital.

Mr Roberts said that Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott sent a memo to staff on Monday confirming that Mr Hall had been injured in Ukraine.

"Earlier today, our correspondent Benjamin Hall was injured while news gathering outside of Kyiv in Ukraine," read the statement.

"We have a minimal level of details right now. Ben is hospitalised and our teams on the ground are working to gather additional information as the situation quickly unfolds.

"The safety of our entire team of journalists in Ukraine and the surrounding regions is our top priority and of the utmost importance.

"This is a stark reminder for all journalists who are putting their lives on the line every day to deliver the news from the war zone.

"We will update everyone as we know more. Please keep Ben and his family in your prayers."

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said President Joe Biden was thinking of the wounded journalist when asked about the situation in Monday's press briefing.

"Well, let me first say, your colleague, Benjamin Hall, I know there's not final reports yet or we would wait for your news organization to confirm those but our thoughts, the president's thoughts, our administration's thoughts are with him, his family and all of you at Fox News as well," she said.

Mr Hall is a British journalist working for US network Fox News who has been covering the invasion of Ukraine on the ground in the war-torn country.

News of his injuries come just days after he clashed with Fox News colleague Greg Gutfeld over comments he had made about the situation in Ukraine.

Mr Gutfield had claimed on show The Five last Tuesday that the media was exaggerating the extent of the atrocities on the ground in the country to create "some sort of emotional response" which then "creates a profit for news companies".

Mr Hall pushed back at his coworker's claims.

"Speaking as someone on the ground, I want to say that this is not the media trying to drum up some emotional response," he said.

He described cities being "absolutely flattened" by Russian forces and Ukrainians desperately trying to evacuate all the while being shelled.

"It's an absolute catastrophe and the people who are caught in the middle are the ones who are really suffering," said Mr Hall.

Mr Gutfield, who made his comments from the safety of the US, fired back that Mr Hall was taking a "cheap attack on me".

Last week, the anchor also revealed how his Fox News colleagues on the ground in Ukraine were helping his mother-in-law evacuate the country.

He told how she was finally reunited with his wife Elena after crossing the border from Ukraine into Poland.

While it is currently unclear how Mr Hall was injured, Monday's incident comes after President Vladimir Putin's forces have repeatedly targeted journalists covering the war in Ukraine while also censoring coverage back in Russia.

Back on 1 March, Ukrainian journalist and cameraman Yevhenii Sakun was one of five people killed when Russian forces shelled a TV tower in Kyiv.

Days later, two journalists for Sky News were shot by Russian forces but survived.

Then, on Sunday, Mr Renaud was killed in Irpin.

Anthony Bellanger, general secretary for the International Federation of Journalists, said the deaths of journalists reporting on the war "cannot go unpunished."

"The authorities must do everything possible to identify the perpetrators of these war crimes," he said in a statement.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

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[*Rishi Sunak facing Tory revolt over record immigration figures*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PH-7V81-JBNF-W3VF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 23, 2023 Thursday 9:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:16

**Length:** 1200 words

**Byline:** Archie Mitchell and Adam Forrest

**Highlight:** The New Conservatives group of 35 right-wing Tory MPs said Thursday’s figures were ‘existential’ for the party

**Body**

Rishi Sunak was facing a major Tory rebellion after net migration to the UK soared to a record high.

Senior MPs blasted the “embarassing” immigration figures and called on the prime minister to “urgently” bring in measures to bring overall numbers down.

Official figures showed net migration in 2022 hit 745,000, a huge upward revision from an earlier estimate of 606,000.

And the Office for National Statistics (ONS) [*revealed that in the year to June,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sunak-rwanda-flights-hunt-echr-b2449928.html) a total of 1.2 million people arrived to live in the UK, leaving overall net migration at 672,000.

The figures mean the population of England and Wales is now growing at the fastest rate since 1962.

Former business secretary Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg said he was “embarrassed” about the “absolutely extraordinary” net migration figure.

“This is a phenomenally high level with economic consequences,” he told BBC Radio 4’s World At One programme, adding that excess immigration was to blame for forecasts of shrinking GDP per capita.

He agreed that the figure pointed to a serious political failure in controlling Britain’s borders post-Brexit.

“I’m embarrassed that we haven’t achieved what we set out to achieve,” Sir Jacob said.

And the New Conservatives group of 35 right-wing Tory MPs said Thursday’s figures were “existential” for the party and called for urgent action.

“At the last election, every Conservative MP was elected on a solemn promise to reduce net migration, which in 2019 stood at 229,000 per year,” the group said in a statement.

It called for a “comprehensive package” of measures today to bring migration below the 229,000 mark before the next election. In a warning to the under-fire PM, the group said: “We will assess any such package and report publicly on whether it will meet the promise made to the electorate.”

The group said: “The prime minister, chancellor, and new home secretary must show that they stand by the promises on which we were elected to parliament. We must act now.

“The word ‘existential’ has been used a lot in recent days but this really is ‘do or die’ for our party. Each of us made a promise to the electorate. We don’t believe that such promises can be ignored.”

Mr Sunak is[*facing mounting pressure to deliver on a 2019 manifesto pledge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rwanda-supreme-court-jeremy-hunt-robert-jenrick-james-cleverly-b2450382.html%22%20title=%22Sunak%20pledges%20to%20do%20‘what%20is%20necessary’%20to%20secure%20Rwanda%20flights) to bring the number of people migrating to Britain down – a pledge made when the figures were less than a third of the level they are today.

Right-winger Miriam Cates said the government had “no democratic consent” for the current level of migration while New Conservative chairman Danny Kruger said it risked “threatening community cohesion”.

Senior Tory Henry Smith told The Independent the “unsustainable numbers” of immigrants “put intolerable pressure on housing, transportation and public services”.

“In mitigation they of course include BNO passport holders and the Ukrainian scheme and come before the effect of the new Nationality & Borders Act, however clearly more needs to happen to bring net migration down,” the MP added.

And Conservative MP David Jones said the figures were “very troubling”, calling for Mr Sunak to consider an overall annual cap on migration numbers.

The deputy chief of the Tories’ European Research Group (ERG) told The Independent that the government should stop all students bringing family member “and make sure they return after their studies”.

As the latest bout of Tory infighting over migration erupted, shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper stuck the boot in, saying the figures showed “the scale of utter Tory failure on immigration”.

In May, the ONS estimated that net migration stood at 606,000, a [*figure Mr Sunak described as “too high”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-braverman-rwanda-tories-b2449652.html) , adding: “I want to bring them down.”

However, in a bombshell revelation, the Office for National Statistics has now revised its estimate for 2022’s net migration figure to 745,000, meaning Thursday’s figure represents a slight dip.

Mr Sunak’s spokesman said the PM is still working toward the manifesto commitment and indicated that further measures to curb net migration could be introduced.

He cited the government’s May decision to bar students coming to the UK from bringing dependents and said “we are looking at other areas where we can make further reductions”.

Tory MP Jonathan Gullis, also a member of the New Conservatives, said the net migration surge was “completely unacceptable”.

“We must take drastic action now to bring legal migration down, as well as do whatever we must to stop the boats,” Mr Gullis added.

Ex-levelling up secretary Simon Clarke said the net migration figure was “unsustainable both economically and socially”, adding that there is “no mandate” for it.

He called for an “urgent change of approach”, including hiking the earnings threshold for visa applications, cutting the shortage occupations list and supporting more British workers into jobs.

The latest ONS figures showed almost all of the net migration to the UK was driven by non-EU citizens. The increase was mainly due to migrants coming for work, predominantly those coming on health and social care visas.

In the year to June, the top five non-EU nationalities migrating to the UK were Indian, Nigerian, Chinese, Pakistani and Ukrainian.

And people arriving via humanitarian routes such as ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and Hong Kong citizens decreased from 19 per to 9 per cent of the total over the same period.

Home secretary James Cleverly, who replaced Suella Braverman last week, brushed off the increase in migration. He said: “This figure is not showing a significant increase from last year’s figures and is largely in line with our own immigration statistics.”

“The government remains completely committed to reducing levels of legal migration while at the same time focusing relentlessly on our priority of stopping the boats,” Mr Cleverly added.

Thursday’s figures show a total of 40,386 people crossed the channel in small boats in the 12 months to June.

As well as [*concerns over the net migration figure*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rwanda-deportation-james-cleverly-braverman-b2448331.html%22%20title=%22James%20Cleverly%20promises%20new%20Rwanda%20treaty%20‘in%20days%20not%20weeks’%20-but%20refuses%20to%20say%20when%20flights%20will%20leave) , Mr Sunak is under intense pressure to deliver on his “stop the boats” pledge.

The PM’s plans faced a major setback when the Supreme Court ruled a scheme to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda unlawful.

He is now pinning his hopes on a new treaty with the African country which he hopes will address judges’ concerns. Mr Sunak is also planning to pass legislation ruling Rwanda a “safe” country to get the deportation scheme up and running.

Pressure to “stop the boats” will also mount after a man and a woman drowned on Wednesday when a small boat trying to cross the Channel to the UK capsized just after leaving the French coast.

One person was airlifted to safety while at least 57 others were rescued by boat and taken to the French town of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Several of those rescued were suffering from hypothermia, the authorities said.

The boat reportedly got into difficulty in French waters shortly after 1pm (local time) and drowned.

The last Channel deaths were reported on 12 August when six Afghans drowned after their boat capsized. That was the worst small boat accident since 24 November 2021, when at least 27 people died in an overloaded boat.

More than 27,200 people have crossed the Channel in small boats so far this year, against a record 45,000 in 2022, according to British authorities.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Afghan refugees 'still lingering in hotels' as UK welcomes Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651V-3XF1-JBNF-W0C6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 3:57 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 734 words

**Byline:** Max McLean

**Highlight:** The UK still has around 12,000 Afghans living in hotels after the Taliban took over the country last year.

**Body**

An [*Afghan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghan) in the UK has said that while Ukrainian war refugees "deserve a home" in the UK, many [*Afghans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghans) are still "lingering in hotels".

Tens of thousands of British households have registered their interest in the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme as millions flee Ukraine in the wake of Russia's invasion.

Meanwhile, the UK still has around 12,000 Afghans living in hotels after the [*Taliban*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taliban) took over their country last year, with some UK citizens frustrated in their attempts to offer Afghan refugees a room.

Mohammad Asif, 55, the director of the Afghan Human Rights Foundation, said: "I have the highest sympathy and respect for anyone who helps ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***" but he remains frustrated at the number of Afghans still waiting for more permanent accommodation.

"Afghans are still lingering in hotels, no proper future, nothing," Mr Asif told the PA news agency.

"Here in the UK, Afghans are having a very tough time.

"Many have become homeless in England, and suddenly we have resources, we have money (to help other refugees).

"Don't get me wrong, I feel the pain of Ukrainians. No one can feel their pain better than me because we have been through this.

"They are our brothers and sisters, the Ukrainians. They deserve a home or somewhere to stay in a safe environment, but then it comes to the selective policies of the West."

Afghan refugees have previously told PA that, while they are grateful to be in the UK, being stuck in hotels has added to the psychological burden of their experience, and they miss the freedom that comes with living in a home of their own.

Mr Asif, who arrived in the UK in 2000 and now lives in Glasgow, said many Afghans stuck in hotels are "having health issues" while he was critical of the language used to distinguish the war in Ukraine from other conflicts.

Here in the UK Afghans are having a very tough time

Mohammad Asif, Afghan Human Rights Foundation

"Now I realise that it all comes to... what colour skin do you have?" he said.

"I see politicians in mainstream media is saying that Ukrainians are 'civilised' and 'they look like us'.

"We see now how quickly Ukrainians can arrive in Britain."

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) website showed that, as of March 19, 9,500 visas have been issued under the Ukraine Family Scheme scheme out of a total of 30,300 submitted applications.

The separate Homes For Ukraine scheme allowing Britons to provide accommodation for someone fleeing the war zone opened on Friday.

Barbara Sleigh-Ives, 63, from Felsham, near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, has been frustrated in her attempts to take in Afghan refugees in the past six months, and has also signed up for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The retired schoolteacher, who spent 13 years in the military, said it was "very frustrating" that she had not been able to fill her spare room.

"It was very frustrating because you sit there thinking these people are in (need of) desperate help," she told PA.

"It was very difficult to get any response from anybody on how I could help refugees who were in desperate need and who were now being housed in hotels, or even to try and sponsor somebody to get out of Afghanistan.

"How many of these people who put their homes forward (for Ukrainians) would accept an Afghan family? I expect a majority of them would.

"They must also be seeing this and saying 'look, they're getting all these people here from Ukraine and we're still stuck in a hotel'."

Ms Sleigh-Ives, who previously hosted a homeless person in her house for around a year, said that she was forced to give up in her efforts to house an Afghan refugee in November of 2021, but remains motivated to fill the room.

"I would be happy to have anybody who needed help," she said.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "Each conflict or scenario requires a bespoke response and our approach to Ukraine has been developed hand in hand with their government.

"Protecting the most vulnerable will always be our top priority and we made it quick and simple for Ukrainians with ties to the UK to come here, as well as ensuring those already here can stay.

"At the same time, we are proud this country has provided homes for more than 4,000 Afghan evacuees in such a short space of time.

"Over 300 local authorities have pledged to support Afghan families so far, and we continue to urge those who have not yet come forward, and those that can offer more housing places, to do so as we resettle up to 20,000 in the coming years."

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government scheme 'must have safeguards to protect Ukraine refugees'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0K1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 750 words

**Byline:** Aine Fo

**Highlight:** One organisation has warned that modern slavery offenders could try to take advantage of the new scheme which will see households paid £350 a month.

**Body**

The [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) public has shown "an enormous amount of goodwill" to open their homes to refugees, but the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) must ensure the right safeguards are in place to protect everyone involved, organisations have said.

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) collating names of those who want to host people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) described the "absolutely incredible" response within the UK.

But those helping with charitable efforts have insisted the right checks must be carried out to ensure such a vulnerable group are kept safe, with one organisation warning that modern slavery offenders could try to take advantage.

We have been working closely with all parts of the Jewish community to centralise all the offers of accommodation for [*#****Ukrainian***](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukrainian?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#****refugees***](https://twitter.com/hashtag/refugees?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Notify World Jewish Relief of your interest and find further information here: [*https://t.co/eRCqZfPfKW*](https://t.co/eRCqZfPfKW) [*#WorldJewishRelief*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/WorldJewishRelief?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#homesforukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/homesforukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/eQ9wOnNXCb*](https://t.co/eQ9wOnNXCb) - World Jewish Relief (@WJRelief) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/WJRelief/status/1503381460413202435?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Details of the Government's scheme, which will see households paid £350 a month for putting up refugees for a minimum of six months, are due to be set out by Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) on Monday.

Paul Anticoni, chief executive of World Jewish Relief, said the protection of those who have had to leave their homes - many of whom are women and children - "has to be a priority for any government or agencies that are involved in accommodation".

He told the PA news agency: "I think the nature of this is going to be, it will only work if there is a sort of partnership dynamic between hosts, local authorities, supporting agencies and other volunteer organisations."

Describing the response of the public in offering to host refugees as "absolutely incredible", he added that safeguards are needed especially due to the trauma endured by refugees.

He said: "Opening your doors to somebody is a brilliant thing to do but making sure then that the right support is provided to those who do want to come is just as important."

The principle is great, but the potential for chaos or abuse is very large

Rabbi Jonathan Romain

Rabbi Jonathan Romain said he welcomed the Government "getting their act together" but said detail on how the scheme will operate is needed.

He has been contacted by more than 900 people offering rooms for refugees coming to the UK, and has been collating details and speaking with the Home Office.

He told PA: "The principle is great, but the potential for chaos or abuse is very large and therefore it needs to be a really sort of tight scheme, both for the sake of the protection of the refugees and the protection of the potential hosts."

He said he is "hopeful" the scheme will be a success "because there's an enormous amount of goodwill".

He added: "There's a real contrast between the brutality of the invasion and the compassion of people in Britain, who are here wanting to make a difference, wanting to help in some way and they're desperate to help because they see this atrocious event and what they really want to do is to stop the war.

"That's not in our power, but we can try and help some of the individuals or families caught up in it. So there's a real sort of, I was going to say a pool of willingness, it's actually a lake, a gigantic lake of willingness, to help in some way. And we need the Government really to provide the wherewithal."

We must remember that refugees are extremely vulnerable. They must not be allowed to fall off the radar

Lauren Agnew, CARE

Lauren Agnew, human trafficking policy expert at Christian charity CARE, warned "red flags" around the potential for modern slavery crimes must not be missed while the "well-motivated" scheme is in place.

She said: "Recent statistics from the National Crime Agency estimate there are at least 6,000-8,000 modern slavery offenders in the UK. We can be certain that some of this number will be seeing the Homes for Ukraine scheme as an opportunity to turn a profit at the expense of vulnerable individuals seeking refuge in the UK.

"Setting refugees up in homes around the UK is not the end of the story. There must be follow-up checks to ensure these individuals are not being exploited. We must remember that refugees are extremely vulnerable. They must not be allowed to fall off the radar.

"We urge the Government to put rigorous safeguarding measures in place to ensure, one, that homes and other locations offered to refugees are indeed safe, and two, that the welfare of refugees is ensured for as long as they need to take refuge in the UK."

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*PM to move 'faster and harder' against Putin at home and on world stage*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y0-6RR1-JBNF-W34S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 775 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The Prime Minister will host foreign leaders on Monday as tougher sanctions measures are debated by MPs.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is set to embark on a week of intense diplomatic efforts with foreign leaders to build a united front against [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , while at home ministers scramble to go "faster and harder" with sanctions levelled against the Kremlin.

The Prime Minister will host Canadian Prime Minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte at Downing Street on Monday.

Mr Johnson is expected to put more pressure on international leaders to take further action to remove Russia from the Swift payment system, while pushing them to back his six-point plan to tackle Russian aggression.

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said amendments to the Economic Crime Bill - which is set to be fast-tracked through all stages in the Commons on Monday - would "give us the chance to bring even more crippling sanctions against Putin and his regime".

In [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , a second temporary ceasefire designed to allow citizens to escape two cities failed to hold, as fresh photographs showed the desperation of those trying to escape the war.

Russia became more isolated from the West as further companies severed ties with the state.

On Sunday, Tiktok blocked its Russian users from posting new videos and Netflix said it was suspending its service in Russia.

Earlier in the day, American Express said it would suspend services in the country, and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) is separating its firm in Russia - which has a staff of around 3,700 - from the rest of its global network as a result of the invasion of Ukraine.

The UK Government said it would pump an extra £74 million into Ukraine to support the country's "indomitable people" through the humanitarian crisis being faced on the ground.

The aid, provided through the World Bank, could go towards supporting public sector salaries, allowing vital state functions to keep operating, or supporting social safety nets and pensions for the Ukrainian people.

Meanwhile, Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) wrote to Interpol requesting the suspension of Russia's access to its systems.

Mr Johnson said: "While only Putin can fully end the suffering in Ukraine, today's new funding will continue to help those facing the deteriorating humanitarian situation."

However, the Government will likely come under criticism for the speed of moves made at home.

The Home Office revealed on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme as of 10am on Sunday.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper tweeted: "This is too slow. Too many hoops for desperate families to have to jump through. Home Office completely failing to understand urgency of crisis."

But Ms Patel said the UK was "doing everything possible" to speed up efforts to grant visas to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, and told The Sun she was examining a "humanitarian route" to allow all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who want to come to the UK to do so.

In Parliament, Labour is set to put pressure on ministers to further reduce the time period before foreign-owned UK property needs to be registered under new plans.

The party said Russian oligarchs still had a "get out of London free" card as even though the grace period under the measures designed to tackle so-called dirty money had been cut from 18 months to six, the opposition was calling for this to be reduced further to just 28 days.

Shadow business secretary Jonathan Reynolds said: "The invasion of Ukraine and continued Russian aggression demands action now, not in six months' time."

But the Foreign Office insisted the new scheme would "allow the Government to move faster and harder when sanctioning oligarchs and businesses associated with the Russian Government".

The PM said: "Punishing sanctions are meaningless until properly implemented, and these changes will allow us to pursue Putin's allies in the UK with the full backing of the law, beyond doubt or legal challenge."

Putin must fail and must be seen to fail in this act of aggression.We must come together under a six point plan of action to ensure Putin fails in his ambitions.The world is watching. It is not future historians but the people of Ukraine who will be our judge. [*pic.twitter.com/mHm0cKAc4H*](https://t.co/mHm0cKAc4H) - Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1500457187340136452?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It comes after Mr Johnson, in a nearly 1,300-word essay in the New York Times, said that the West had "failed to learn the lessons of Russian behaviour" that have led to the invasion of Ukraine, the Prime Minister said as he warned world leaders: "We need to prepare now for even darker days ahead."

Mr Johnson will launch into a week of what No 10 called "focussed engagement" with his global counterparts, starting with Mr Trudeau and Mr Rutte.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*William and Kate reveal Charlotte and George quiz them about Ukraine war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-YNH1-DY4H-K29C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 6:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 735 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge brought trays of chocolate brownies and granola bars, homemade at Kensington Palace, for the volunteers.

**Body**

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have pledged their support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as they revealed their eldest children have been questioning them about the conflict.

William and Kate's comments came when they met volunteers at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre in London, who were filling lorries with aid to support the humanitarian relief effort following the Russian invasion.

The second in line to the throne told them that Britain and the rest of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) were united behind them and spoke of the shock at seeing war on European soil.

William, 39, said Britons were more used to seeing conflict in Africa and Asia. "It's very alien to see this in Europe. We are all behind you," he said.

But he added that he, like many, wanted to do more to help. "We feel so useless," he said.

William and Kate, 40, wore Ukrainian yellow and blue solidarity badges and took trays of chocolate brownies and granola bars, homemade at [*Kensington Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kensington-palace) , for the volunteers working at the centre in nearby Holland Park.

They offered assistance from their charitable foundation for children and young people suffering mental health problems and trauma from the war, and said their eldest children, [*Prince George*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-george) , aged eight, and six-year-old Princess [*Charlotte*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charlotte) , had been affected by the unfolding tragedy.

"Ours have been coming home asking all about it," William said. "They are obviously talking about it with their friends at school."

He suggested he had found it difficult discussing some of it with his children, adding he had to "choose my words carefully to explain what is going on".

The royal couple spent an hour chatting to some of the volunteers working daily at the centre, a social club, to send aid to a hub in western Ukraine and on to people on the front line.

In the club, packed with boxes of first aid, over-the-counter medicines, food for babies and adults, and military coats and socks, they spoke to volunteers taking calls from people all over Britain offering assistance.

Many of the calls come from the diaspora, some of the 100,000 Ukrainians living in Britain and worried about their friends and families, but others here have been eager to help as well.

The couple were shown around by the Ukrainian ambassador Vadym Prystaiko, his wife Inna Prystaiko, and Inna Hryhorovych, who set up the relief operation.

William and Kate spoke to them and the other volunteers about the crisis and listened to their fears that Russian president Vladimir Putin will unleash a third world war unless he can be stopped in Ukraine.

They spoke about the dangers of a second disaster at Chernobyl and also of the impact on the rest of Europe of losing Ukraine's agricultural output.

William said: "The irony is it brings Europe closer together.

"Europe is closer together than it's ever been before because of Ukraine."

In a hall still packed with aid boxes on the stage and full to the brim until it was cleared when the last lorries went out, he praised the people of Ukraine for their spirit and the volunteers for their commitment.

"We have seen a lot of that Ukrainian spirit already," he told them. "Keep together. Everyone is there for you."

He added: "We feel for you, we really do."

He and Kate gladly posed for photos with the volunteers, saying it was the least they could do.

"They had been supposed to help with packing but in the crowded chaos it did not happen.

The duchess suggested returning to do that, "I think we need to come and help out here", Kate said "Give you some respite."

In a side room, the royals and their hosts spoke with Saleh Saeed, chief executive of the Disasters Emergency Committee, a group of 15 charities channelling humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

His key message was the humanitarian crisis is set to last for months, possibly years, no matter when the fighting stops and the most important thing the British public can do to help is to send money, rather than old coats or other items.

"The British people have been incredibly generous.

"They have given £132 million over the last six days," he said. "But this is not going to be over soon. The most important thing is for people to give more money so that charities and the people of Ukraine can buy what they need with dignity."

As the press were ushered out of the meeting, the ambassador was telling William and Kate about the problems facing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to get to Britain.

He suggested the European Union's system of taking refugees was better.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Emmanuel Macron lashes UK for not doing enough for Ukraine's refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6503-1H11-JBNF-W3P4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 7:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 792 words

**Byline:** Alana Calvert

**Highlight:** French president criticises Boris Johnson's visa policy

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) 's government has been condemned by French president [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) for failing to live up to its "grand statements" on helping refugees from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Speaking at the end of an EU summit in Versailles, Mr Macron criticised Britain's visa policy, which had required applicants to make them in person in Brussels or Paris.

Mr Macron said the approach so far had further exacerbated circumstances for those fleeing the war.

"Despite all the grand statements... the British government continued to apply current rules that meant they did not welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who wanted to reach British soil saying they have to travel hundreds of kilometres in order to apply for a visa," said the president.

He added: "I would hope that the Ukrainian men and women who have lived through horror and crossed Europe to reach their families on UK territory will be better treated."

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

In response to Mr Macron's reported remarks, the Home Office pointed to Ms Patel's comments, which stated: "We are now making the process quicker and simpler by removing the need to physically visit visa application centres for many of those who are making the perilous journey across Europe."

Meanwhile, the government is intending to further ramp up pressure on the Kremlin with plans to ban exports of luxury goods to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in the latest move to isolate Vladimir Putin.

Details of the plans and what it means for UK businesses will be set out in the coming days, Downing Street said.

It came as Mr Johnson joined with other G7 leaders on Friday to commit to further increase the pressure on the Russian president's regime.

The group agreed to take steps to deny Russia "most favoured nation" status on key products, which No 10 said would significantly reduce the ability of Russian businesses to export.

Sharing the news on Friday evening, foreign secretary Liz Truss said the UK stood "united with our G7 partners", and would "continue strengthening our response" to put a halt to Russia's aggression against its neighbour.

But Labour said the ban on luxury goods "should not have taken this long". Nick Thomas-Symonds, Labour's shadow international trade secretary, said: "We cannot allow Putin, and his cronies in Moscow, to live a Mayfair lifestyle while they kill innocent people in their illegal invasion of Ukraine."

The announcement follows Britain's sanctioning of nearly 400 Russian parliamentarians, with ministers seeking to "tighten the screw" on Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine.

Earlier on Friday, Ms Truss said 386 members of the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, would be banned from travelling to the UK and any assets they had in the country would be frozen.

The government originally announced its intention to sanction the parliamentarians last month over their support for the Ukrainian breakaway regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

Meanwhile, former Tory foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt argued the Russian invasion of Ukraine was "the biggest failure of Western foreign and security policy in our lifetimes".

Writing in the Daily Telegraph, he said: "It happened because we forgot the most fundamental lesson of the Cold War: the power of deterrence. Instead of peace through strength we caused war through weakness."

Mr Hunt also suggested the UK should increase spending on "defence, aid and soft power" to at least 4% of GDP over the next decade.

The UK's permanent representative to the United Nations accused Russia of bringing about "wild, completely baseless and irresponsible conspiracy theories".

It came as the UN security council met at Russia's request to discuss claims levelled by Moscow about biological activities in Ukraine.

Mr Johnson has previously expressed fears Russia is spreading a "fake story" that the US or the Ukrainians have chemical weapons in Ukraine as a pretext for an atrocity.

The Ukraine crisis is expected to be a topic for discussion when Mr Johnson meets Irish premier Micheal Martin for talks on Saturday.

The sanctioning of nearly 400 Russian parliamentarians in the Duma on Friday followed the announcement on Thursday that seven more oligarchs linked to Vladimir Putin, including Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich, were being subjected to similar measures.

The Duma move was first announced on February 22 and ministers are yet to target all the members of the Federation Council, the Russian parliament's upper house.

The UK has now sanctioned more than 500 high-value individuals and entities since the invasion of Ukraine began, while Russian aircraft - including oligarchs' private jets - are banned from the UK.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Cambridge professor left "in limbo" waiting for word on refugee nephew's visa*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-XNY1-JBNF-W0YN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 6:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 728 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Dr Anton Enright's 15-year-old nephew Viktor escaped war-torn Ukraine on March 3.

**Body**

A professor at [*Cambridge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cambridge) University has said that his Ukrainian nephew has been left "in limbo" because of issues with the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) Family Scheme.

Dr Anton Enright, a professor in the pathology department at Cambridge University, is at his home in Cambridge, while his 15-year-old nephew Viktor is stuck in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) , [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , after escaping from war-torn Ukraine.

Dr Enright, 46, and his partner, Tatyana Lapa, 40, a GP, flew to Poland on March 3 and said that his sister-in-law Svitlana, 38, "having spent multiple days making a treacherous and difficult journey, handed the traumatised boy to us".

Svitlana remains in [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) with her parents, due to the nature of her job which was not revealed for safety reasons.

"(Viktor and his mum) spent the previous three nights going up and down to air raid shelters because they were staying near Lviv which was under missile attack," Dr Enright told the PA news agency.

"So there was a very tearful exchange on the Ukrainian border on March 3."

Mr Enright heard from his family in Ireland that the EU and Ireland were offering a visa waiver, so he decided to fly to his sister's family in Dublin to try and apply for a visa there.

He said that arriving in Dublin airport was "probably the best part of the whole experience" as they passed through the airport within five minutes, stamped Viktor's passport and gave him a piece of paper written in Ukrainian and English that said: "Welcome to Ireland. You are safe and we are here to help".

But Dr Enright said making an application under the UK's Ukraine Family Scheme so that his nephew could be with family involved "incredibly complicated" paperwork.

The Ukraine Family Scheme was set up by the Home Office to allow ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to travel to the UK to live with their family members who are British nationals or UK settled persons.

"It took us an hour to work out whether or not he was eligible," Dr Enright said.

"It is a lot of work to have to fill out thee forms. And then we were finally told we needed to book an appointment at the visa application centre in Dublin.

"And when we go to that website, there are no appointments available. When you phone the British embassy in Dublin, they pass you around to other phone numbers," he said.

Turning up at the visa application centre in Dublin on a whim on Monday March 7, Viktor's photo and fingerprints were taken and all the paperwork needed for the application was packaged and sent to the UK, with Viktor and Dr Enright being told that the application would be processed between 24 and 48 hours.

We've had no update and we are basically living in a life of limbo with a traumatized 15-year-old boy, who just wants to come to Cambridge -a place he's been many times -to sit and play with his cousins and to be with his family again.

Dr Anton Enright

"It's now Thursday. We seem to be no closer to getting that visa," he added.

Miss Lapa is currently in an airport hotel in Dublin with Viktor and Dr Enright and his partner have been "shuttling back and forth between Cambridge and Dublin just to make sure we're there with him".

"We've had no update and we are basically living in a life of limbo with a traumatized 15-year-old boy, who just wants to come to Cambridge - a place he's been many times - to sit and play with his cousins and to be with his family again," he added.

"This is a boy who's been through a lot. He's been in air raid shelters and had to make a difficult trip to Poland, he's terrified about what's happening to his family in Ukraine."

Dr Enright added that he and his partner's "work life is on hold" because they are both on compassionate leave and feel "deeply let down" by the visa process.

He added that the people of Cambridgeshire and beyond have offered him lots of support, with Coton FC U15s offering to let Viktor play or train with their team because of his love of the game.

A Government spokesperson said: "We are standing shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians which is why we've made it easier for those with Ukrainian passports to come here.

"This is alongside changes to visas to ensure Ukrainians in the UK can stay here.

"We have expanded our Visa Application Capacity to 13,000 a week, deployed additional staff across the EU, with a 24/7 helpline in place to ensure those who need appointments can get them to come here. This allows us to balance security risks while welcoming those in need."

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Andrew Marr: 'Deranged' Putin was one of my cleverest interviewees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-0S91-DY4H-K3KK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 12:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 687 words

**Byline:** Laura Harding

**Highlight:** The broadcaster interviewed the Russian leader ahead of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games, while he was at the BBC.

**Body**

[*Andrew Marr*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-marr) has described [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) as "one of the cleverest men that I have ever interviewed" as he accused the "deranged" Russian leader of hiding behind his country's nuclear capability.

The veteran broadcaster, who left the [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) in November last year after 21 years, interviewed Mr Putin in 2014 ahead of the Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Reflecting on their meeting, Marr told ITV's Good Morning Britain: "He was extraordinary. He's got this very famous, cold, cold stare that people talk about, but I would say, listening to him, because he was being interviewed then in lots of different languages, he's one of the cleverest men that I have ever interviewed.

"He may not be any more, but he was then.

'What do you make of his [Putin's] state of mind?'[*@AndrewMarr9*](https://twitter.com/AndrewMarr9?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) explains why the current situation between Russia and Ukraine is 'such a dangerous moment for us and the world.'[*@susannareid100*](https://twitter.com/susannareid100?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) | [*@richardm56*](https://twitter.com/richardm56?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Watch GMB [*https://t.co/6iQ6ebeOEQ*](https://t.co/6iQ6ebeOEQ) [*pic.twitter.com/DD9VG5Vvth*](https://t.co/DD9VG5Vvth) - Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/GMB/status/1500759662601420801?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"I was in a slightly disturbed state myself, because I just interviewed Elton John before I had gone out to Sochi in Russia.

"If you remember, there was a big gay rights issue at the Winter Olympics, suspicion the Russians were homophobic, and Elton John said 'Oh, you're off to see Vladimir Putin.'

"I said yes, and Elton John said 'Well, give him a Donna Summer album and a kiss from me.'

"And I thought 'I can't really do that', but that was going around in my head as I was talking to Putin. So it was a real moment."

He added: "Over the last 50 years we have faced, as a country, frankly deranged foreign leaders, or people whose mental stability we were unsure about, and we have faced nuclear threats, but what we haven't faced before is the two things coming together at once.

"And that's why this is such a dangerous moment for us and for the world."

Asked if he thinks Mr Putin is hiding behind Russia's nuclear umbrella, Marr said: "Exactly. I think the concern here is that he hasn't got many other places to go.

"I think the economic stranglehold on the Russian economy is brutal, and, by all accounts, highly effective.

"He's going to find it very, very hard to keep his country running; they're running out of money, there will be quite soon... people are going to be rioting in the streets about that.

"His war machine is not a very warlike war machine. They're very, very good at killing unarmed civilians, they don't seem to be quite so good at fighting.

"He's in real, real trouble in Kyiv. So what else does he have left? Frankly, he's got nuclear weapons left. And that's why I think we're going to hear more and more blood-curdling threats from him, and we're going to have to, as we say in Scotland, keep the heat."

Marr, who was formerly the political editor of the BBC before going on to host Sunday morning politics programme The [*Andrew Marr Show*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrew-marr-show) , left the broadcaster to focus on writing and presenting political and cultural shows for Global, and writing for newspapers.

He has said his new show on LBC, which launches on Monday night, gives him a "new freedom" to do "fast-paced, very regular political journalism with no filter".

It seems to me that the Foreign Office and the Home Office have got a complete tin ear for the mood of the country

Andrew Marr

He blasted the Government over its visa system for allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter the UK, telling GMB hosts Susanna Reid and Richard Madeley: "I am, I think, as angry as both of you seem to be about the lack of generosity and openness when we're bringing people into this country, refugees.

"All across Britain, people are raising money, they're collecting food, they're collecting clothing to send to the Ukrainians. There is a real sense that we stand with Ukrainians, we want to help and welcome Ukrainians.

"That is the kind of people we are in this country, and to have such a meagre, infuriating visa system at this time, it seems to me that the Foreign Office and the Home Office have got a complete tin ear for the mood of the country.

"They really have to get a grip of this very, very soon indeed."

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Two teachers called out far-right activities at their German school. Then they had to leave town.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SP-8RF1-DY4H-K16S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 25, 2023 Tuesday 5:59 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1082 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** Two teachers in eastern Germany say they spent months unsuccessfully trying to counter the far-right atmosphere at their small town high school

**Body**

Two teachers in eastern Germany tried to counter the far-right activities of students at their small town high school. They counseled bullies who threatened to beat up immigrant classmates. They gave more lessons about their country's [*Nazi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazi) past. They invited in a Black rapper to talk about mutual respect.

None of it helped. In desperation, Laura Nickel and Max Teske wrote a public letter in which they described an atmosphere of intimidation at Mina Witkojc School in Burg. They reported students greeting each other with the Nazi salute, scratching swastikas on their desks and playing music with racist lyrics in the hallways.

“[*Teachers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/teachers) and students who openly fight against far-right students and teachers fear for their safety,” the two said in the letter they sent to local newspapers. "The problem has to be recognized and openly fought. Schools should be places free of fear, full of open-mindedness and safety for everyone and cannot provide a home for the enemies of democracy.”

Even so, Nickel, who taught English and history at the high school, and Teske, a math and geography teacher, were unprepared for the backlash their call to action produced. A letter from an anonymous group of parents demanded their dismissals. Stickers with their pictures and the caption “Piss off to Berlin” plastered light poles near campus. On social media, someone declared a desire to “hunt them down.”

Further disheartened by what they say was a lack of support from colleagues, the principal and local administrators, Nickel and Teske announced when the academic year ended two weeks ago that they were leaving the school and the town located 116 kilometers (72 miles) southeast of Berlin.

“Far-right extremist statements, actions, slogans, homophobia and sexism were and are the order of the day at this school,” Nickel, 34, who worked at Mina Witkojc for four years, told The Associated Press in a joint interview with Teske, 31, who taught there for three years.

Neither the school nor the local school authority responded to the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) 's requests for comment on the teachers’ resignations.

But Teske and Nickel's experience has aroused fears in the German capital that the far right has gained a greater foothold in some parts of the former East Germany than many thought. Experts say that especially in the south of [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) state, where Burg is located, an entire network of tattoo parlors, nightclubs, youth groups and fan clubs of the FC Energie Cottbus soccer team spread the messaging of the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, party.

Earlier this month, Brandenburg state’s domestic intelligence service declared Young Alternative for Germany, the AfD’s wing for supporters age 14 and above, as particularly radical and put it under official surveillance as a “proven right-wing extremist” group.

.The state education ministry, which was criticized for not supporting the teachers enough, announced last week that it had identified a teenager suspected of originally posting the "hunt them down” post on Instagram.

Amadeu Antonio Foundation Executive Director Timo Reinfrank, whose organization promotes human rights while working against right-wing extremism, racism and antisemitism in Germany, told the AP that southern Brandenburg state has become “a zone of fear which the Nazis have declared as their home zone.”

Reinfrank said that's not really a surprise for those familiar with the area, where the far right was active even before AfD's founding a decade ago. The foundation he leads was named for an Angolan contract worker who in 1990 was beaten to death when a group of about 50 youths with baseball bats went looking for Black people to attack in the Brandenburg town of Eberswalde.

AfD was founded in 2013 and first entered Germany's parliament four years later after campaigning on an anti-migrant platform. Recent polls show the party with a record level of support nationally, about 20%.

The reasons for its particular appeal in eastern Germany are manifold. East Germany was a communist dictatorship until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and many people there lost their jobs after Germany's 1990 reunification. Residents still speak of feeling like second-class citizens compared to Germans in the country's west.

AfD has used the coronavirus pandemic and the influx of 1.2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since Russia invaded Ukraine as opportunities to promote an “us vs. them” narrative and to offer what seem like simple answers to complex problems, experts say.

Many think AfD could emerge as the strongest party when Brandenburg and the fellow eastern states of Saxony and Thuringia hold elections next year. In Thuringia, the AfD candidate last month won the county administrator's post in Sonneberg, the first time since the Nazi era that a far-right party placed first at the county level.

Meanwhile, Chancellor Olaf Scholz ’s center-left governing coalition with the environmentalist Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats has a reputation for infighting and faces strong headwinds over immigration, an environmental plan to replace millions of home heating systems and inflation that remains high.

For people like Nickel and Teske, standing up against right-wing populists comes at a steep personal price. After the teachers announced their withdrawal from Burg, the head of the AfD chapter in Cottbus, Brandenburg state’s second-largest city, cheered on Twitter that Teske, whom he called a “leftist radical informer,” and his “accomplice” were gone.

The police are investigating threats against the teachers, and officers patrol past their homes frequently. When Teske goes out, he often looks over his shoulder to see if somebody might be following him. Recently, a man approached him in a grocery store from behind and whispered, “Get out of here,” into his ear, he said.

Yet he refuses to see the decision to leave town as a defeat. By calling out the dire conditions at the school, he and Nickel sparked a much-needed national debate about the rise of the far right in Germany, Teske said.

“We will continue to be loud, we will continue to make a political impact, and won’t let the far right win,” he said.

Germany, where the Nazi party was elected to power 90 years ago and led the country into World War II and the Holocaust, has a special responsibility to fight far-right populism, Nickel added.

“History repeats itself, and I believe that we must definitely do something now to put a stop to anti-democratic parties in Germany,” she said.

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ministers 'urgently' examining visa rules for Ukrainians fleeing war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WC-2P91-JBNF-W44C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 5:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 793 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Ministers have faced intense criticism over lack of resettlement scheme

**Body**

Ministers are "urgently" examining how to aid ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing war amid intense criticism over current UK [*visa rules*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visa-restrictions).

As the Kremlin wages war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , it is understood the Home Office is working on a package of measures to help those fleeing the Russian invasion, with an announcement expected within days.

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) , the home secretary, has unveiled [*minor concessions for Ukrainians who are already in Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-invasion-refugees-julian-lewis-b2023992.html) for work, study and tourism - extending the time period before they must leave the country.

But so far there has been no announcement of a resettlement scheme for Ukrainians, or other measures in response to an expected exodus of refugees.

Speaking on the BBC's Sunday Morning programme, [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) , the foreign secretary, said the UK was "urgently looking" at what the government can do "facilitate" refugees fleeing war.

It was put to the cabinet minister that anyone who has no connection to the UK cannot get in, and when asked if that will be changed, she replied: "We are looking urgently at what we can do.

"We're working with European partners about how we support refugees who are leaving Ukraine. So, yes, is the answer."

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees an estimated 368,000 people have left Ukraine to bordering countries - predominately to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania.

[*David Lammy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-lammy) , the shadow foreign secretary, earlier told Sky News that current visa restrictions for those seeking sanctuary in the UK from the turmoil in Ukraine were "totally unacceptable" and "bureaucratic".

"It is insisting that people demonstrate salaries, that they have families ties in this country," the Labour frontbencher said.

"People are fleeing with their children in their arms. Why would you ask people how rich they are to enter our country? Of course, there are some people who may not have family ties, but want to come into this country."

Wales first minister Mark Drakeford also said the UK will need to "go beyond" its current visa arrangements for those fleeing conflict in Ukraine.

It comes after a ministerial aide at the Home Office provoked outrage at the weekend for [*suggesting those fleeing the Russian invasion could apply for a seasonal workers' scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-crisis-kyiv-tory-mp-b2024163.html) for fruit picking.

The Conservative MP was replying to Labour's shadow armed forces minister Luke Pollard, who had raised concerns that Ukrainians fleeing the conflict still have to apply for a visa to enter the UK, something other countries - such as Ireland and Portugal - have waived in response to the invasion.

He wrote: "I'm looking for a route for people fleeing Ukraine who might not have a family link in the UK. We have a moral obligation to help them. Will you now change policy to do exactly that?"

The minister replied,[*in a now-deleted tweet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-crisis-kyiv-tory-mp-b2024163.html) , saying, "As you will be well aware there are a number of routes, not least our seasonal worker scheme you will recall from your Shadow Defra days, which Ukrainians can qualify for, alongside the family route for those with relatives here."

Enver Solomon, CEO of The Refugee Council, also said events over the weekend were "creating yet more confusion and distress to Ukrainian families desperately seeking reassurance and support from the UK government regarding their future safety".

He added: "We urgently need the government to announce a clear plan which immediately relaxes visa requirements to allow family members of Ukrainians in the UK to join them here.

"And a safe route so people at risk of persecution can apply for a humanitarian visa to travel to the UK and claim asylum once here. We must uphold our tradition of supporting people fleeing war and bloodshed, and send a clear signal to Ukrainian families that they are welcome in the UK."

In an update posted on Twitter on Saturday, the Home Office said the UK government "has an extensive visa application centre network" in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

"Ukrainians in these countries can access these services & apply for visa under existing immigration routes," they said.

The department added: "We have been planning for the impact that a Russian invasion would have on visa application centres, and swift action was taken to ensure contingency plans were put in place.

"More staff have been surged to visa application centres. Dependents of [UK] nationals residents in [Ukraine] needing a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary Lviv location or through a visa application centre in nearby countries including Poland, Moldova, Romania & Hungary."

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine crisis: Why put a pop up centre in Lille and what is next for refugees in Calais?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-YBJ1-JBNF-W351-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 12:37 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 845 words

**Byline:** Ryan Cooper

**Highlight:** Ukrainians say they have endured days on end with no confirmation of their visa application status

**Body**

The UK government has promised a visa pop-up centre in northern [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) to help process the ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) looking to seek sanctuary in [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain).

Here are some of the key questions as Russia's invasion of Ukraine[*enters its fourteenth day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-troops-b2031656.html).

-What is the Ukrainian refugee situation in France?

Hundreds of people have escaped [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the Russian invasion and made it to Calais seeking to come to the UK.

As of Tuesday night, the UK government said more than 500 visas had been issued to Ukrainians, although this is from the 10,000 applications submitted.

A pop-up visa application centre is due to open in Lille, while another has already opened in Paris.

-Why is a visa even necessary?

Countries in the European Union have said Ukrainians fleeing war in their homeland can stay for up to three years.

But because it is no longer in the bloc, the UK has its own system for granting people entry, called the Ukraine family scheme visa.

This allows people to join an immediate or extended family member in the UK, providing that this relative has British nationality, indefinite leave to remain, settled status or proof of permanent residence.

-So what's the delay?

Around 140 Ukrainians are currently holed up at a youth hostel in Calais, while scores of other families are staying at provided accommodation elsewhere or are paying for private accommodation in northern France.

They are effectively in two positions -some have submitted their paperwork and are waiting for the green light to travel, hence being in Calais where access to the UK is relatively straightforward, while others are one stage back, waiting for an appointment.

The Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announced in the Commons on Tuesday that a pop-up visa application centre would be set up in Lille, some 70 or so miles away, to help with the backlog, while Defence Secretary Ben Wallace offered the military's support in an attempt to speed things up.

But there are concerns, too, about making sure the process is completed correctly, with Home Office minister Kevin Foster telling MPs on Tuesday that Calais had seen people arriving with fake documents, and also referenced the 2018 Salisbury poisonings, in which two alleged Russian agents entered the UK on fake passports.

-So why not have the pop-up centre in Calais?

The situation is a tricky one. Politically, there is reported concern about the port's reputation during the migrant crisis as an unauthorised departure point for people trying to get into the UK illegally, either by boat across a narrow point of the English Channel, or by stowing onto lorries.

The French government has also sought to reduce the number of people without a home temporarily settling in Calais, particularly since the so-called Jungle camp was pulled down.

So setting up the visa processing centre away from Calais may reduce the number of people travelling there, and be less attractive to people-smuggling gangs looking to exploit vulnerable refugees, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said on Wednesday.

The only real assistance for Ukrainians in Calais is a welcome desk -a makeshift advice centre -at Calais ferry port staffed by a handful of UK Government officials. It does not process applications.

Lille itself is around 70 miles away. The train journey between the two can take as little as half an hour but from the Frethun terminal on the outskirts of Calais. The Ville terminal is much closer to the centre of Calais where many Ukrainians are staying but takes up to 90 minutes to get to Lille.

Train travel fees, for this reason, have been waived.

-What next?

This is the question many are asking. At present, the UK government has not stated precisely where or when the visa application centre will open up, meaning many refugees are not sure yet whether to travel.

Reports have emerged of people being told to wait in excess of a week to even get an appointment slot at other facilities.

Getting an appointment and handing over the paperwork does not mean the end is in sight, either.

Ukrainians have said they have endured days on end with no confirmation of their visa application status, despite repeated phone calls and emails to various state departments.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Volunteers extend help to thousands of refugees from Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WC-7C41-DY4H-K522-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 6:05 PM GMT

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**Length:** 768 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Since Russia launched attacks on Ukraine, 368,000 people have fled the country, according to the UN refugee agency

**Body**

Sitting with her teenage daughter in a hotel foyer in northern Romania, 38-year-old Viktoriya Smishchkyk breaks down in tears as she recounts her departure from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

"I could hear the sound of the fighting outside, it was very scary," Smishchkyk, who is from Vinnitsya in central Ukraine, told The Associated Press from a hotel that is offering free accommodation to refugees.

"We left all our belongings behind, but they are material things - less important than the lives of our children," she said.

Smishchkyk and her daughter are among hundreds of thousands of people who have fled Ukraine since Russian launched its attack on Thursday. The U.N. refugee agency said Sunday about 368,000 people have fled the country, many into bordering nations like Romania, [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , Moldova, and Slovakia.

Amid the horrors and chaos, volunteers from far and wide are showing support by extending help to those whose lives are being shattered by war.

At Romania's Siret border crossing, where thousands of Ukrainians have entered, government workers race to distribute basic amenities donated from all across the country. Meanwhile, people and businesses are pooling resources to provide the refugees with everything they need.

Stefan Mandachi, a businessman who lives in Suceava, a city about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the Siret border, has converted a large ballroom at the hotel he owns into a refugee reception center and is offering private hotel rooms for free to the displaced.

Scores of mattresses are laid out on the ballroom's floor, donated clothes are piled high and young children run around.

"I feel the need to help, it's my duty to help," said Mandachi, who is also offering free food for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from his fast food chain. "I have locals who speak Ukrainian - we are united to help them."

For Vasiliu Radu, a 34-year-old emergency service worker at the Siret border, the outpouring of support from volunteers has made him proud of his fellow citizens. "It's more important these days, in these situations of war and instability - that people must help each other," Radu said.

But not everyone trying to flee Ukraine is receiving the help they need.

Some Indian citizens seeking to flee into Poland were stuck at the border Sunday and were unable to cross, according to Ruchir Kataria, an Indian volunteer in Poland who is trying to help them.

Kataria, who has been in cell phone contact with Indians stuck at the border crossing into Medyka, and a smaller group at Poland's Krakowiec border, told the AP that the Indians trying to cross at Medyka were told in broken English: "Go to Romania."

But the group had already made long journeys on foot to the border, not eating for three days, and had no way to reach the border with Romania which is hundreds of kilometers away.

In Poland's southeast city of Przemysl, just a few kilometers from a border crossing with Ukraine, hundreds of people waited in a parking lot to help refugees who were being bussed in from the border by authorities.

"I am very happy that I have come and I want to thank all the people who are organizing this," a young Ukrainian girl, who had just arrived, said. "This feels really nice that people are waiting for us in your country."

Moldova, which shares a long border with Ukraine, is also seeing a massive influx of refugees. Authorities said that since Thursday, 70,080 Ukrainian citizens have entered the small nation of about 3.5 million.

Moldova's President [*Maia Sandu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maia-sandu) , who visited a northern border crossing Sunday, urged people to remain calm and vigilant and thanked volunteers for their work.

"In these difficult days, I am proud of the citizens of our country, who have shown solidarity and humanity and have offered our neighbors a helping hand when needed," Sandu said.

Jacob Sontea, a Nigerian student who was based in Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, arrived by train at Hungary's border Sunday with his family. Border authorities escorted them into the European Union country, which had until now been notorious for strongly opposing any type of immigration from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

"It was becoming chaotic in the city of Kharkiv ... It was dangerous, so we had to leave because this is the only choice we had," he said.

Back at the hotel in Suceava, Smishchkyk tries to catch her breath as she glances tearfully at the ceiling. "They are still there," she said. "Our relatives, brothers, sisters, cousins. It is just very difficult to process."

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Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary; Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland; Rafal Niedzielski in Przemysl, Poland, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

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[*Ukrainians seeking safety in the UK could be criminalised*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W8-VVH1-F072-40YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 27, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 28

**Length:** 772 words

**Byline:** SONYA SCEATS

**Body**

The disconnect is extraordinary. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine under way, Europe is facing its largest conflict in a generation. War will have huge implications for European security and stability, with the prospect of mass displacement across Ukraine's borders. Boris Johnson has promised parliament that Britain would protect people fleeing the conflict. But his government is preparing to pass a borders bill that will criminalise Ukrainians who make their own way to safety in the UK.

Most of us facing invasion by hostile forces known to practice torture would take our children and run to wherever we felt safe. If Johnson's Nationality and Borders Bill passes, however, any Ukrainian who arrives in Britain outside of official resettlement schemes will be treated as a criminal, receiving limited rights and risking imprisonment in processing centres thousands of miles from our shores.

Already, tens of thousands of people have been forced from their homes. Huge traffic jams have formed on roads leading out of Kyiv, every car filled with ordinary people whose lives have been thrown suddenly into chaos. Among them is a Ukrainian psychologist, who reached out to a colleague of mine at Freedom from Torture seeking assistance. She was messaging from a shop where she was buying a Kalashnikov to protect herself and was desperately seeking a way out of Kyiv. When shells are falling on your city, you simply do not have time to apply for visas and travel documents.

Recognition of this fact is at the very core of the Refugee Convention, which ensures that those fleeing persecution are not penalised for their means of arrival in the country where they claim asylum. The convention, which Britain helped draft, was laid down in the wake of the Second World War when much of Europe lay in ruins and the full scale of the horrors of the Holocaust were becoming known. Johnson's anti-refugee bill flies in the face of these rules, designed to keep all of us safe whenever the tragedy of war forces people from their homes.

We at Freedom from Torture believe the bill is the biggest legal assault on international refugee law ever seen in the UK. The UN's refugee agency has warned that the bill is "fundamentally at odds" with the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention. Former UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon has been even franker: the "damaging precedent" set by this anti-refugee bill would "threaten the integrity of the global asylum system".

In the face of mounting evidence, this government has given up justifying the legality of the bill, instead arguing that it "disagrees" with the UN and that "as a sovereign nation, it is up to us to interpret the convention". This is nonsense; as a comprehensive report by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law recently noted, it is not for parliament to define the meaning of international treaties.

By reducing the dispute to one of legal gymnastics, they are betraying the spirit of the international human rights - if the UK abandon its obligations, Russia's president Vladimir Putin could reasonably question why he should be expected to uphold his. Worse still, they are ignoring the devastating impact these policies will have on the world's most vulnerable people.

Tomorrow, members of the House of Lords have an opportunity to stop this heartless bill from becoming law. Amendments proposed by peers would block penalisation of refugees depending on their mode of arrival and create 10,000 global refugee resettlement places a year. As the bill passes through parliament in the coming weeks, it is crucial that every parliamentarian with a conscience does all they can to support these changes. Make no mistake, anyone who votes in favour of this bill is voting to slam the door in the face of Ukrainian men, women and children in need.

While this government is turning its back on people seeking safety, all over Britain people are showing their support for Ukrainians in need. A petition launched by Freedom from Torture on the day the Russian invasion began urges the government to accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to abandon clauses in the borders bill that would criminalise them and has already been signed by more than 100,000 people.

All over the country, caring people are showing support for refugees, including through the enormous Together With Refugees coalition. If enough of us join together, we can stop this anti-refugee bill and build an asylum system which treats those fleeing torture and conflict with dignity and decency, in accordance with the international rules which Britain helped shape.

Sonya Sceats is chief executive of Freedom from Torture

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine War: What to know on Russia's war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-1NC1-JBNF-W04T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 9:59 AM GMT

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**Length:** 847 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** On Day 11 of Russia's war on Ukraine, Russian troops are shelling encircled cities

**Body**

On Day 11 of Russia's war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) troops shelled encircled cities and a pro-Russian official said safe-passage corridors would open again for residents of the besieged port city of Mariupol.

The number of Ukrainians forced from their country grew to 1.4 million and the Kremlin's rhetoric grew, with Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) warning that Ukrainian statehood is in jeopardy. He likened the West's sanctions on Russia to "declaring war."

Here's a look at key things to know about the conflict Sunday:

PROMISE OF SAFE PASSAGE FOR FROM TWO CITIES - AGAIN

A pro-Russian official said safe-passage corridors would open again for residents of Mariupol on Sunday, a day after a promised cease-fire in the besieged port city collapsed.

Ukrainian officials said Russian artillery fire and airstrikes had prevented residents from leaving before the agreed-to evacuations got underway. Putin accused Ukraine of sabotaging the effort.

Eduard Basurin, the head of the military in separatist-held Donetsk territory, said safe passage corridors for residents would also be opened for residents of Volnovakha. He did not give any details on how long the corridors would remain open, nor whether there would be a cease-fire to facilitate the evacuation of the two cities. He made the comments on Russian state television.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND?

Russian forces launched hundreds of missiles and artillery attacks across the country, including dropping powerful bombs on residential areas of Chernihiv, a city north of the capital of [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , Ukrainian officials said. But a mileslong Russian armored column threatening the capital was still stalled outside Kyiv.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces were holding key cities in the central and southeastern part of the country, while the Russians were trying to block and keep encircled Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv and Sumy.

Ukrainian forces were defending Odesa, Ukraine's biggest port city, from Russian ships, Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich said.

Russian troops took control of the southern port city of Kherson last week. Although they have encircled Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv and Sumy, Ukrainian forces have managed to keep control of key cities in central and southeastern Ukraine, Zelenskyy said

DIRECTLY WITNESSED OR CONFIRMED BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In Mariupol, Associate Press journalists witnessed doctors make unsuccessful attempts to save the lives of wounded children, pharmacies ran bare and hundreds of thousands of people faced food and water shortages in freezing weather.

In Irpin, near Kyiv, a sea of people on foot and even in wheelbarrows trudged over the remains of a destroyed bridge to cross a river and leave the city. Assisted by Ukrainian soldiers, they lugged pets, infants, purses and flimsy bags stuffed with minimal possessions. Some of the weak and elderly were carried along the path in blankets and carts.

Kyiv's central train station remained crowded with people desperate to leave, and frequent shelling could be heard from the center of the capital city.

DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Moldova pledging America's support to the small Western-leaning former Soviet republic. The country is coping with an influx of refugees from Ukraine and keeping an eye on Russia's intensifying war with its neighbor.

A third round of talks between Russia and Ukraine will take place Monday, according to Davyd Arakhamia, a member of the Ukrainian delegation. He gave no additional details, including where they would take place.

Previous meetings were held in Belarus and led to the failed cease-fire agreement to create humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of children, women and older people from besieged cities.

Putin continued to blame the war on the Ukrainian leadership and slammed their resistance to the invasion. He said if they continued to resist, "They are calling into question the future of Ukrainian statehood." His comments came after Zelenskyy made a "desperate plea" on Saturday to the U.S. Congress for more planes as Russian forces continued to batter strategic locations with missiles and artillery.

Meanwhile, Israel's prime minister returned Sunday from a trip to Russia where he met Putin and discussed the war.

[*Naftali Bennett*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/naftali-bennett) flew to Moscow on Saturday, where he met the Russian leader for three hours. Bennett spoke to Zelenskyy after his meeting with Putin.

Bennett's trip was the latest attempt at diplomacy in the Russia-Ukraine crisis. Israel is one of the few countries that has good working relations with both Russia and Ukraine.

THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The U.N. World Food Program says millions of people inside Ukraine, a major global wheat supplier, will need food aid "immediately."

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** continued to pour into neighboring countries, including Poland, Romania and Moldova. The number of people who have left Ukraine since fighting began has now reached 1.45 million.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war between Russia and Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*War veteran feels 'sense of duty' to help deliver medical supplies to Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-C1F1-JBNF-W54M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 7:27 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 696 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Matt Simmons will be travelling to Poland on the evening on March 4 to deliver medical supplies.

**Body**

A war veteran, who says he feels "a sense of duty" to "do something" for Ukraine, is planning to travel to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) to deliver medical supplies.

Matt Simmons, 42, from Emsworth, [*Hampshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hampshire) , set up the organisation Ems4Afghans last year in response to the [*Taliban*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taliban) taking control of Afghanistan, which is now being relaunched as the community interest company Bridge to Unity to offer support to multiple causes.

He told the PA news agency he found a Facebook page for a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Poland (Zintegrowana Sluzba Ratownicza) and has teamed up with them to help provide medical supplies to those in Ukraine, including ambulance dressings and eye wash.

Mr Simmons has been crowdfunding to help raise money for the medical supplies, and said he has been "reaching out to absolutely everyone", and has been working on "three hours of sleep at night".

So far, £10,000 has been raised from the £12,500 target Mr Simmons set when he started fundraising on February 25 - just one day after Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into Ukraine.

"We went to the community in Emsworth and surrounding areas and it's gone bigger than little us in Hampshire," he said.

"It's gone mad. I've got people sending items from New York and donating from around the world.

"[*Charlotte Crosby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charlotte-crosby) from Geordie Shore has put out a message about me on her Instagram (story)."

Mr Simmons added that the support he has received so far has been "overwhelming and heart-warming".

"I think sometimes people want to do something when you see such things in the media but don't necessarily know how they can help," he added.

"(Fundraisers) give people a direction of how to help. I've tried to say to people, it doesn't matter if you're donating money, if you're sharing a post, if you're interacting with a post, if you're putting us in contact with somebody that may be able to help.

"It's about sharing and interacting and pushing the message out and that's the important thing - us all coming together in the face of Russian aggression and fighting back in a way."

Mr Simmons is set to travel to Poland between March 4-5 with five others, including two members of Portsmouth Baby Bank who have been collecting essential items for mothers and their children - and Hannah Jarvis, 39, from Abergavenny, Wales, who has worked with Mr Simmons on helping Afghan refugees in the past.

She said: "(It has been heartening to see) the best of humanity leap into action and respond to the worst of humanity.

"I never expected we'd raise over £10,000 in such a short space of time and we're now at the point where we're declining offers of assistance, which is a wonderful problem to have.

"Whilst I think we may see some unpleasant scenes at the aid camp and no doubt be upset to hear of the experiences of the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, it's certainly preferable to being at home feeling helpless and frustrated."

The conversations Mr Simmons has had with the Polish [*NGO*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngo) , which provides medical care and practical assistance to those entering Poland from Ukraine, have meant the drive for donations is even more paramount.

"They're saying they're really up against it. They've got teams of medical people down there 24 hours a day," he said.

"Supplies are a massive issue. They're just having to do supply runs all the time and that's taking people with medical experience away from the border.

"They've said in the last 24 hours there's been a difference in the type of injuries they've seen come through and the type of medical needs that are coming through.

"They're starting to see more trauma injuries."

People will be able to follow us, follow the story and by taking it myself, it's actually like I'm taking the supporters with me and they'll be able to see where their donations have ended up.

Matt Simmons

Even though there is a risk in travelling to Poland, Mr Simmons said: "I've got to go. That's the biggest thing.

"That's what will get people behind us, I think, because we can then be transparent with what's donated.

"People will be able to follow us, follow the story and by taking it myself, it's actually like I'm taking the supporters with me and they'll be able to see where their donations have ended up."

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Priti Patel’s plans to fast-track removal of Albanian asylum seekers ‘could violate law’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:668P-WY71-DY4H-K2GY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 31, 2022 Wednesday 1:15 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 828 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** UK granted 53 per cent of Albanian asylum applications in past year and enforced returns would break Refugee Convention

**Body**

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has met [*Albanian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/albanian) officials as she attempts to “fast-track” the removal of Albanian asylum seekers who cross the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) in small boats, but it is not clear how the plans will be workable or legal.

She discussed the sharing of forensic evidence and biometric data with members of the Albanian state police on Tuesday, with the government hoping to deport convicted [*criminals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/criminals) from the UK on the basis they are not “conducive to the public good”.

British authorities separately hope to declare asylum applications by Albanians “inadmissible” on the basis they have travelled through safe third countries, but forcing them back to the country they are fleeing would be a breach of international law.

A pilot scheme has started to increase intelligence sharing on Albanian migrants after a surge in the numbers crossing the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) , which Home Office officials believe is being facilitated by organised crime networks.

Around 6,000 Albanians have arrived on small boats so far in 2022, constituting up to 60 per cent of migrants on some days.

Ms Patel claimed it was “shameful and absurd that so many Albanian nationals are entering the UK via small boats when [*Albania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/albania) is a safe country”, but Britain granted more than half of Albanian asylum applications in the past year.

The Home Office has said it will consider applications by Albanians “immediately” with a view to arrange quick returns -despite many of the 166,000 asylum cases in a record backlog waiting years for a decision.

The Independent understands the plans have not yet been implemented, because of ongoing discussions with Albanian authorities and legal barriers.

Returning asylum seekers to the country they are fleeing is a violation of the Refugee Convention, with the United Nations stating that “the most essential component of refugee status and of asylum is protection against return to a country where a person has reason to fear persecution”.

The Refugee Council said it had worked with Albanians who had been “trafficked and are victims of criminal and sexual exploitation”, and that it would be “totally wrong” to pre-judge asylum claims based on nationality.

“Just because a country is not at war, does not mean that it is safe for all that live there,” chief executive Enver Solomon added.

“The fact that over half of Albanians who claim asylum here are given refugee protection by our government speaks volumes for the clear dangers these people are facing.”

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Migrants (JCWI) told The Independent that many Albanians crossing the Channel were fleeing violence.

“If Priti Patel’s shameful new plan goes ahead it will put Albanian lives at risk, and pave the way for broader anti-refugee cruelty,” said advocacy director Zehrah Hasan.

“Most of us believe that people seeking safety in the UK should be treated with fairness and compassion, but once again it appears this government is more interested in headline-grabbing cruelty than the lives of people their policies affect.”

Care4Calais, which is one of the charities bringing a legal challenge beginning next week against the [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) scheme, warned that the government was again “risking falling foul of international law”.

Founder Clare Moseley said: “The home secretary can’t throw due process out of the window and tar a whole nation with tropes. People’s claims should be assessed individually.”

In the year to June, the British government granted 53 per cent of asylum applications to Albanians, and it is not clear how it could lawfully treat them differently from other nationalities when each claim must be considered on an individual basis.

It may attempt to declare asylum applications from [*Albanians “inadmissible” and refuse to consider them*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-asylum-guidance-belgium-inadmissible-b2075884.html%22%20title=%22Asylum%20seekers%20could%20be%20sent%20to%20Rwanda%20for%20‘spending%20a%20couple%20of%20weeks%20in%20Brussels’%20on%20way%20to%20Britain) on the basis that they have travelled through safe countries to reach the UK.

That move would put them in scope for transfer to “safe third countries”, which will include Rwanda if the government’s controversial deal is implemented.

A 2021 agreement with Albania allows the return of failed asylum seekers, foreign national offenders and visa overstayers, but not asylum seekers whose claims remain under consideration.

The deal states that it does not affect the UK’s duties under the Refugee Convention of any international agreements concerning asylum and human rights.

Since 2018, 94 per cent of all migrants crossing the Channel in dinghies have claimed asylum. Half of the claims were granted, 43 per cent were declared “inadmissible” because of their time in safe third countries and only 8 per cent were refused.

Under British law, people have to be present in the UK to make an asylum application and there is no visa for that purpose. The government has set up bespoke schemes to resettle people directly from countries including Afghanistan, and offered ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** three-year visas, but parliamentary committees have said there must be more safe and legal routes to reduce demand for Channel crossings.

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, vows Leo Varadkar*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RF-FG61-JBNF-W1GH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 19, 2023 Wednesday 11:44 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1040 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Ireland’s premier held a press conference after an hour-long meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky.

**Body**

Ireland’s premier has vowed to stand with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for as long as it takes after holding talks with President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) on a visit to Kyiv.

Taoiseach [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) visited the sites of several atrocities committed in the early weeks of the Russian invasion, before meeting the Ukrainian leader in the capital.

After an engagement with the president, Mr Varadkar then met Ukraine’s Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and the chairman of the Verkhovna Rada parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk.

Mr Varadkar also paused for a moment’s silence at a memorial in central Kyiv for the children who have died in the conflict, placing a toy lamb among the other teddies.

At a press conference after an hour-long meeting with Mr Zelensky, Mr Varadkar insisted Ukraine would win the war.

“Perhaps Russia believes that it can break the resolve of the Ukrainian people, but I know from the way you fought for the past few years, and from my visit here, that it cannot,” he said.

“My visits to the sites of these atrocities this morning, and my meeting here in Kyiv, has confirmed to me that Russia will not succeed, and Russia cannot be allowed to succeed.

“This is the 21st century and the idea that national boundaries can be changed by violence, or the democratically elected governments can be overthrown by foreign invasion, must perish.

“We need to make sure that Ukraine succeeds, that it wins this war, so that no other country gets attacked.

“If Russia thinks that targeting civilians and essential infrastructure will discourage Ukraine’s friends, including Ireland, well, it’s wrong.

“Volodymyr Zelensky, we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. Ukraine will prevail and Ukraine will be rebuilt.”

Mr Varadkar also reiterated Ireland’s support for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and called for the process to start before the end of the year.

He also committed in taking a lead role to set up international tribunals to prosecute crimes committed in Ukraine and to assist in efforts to de-mine areas.

He made clear that while Ireland was militarily neutral it was not politically neutral, and announced an additional five million euro in humanitarian funding to help respond to the attack on the Kakhoka dam and other areas.

Вітаю в Україні Главу Уряду Ірландії Лео Варадкара [*@LeoVaradkar*](https://twitter.com/LeoVaradkar?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Сьогодні проведемо важливі переговори: безпека, політична взаємодія, справедливість для України та наша економічна взаємодія.Хоч Ірландія є нейтральною країною, ця нейтральність не означає байдужості, і це дуже… [*pic.twitter.com/ZNWiuxz9d1*](https://t.co/ZNWiuxz9d1) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1681624887738216448?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Zelensky thanked the people of Ireland for taking in tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the Russian invasion began.

“I, first of all, would like to extend words of gratitude to you and to the whole people of Ireland for hosting our nationals in Ireland. This is a significant moral support to our nation,” he said.

“You’ve hosted 86,000 Ukrainian citizens, you’ve provided them with accommodation, with funding, with access to education and health support, this is very important.”

Mr Zelensky said it was a “fruitful” meeting where they spoke about the sanctions package against Russia, about how to stop Russia producing missiles and Ukraine’s accession to the EU.

He also informed Mr Varadkar about the recent Russian attacks on its port cities, including Odesa. He said Russia was targeting residential areas and food infrastructure, which was not only an attack on Ukraine, but on “global stability”.

“It’s important that every country of the world which is striving for peace, for normal life, on all continents, it’s important for them to condemn the Russian terror and participate in common efforts to overcome this aggression.

“Ireland is participating in such common efforts.”

Mr Zelensky also said he was “very grateful” that the Taoiseach began his visit in Kyiv’s suburbs, stating that he had “seen with your own eyes the consequences of the war, the consequences of Russia’s aggression”.

Mr Varadkar began an intensive schedule of engagements with a visit north of the city to the Kyiv Oblast region.

He was taken to the small cities of [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha) and Irpin, where scores of civilians were killed during a period of Russian occupation at the start of the war.

In Bucha, Mr Varadkar visited the Church of St Andrew where a mass grave was discovered after Russian soldiers retreated from the area.

Inside the building he was shown an exhibition of images of the graphic scenes captured during the exhumation process.

Ukraine’s prosecutor general Andrei Kostin accompanied the Taoiseach on the visit and explained the work done to collect evidence for war crimes investigations and secure justice for those killed.

The Taoiseach’s tour also took him through the village of Horenka, where he was taken to an apartment block that was heavily damaged in a Russian aerial bombardment.

The shelling blew a huge hole in the side of the building and the interiors of the apartments that were destroyed are clearly visible.

Among the debris was a painting of an old man enjoying a bath, representing the defiance of residents.

Horenka is where Irish-born cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski was killed in a Russian attack in March 2022.

Mr Zakrzewski, 55, who worked for Fox News, was killed alongside 24-year-old Ukrainian freelance journalist Oleksandra “Sasha” Kuvshynova.

The Irish premier also visited Moschun, a village that witnessed a pivotal battle in the fight to repel a full-scale invasion of Kyiv.

Mr Varadkar laid flowers and observed a moment’s silence to commemorate the Ukrainians fighters, most from the territorial reserves, who were killed in defence of the capital.

He also visited a bridge in Irpin where Russian forces bombed civilians fleeing the conflict. The bridge was later blown up by Ukrainian troops in an effort to prevent Russian tanks entering Kyiv.

Later in the morning, Mr Varadkar visited Mikhailivska Square (St Michael’s Square) in central Kyiv, where he watched as two Ukrainian soldiers laid a wreath on behalf of the Irish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) at a ceremony at the Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine.

The Taoiseach was then shown the remnants of several Russian tanks and other military vehicles on display in the square.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugee families fear for future as time with hosts runs out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:666V-F0V1-JBNF-W4XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 22, 2022 Monday 9:11 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 819 words

**Byline:** Indy Staff

**Highlight:** Mother-of-one worried young son will be retraumatised if forced to relocate away from new community

**Body**

A [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) who has settled with a host family in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) has said she wakes up every day worrying about her young son being retraumatised if they are forced to relocate away from their new community.

Tania Orlova came to the UK in April with her son Danylo, eight, and her 74-year-old mother Liubov under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

They are being hosted by a family-of-three in High Wycombe, in [*Buckinghamshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckinghamshire) , who have agreed they can stay for between nine and 10 months.

Ms Orlova said their hosts are “so helpful and supporting”, but it is “absolutely natural” that they will want their space back at some point, while it will also be more comfortable for her family to have their own home.

The 44-year-old from Kyiv has started looking for rental accommodation on the Rightmove and Zoopla websites but said her lack of credit history in the UK was causing problems, while properties in the area she had settled in are “expensive”.

“Now we have come to UK, it’s really so welcoming and nice,” she said.

“At the same time I feel like we are in this Cinderella fairytale when we’ve got everything nice – nice dress, we are in this nice place, with a nice carriage – but then there is a certain time when our carriage would turn to be a pumpkin.”

Ms Orlova has a job working at a local charity, her son is settled in school and the family is registered with a GP.

She said: “And now – what if I can’t find an apartment in Buckinghamshire, which is an expensive county? What if I have to move, what if I have to move from High Wycombe, where I am now, to another place, so I have to traumatise my kid again to move again?”

She added: “You wake up and you think about it. What, what could I do? What could I do next? What could be my next step?”

Wednesday marks six months since the start of the war in Ukraine. Around 81,700 refugees have come to the UK under the Homes For Ukraine scheme, with hosts expected to provide accommodation for at least six months.

Refugees whose placements are set to end will need to find alternative accommodation either independently or with another sponsor.

Research from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that the rising cost of living and lack of affordability was cited by 23 per cent of hosts who do not want the arrangement to continue beyond six months.

Councils fear that homelessness could rise, with local government figures showing at least 1,300 Ukrainian refugee households had become homeless or been threatened with homelessness as of July 29.

Ms Orlova has helped to organise an open letter to the government from refugees, with suggestions to help them find settled accommodation.

The letter, co-ordinated with the Sanctuary Foundation, says refugees are experiencing “serious impediments” when it comes to trying to rent, and this is “beyond the reach” of many who are currently being sponsored.

The suggestions include enabling families to rent homes together, and ensuring they have access to intensive English language courses, which would enable them to start earning sooner.

Other proposals include creating a database of landlords that are ready to rent property to Ukrainians and providing financial incentives, potentially in the form of property taxation allowances.

A spokeswoman for Buckinghamshire County Council said it will be challenging to find accommodation in some locations “due to a lack of availability and high housing costs”.

She said: “We want to help our guests from Ukraine as much as we can and are looking at solutions which will require all tiers of government, the private and voluntary sector to work together.”

This includes extending stays with existing sponsors, rematching with new sponsors, renting privately – where the council may be able to help with a deposit guarantee and provide one month’s rent upfront – and applying for social housing, although high demand means there is likely to be a long wait.

Kateryna, a mother-of-two, has been living with hosts in Wysall, a village near Nottingham, since early May. Her son, 14, and four-year-old daughter have both started at local schools.

Their sponsors have helped the family “a lot” but are unable to host them beyond early November due to pre-existing commitments. Kateryna said they are struggling to find another sponsor who lives near the children’s schools, and who can provide support while she continues with her English lessons.

She said: “Three weeks ago we turned to the council, but there is no concrete answer at the moment.“I am very worried about the unknown. I want stability, certainty. I want a better future for my children. I am determined to work for the future of my children.”

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said it is contacting sponsors and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to outline the next steps and what support is available. It did not set out what these steps and support are, or whether it has already begun to contact people.

**Load-Date:** August 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Bomb threats put tiny Moldova, Ukraine's neighbor, on edge*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6666-65F1-DY4H-K0F8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 19, 2022 Friday 6:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 866 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** It's been another week plagued by bomb threats in Moldova

**Body**

For tiny Moldova, an impoverished, landlocked nation that borders war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) but isn't in the European Union or NATO, it's been another week plagued by bomb threats.

On an overcast day outside the international airport serving Moldova's capital of [*Chisinau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chisinau) , hundreds of people lined up this week as bomb-sniffing dogs examined the vicinity. That's now a common scene in Europe’s poorest nation as it battles what observers believe are attempts to destabilize the former Soviet republic amid Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of July, Moldova has received nearly 60 bomb threats — with more than 15 reported so far this week — at locations ranging from the capital’s city hall, to the airport, the supreme court, shopping malls and hospitals.

While no one has yet been charged for the bomb threats, most of which have arrived via email and all of which have turned out to be false, officials say they have traced computer addresses to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , Ukraine and Belarus.

“It is part of the disinformation war against Moldova, which is ongoing,” said Valeriu Pasa, an analyst at the Chisinau think tank Watchdog.md. “It could be part of the Russian effort to destabilize Moldova, as they use many different methods to do so.”

Since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, Moldova, which has a population of 2.6 million people, has faced a multitude of crises. It has received more ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** per capita than any other country; tensions have soared in the country's Russia-backed breakaway region; it is dealing with an acute energy crisis; and like much of Europe it is battling skyrocketing inflation.

The frequent bomb threats are only adding pressure to the country's already overstretched authorities.

“It blocks a lot of the resources — police, investigators, technical services — it’s a type of bullying I would say, or harassment, of Moldovan state systems and public services,” Pasa said.

Maxim Motinga, a prosecutor from Moldova’s Office for Combating Organized Crime, told The Associated Press that since the bomb threats started “practically every day we open criminal cases.”

“At the moment, all criminal investigations are ongoing,” he said, adding that requests have been made for official assistance from Russia and Ukraine if “certain tracks leading to the respective countries were established.”

“I hope we get some answers from those countries,” he said.

For Veaceslav Belbas, a 43-year-old Moldovan businessman returning from Turkey to Chisinau on Monday, a bomb threat left him frightened as his plane circled the capital’s airport for 30 minutes. After that, the plane did a U-turn and went back to Turkey.

“We prayed a lot and finally landed,” he said. “For me, it was such a big shock that I told my wife that this is my last flight.”

Tensions in Moldova soared in April after a series of actual explosions occurred in the Russia-backed breakaway region of Transnistria, where Russia bases about 1,500 troops in a so-called frozen conflict zone. It raised fears that non-NATO, militarily neutral Moldova could get dragged into Russia’s war orbit. At least one Russian official has spoken openly of snatching enough land in southern Ukraine to link up Russian-controlled areas from the mainland to Transnistria.

Observers pointed out that the blasts came as Moldova — which has historically close ties with Moscow — showed a growing Western orientation and after it had applied to join the EU, which it did shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine. It was granted EU candidate status in late June, shortly before the bomb threats started.

Since Moldova gained independence in 1991, it has been plagued by organized crime and official corruption. After an election in 2019, a local oligarch attempted to seize power, which triggered mass protests before he fled the country. In 2014, several politicians and oligarchs had alleged ties to a scam in which $1 billion vanished from local banks. No one has yet been convicted in that case.

Galina Gheorghes was returning to England from Moldova last month after attending a family get-together when a bomb threat canceled her flight. She says she is angry that no one has yet been caught.

“It is very bad what’s happening … unfortunately, the ordinary people suffer,” the 35-year-old Gheorghes said.

Amid a seemingly endless pattern of disruptive and costly threats, Moldova’s Internal Ministry said it wants to toughen punishments for anyone convicted of false bomb alerts by ramping up fines and handing out lengthier prison sentences.

Chisinau Airport has been hit by dozens of bomb threats since July and has bolstered security in response. Radu Zanoaga, head of border police at the airport, says a specialist unit has been established to save security officials the trouble of traveling in from the city center each time a bomb threat is made.

“At the moment, we are dealing with the situation in cooperation with other (state) bodies and institutions that operate within the airport,” he said. “There have been bomb alerts before — but not as many and not as frequent as now.”

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Stephen McGrath reported from Sighisoara, Romania.

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Follow the AP’s coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Calm prevails at Poland-Ukraine border despite growing fears*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64TV-F8B1-DY4H-K31R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 20, 2022 Sunday 12:02 PM GMT

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**Length:** 783 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As tensions soar in Ukraine's east, calm persists along the country's border with European Union nation Poland

**Body**

As tensions soar in Ukraine's east and Western leaders issue dire warnings that a wider war could be coming, calm persists along Ukraine's western border with [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) nation Poland.

A sports center painted with the Olympic rings in a small Polish community directly on the border stands ready to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. For now, the center in Medyka is empty. At the nearby border crossing, there is no sign of Ukrainians fleeing.

Many Ukrainians do just the opposite: cross the border back into [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after working or shopping in Poland, some defiantly vowing to defend their country in case of a larger Russian invasion.

"Russia expected everyone to panic and flee to [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , to just buy buckwheat and pasta, food, but we all bought machine guns and weapons and cartridges," Volodymyr Halyk, 29, said. "No one is afraid, no one will abandon their homes, no one will flee."

Halyk and a friend, Volodymyr Yermakov, described themselves as veterans of the war against Russia-backed separatists that began in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Yermakov, 34, said he was prepared to take up arms again should Russian President Vladimir Putin launch an invasion.

"Putin is an aggressor and does not allow anyone to live a normal life," he said. "They want to take our territory, and that's the truth."

Russia has denied plans to invade Ukraine, but Western officials have said that with an estimated 150,000 troops and equipment surrounding the country on three sides, an attack could happen at any time.

People in Poland, which was controlled by Moscow during the Cold War, are following the news of Russia's military buildup with concern. The Polish government last year became embroiled in a migration dispute with another eastern neighbor, Russian ally Belarus.

Poland and the European Union accused Belarus of assisting people from the Middle East to cross the border into Poland. The Polish government called the migration part of an effort of hybrid war aimed at destabilizing central Europe and the EU more widely.

Mariusz Gumienny, the town council chairman in Medyka, said the thousands of additional U.S. troops who arrived in the area are helping to maintain a sense of security.

"It calms the mood," he said.

The U.S. deployed nearly 5,000 more troops to Poland in recent weeks. They come in addition to 4,000 rotational troops the U.S. began sending after Russian actions against Ukraine in 2014. The job of the American soldiers is to reassure NATO ally Poland and to be in place to help evacuate U.S. citizens or Ukrainians should that be necessary.

Local residents stand ready to help Ukrainians if the tensions with Russia escalate into a broader conflict, according to Gumienny. But he says people also worry that a large number of arrivals could overwhelm the town or that a prolonged war in Ukraine might cause wider instability.

"There is no panic. You can't see inhabitants trying to protect themselves in any way. But one thing is still in my mind: what will happen if a wave of refugees from Ukraine starts? This is what (townspeople) fear most," Gumienny told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Poland is one of the easternmost members of NATO and the EU. Many Poles think membership in those organizations offers a good deal of protection from Russia as Putin seeks to reassert Russia's authority in a region that he believes should return to Moscow's sphere of influence.

Warsaw has long sought to support democratic reforms and greater integration with the West in Ukraine, in an effort to ensure having a buffer zone between Poland and Russia.

Prime Minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) said this week that a "free and sovereign Ukraine" was a matter of national interest for Poland. In addition to readying a plan to help any Ukrainians who might flee, Poland is also sending defensive weapons to the country on its southeastern that borders its central-and southeast.

At an international security conference in Munich, Germany, Morawiecki said Saturday that Poland plans to send more weapons to Ukraine. He said he thinks that Western countries have long ignored Russia's attempts to restore its sway in the region but are finally becoming aware of the risk to all of Europe.

Halyk, the Ukrainian who said he bought weapons in Poland on Saturday, had his own warning for Europe before he drove home on Saturday.

"Remember, when the last Ukrainian soldier dies, it will be your turn," he said. "That is why we must unite, because we have a common goal, you can even say a common enemy, who will always want more, who is bloodthirsty, who will not allow anyone to live in peace."

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Follow AP's coverage of the tensions between Russia and Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*A German county elected a far-right candidate for the first time since the Nazi era, raising concern*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68N2-SH21-DY4H-K3S8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 8, 2023 Saturday 6:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1038 words

**Byline:** Kirsten Grieshaber

**Highlight:** The election of the first head of a county administration by the far-right Alternative of Germany in a rural eastern region recently has lead to concern among opponents of the party

**Body**

Mike Knoth is more than thrilled that a far-right populist party's candidate recently won the county administration in his hometown in rural eastern Germany for the first time since the [*Nazi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazi) era.

The gardener despises the country's established parties, he doesn't trust the media and he feels there are too many migrants in the country. The far-right party Alternative for Germany, or AfD, he hopes, will improve everything that's not going well in his eyes in Sonneberg, which is in the southeastern state of [*Thuringia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/thuringia).

“I think the fact that so many people voted for Alternative for Germany has already given it legitimacy,” Knoth, 50, said during an interview this week as he walked his dog down the town's deserted main shopping street.

But some in Sonneberg haven’t been won over by AfD’s nationalist and antidemocratic rhetoric.

Margret Sturm, an optometrist whose family has been selling glasses for almost 60 years in Sonneberg, voiced her concern over AfD’s victory in an interview with a public television station.

“I told them that I don’t think it’s good to vote for the AfD. And whoever votes for the AfD must know that they have the Nazis in tow,” Sturm told The Associated Press in an interview in her store.

Sturm can barely fathom what happened after the interview was aired last week.

“We got hate mail, threatening phone calls, every minute. We were insulted by people we don’t even know, who don’t know us, who don’t know the business.”

The threats were so relentless that Sturm’s husband installed surveillance cameras inside the store.

But Sturm, 60, said she won’t let anybody silence her.

“[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) here are afraid to take a stand against the AfD and that makes us even more worried than anything else.”

She said that other residents who oppose the AfD no longer want to voice their criticism openly.

“That’s exactly the kind of intimidation that basically results from the machinery of hatred and incitement and then sadly spreads. And that really worries me,” said Stephan Kramer, the head of Thuringia’s state domestic intelligence agency, told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) at his office in the state capital, Erfurt.

Kramer has warned for years that AfD’s Thuringia branch is particularly radical and put it under official surveillance more than two years ago as a “proven right-wing extremist” group.

It doesn't bother Knoth that the AfD is under surveillance by Thuringia's domestic state intelligence agency for its close ties to far-right extremists.

"It was elected democratically, and I don’t find anything offensive about it,” he said.

Knoth expects the AfD to take a law-and-order approach, curb immigration and make Germany safe.

Tackling migration or fighting crime are hardly topics that belong to the job description of a local county administrator, but the AfD's Robert Sesselmann campaign on these themes proved to be successful.

The runoff election in Sonneberg county last month pitted Sesselmann against center-right rival Jürgen Köpper. Official figures showed that Sesselmann won by 52.8% to 47.2%.

Sonneberg has a relatively small population of 56,800, but the win was a symbolic milestone for AfD.

The unemployed Radoslaw Schneider, 39, also expects things to improve now that Sesselmann is in charge. He said that AfD “believes that something needs to be done also for the Germans,” and foreigners should no longer get preferential treatment — which will happen now with AfD in power, he thinks.

Alternative for Germany first entered the national parliament in 2017 following an anti-migrant campaign in response to a mass arrival of refugees to Europe.

The party, a decade old, has been polling at record levels nationally with between 18% and 20% of support.

Center-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s governing coalition with the environmentalist Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats, meanwhile, faces strong headwind over high immigration, a plan to replace millions of home heating systems, and a reputation for infighting, while inflation remains high.

AfD's Thuringia leader, Björn Höcke, has espoused revisionist views of Germany’s Nazi past. In 2018, he called the Holocaust memorial in Berlin a “monument of shame” and called for Germany to perform a “180-degree turn” when it comes to the way it remembers its past.

In the early 1930s, Thuringia was one of the first power bases of Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist Party.

Nowadays, the AfD appeals especially to people in the formerly communist and less prosperous eastern states, such as Thuringia.

The coronavirus pandemic, Russia’s war in Ukraine and the influx of hundreds of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to Germany have also contributed to AfD’s success, Katharina König-Preuss, a state lawmaker with The Left party in Thuringia, said during an interview in the state parliament in Erfurt.

The party has been putting the blame for many problems squarely on immigrants or the national government, she said.

“I would say that a great deal of these racist narratives, which don’t match reality at all, have now caught on with a larger part of the East German population," said König-Preuss, who is one of the most outspoken critics of the AfD and has received several death threats.

Scholz tried to play down the recent rise of the far-right populists.

“Germany has been a strong democracy for a long time now, since World War II,” Scholz told reporters in Berlin last week after being asked what he's doing to prevent a resurgence of fascism 77 years since Hitler’s demise.

It was Germany's Nazi rule, which led to the murder of 6 million European Jews and others, and more than 60 million dead in World War II, that gives Kramer sleepless nights.

“When I look at this development in Germany, the country where industrial mass murder was driven to perfection, then this is different from all other countries," he said.

In autumn 2024, there will be state elections in Thuringia. The AfD leads in the polls with more than 30%.

If the AfD, which is currently still shunned by all other mainstream parties in Germany, will become part of the state government, then Kramer, who is Jewish, will leave the country with his family.

“We’ve seen before in history where that can lead," he said. "And I must honestly confess, I have no desire to wait for it to occur again.”

**Load-Date:** July 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Voices: ‘Hello Stoke, this is Paris calling’: Can Eurovision succeed where levelling up is failing?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661B-C021-DY4H-K0DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 27, 2022 Wednesday 4:01 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 824 words

**Byline:** Andrew Naughtie

**Highlight:** If we’re serious about about building the ‘Global Britain’ we were promised, why not point Eurovision’s hundreds of millions of viewers at a part of the country now condemned as ‘left behind’?

**Body**

For [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) to come second to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) at [*Eurovision*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eurovision) 2021 was no mean feat. It also put an end to one of the silliest myths about our dismal performance in recent years: that it’s somehow All About Us.

By combining a decent enough song with a genuinely charismatic performance and an existing online fanbase, [*Sam Ryder*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sam-ryder) proved we can still win this thing. Let this put an end to the sanctimonious idea that Britain was losing out year after year at Eurovision because of Brexit, or because of fatigue at our warmongering colonial arrogance, or something – a conceit every bit as Anglocentric as the idea that we somehow deserve to win.

The viewing public of Europe and beyond simply are not fixated on passing sombre judgement on us and our politics, and it’s self-aggrandising of us to think so. For years, we sent Eurovision anything but our best, and we got the points we deserved (or rather, we never got the ones we didn’t deserve).

Now, by taking on the mantle of hosting Eurovision while Ukraine suffers a continued pounding by the inept but still murderous Russian army, we have the chance to show our solidarity. Unfortunately, we’ll also be calling attention to ourselves at the worst possible time to show off.

Hosting Eurovision isn’t just expensive; it’s also very exposing. The hosts can screw everything up spectacularly. Coming up with something to fill the excruciatingly long gap during the voting is almost as challenging as pulling off an Olympic opening ceremony – but without anything like the budget or lead time. And overshadowing it all is the task of putting on your best national face.

So, where’s it going to be? Glasgow and Manchester, of course, are straight out of the gate as the top contenders. Classic British thinking: for all that truly great music, live and recorded, emanates from every corner of the union, there isn’t a long list of non-London cities that outsiders associate with both inclusive fun and musical excellence. The go-to stand-ins for the entire North and the whole of Scotland are, as ever, the thunderingly obvious choices.

Neither is the worst possible option, self-image wise, but the fact that they’re leading the pack already does signal a lack of imagination. Maybe we could be a bit more honest and invite this international circus deeper into the heartland. We could even think of it as an unexpected boost for the depleted levelling-up agenda: yes, HS2 has been hacked to its bones and the North has now [*fallen behind the English public spending average*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/uk-news/levelling-up-johnson-truss-sunak-b2131599.html) , but there’s always the option of bringing Eurovision to Victoria Hall in Stoke-on-Trent or the Northern Echo arena in Darlington.

And given the condition of the country and the peeved mood of the mythical 2019 Red Wall voter, maybe it would behove everyone involved to think even bigger – or rather, smaller.

The ultimate example was set by Ireland in 1993, when an equestrian facility operator had the chutzpah to write in to RTÉ and pitch them on the idea of hosting the international contest in the County Cork town of Millstreet. Its nearby Green Glens Arena could seat nearly two-and-a-half times the population of the town, and the national broadcaster went for it.

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So if we’re serious about leaving no one behind, about building the “Global Britain” we were promised instead of a shrivelled remnant fast acquiring a reputation for complacent cruelty and broken promises, why not go the whole hog and point Eurovision’s hundreds of millions of viewers at a part of the country now condemned as “left behind”?

Think a funding-deprived Victorian town hall, or the sort of seaside conference centre usually reserved for glum political party conferences. Or maybe we could go the whole hog and host it somewhere truly off the radar – a Working Men’s Club in [*Grimethorpe*](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/03/grimethorpe-hit-rock-bottom-then-bounced-back) , perhaps, or the Athletic Sports Club in [*Mexborough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/boris-johnson-miners-north-england-thatcher-b1898725.html).

After all, in the face of nonexistent growth and excruciating living costs, patronising grand gestures with no promise of delivery are apparently all we have left to offer. So for Eurovision to swoop in with a few days’ worth of big money (much of it from EU countries) before vanishing again and leaving nothing behind would fit the spirit of the times just perfectly.

Funnily enough, Millstreet’s Green Glens has since served a new purpose as temporary accommodation for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Popular in Ukraine though Boris Johnson might still be, it’s hard to imagine a government led by him or his emotionally jaundiced party giving up even a modest privately owned rural events venue to shelter people fleeing a despicably violent conflict. Hosting the Eurovision Song Contest [*on Mariupol’s behalf*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/15/zelenskiy-hails-ukraines-eurovision-win-and-plans-to-one-day-host-final-in-mariupol?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=twt_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter) will have to do.

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jewish volunteers bond with Ukrainian kids at summer camp*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661X-Y951-JBNF-W485-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 30, 2022 Saturday 8:05 AM GMT

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**Length:** 808 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A summer camp in Poland's capital has brought Jewish volunteers originally from Russia or other parts of the former Soviet Union to mentor Ukrainian refugee children

**Body**

A 5-year-old girl's drawing at a summer camp in Poland's capital caught the eye of one of her counselors. Why did she use black and white, and not red or pink, to make a heart, Rabbi Ilana Baird asked the child.

The girl, sighing heavily, said it was black like the dog she left behind in Ukraine.

Baird, who lives in California, volunteered with several other [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) people originally from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) or other parts of the former Soviet Union to mentor Ukrainian refugee children at the camp in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw). The program, which ended Friday, was designed to give some joy to youngsters traumatized by war, to help prepare them for a new school year in Poland, and to give their mothers some time to themselves.

After performing puppet shows and reading stories to her group of 5-and 6-year-old campers, painting a lot of little faces and dispensing lots of big hugs, the rabbi saw another heart drawing. This one was pink.

“Happiness,” the girl explained.

Baird, 48, was happy to see cheerful colors and rainbows also emerging in the artwork of other children under her care at the Kef Be Kayitz camp, a Hebrew name that means Fun in the Summer.

For the volunteers, the decision to take time off from their usual jobs in the United States and fly to Poland to work with the Ukrainian children was driven by desire to help those in need, a value that is universal and a central part of Jewish religious teachings.

“Jewish people have suffered so much in the past. We suffered pogroms, we suffered the Holocaust and we suffered antisemitism," Baird said. “And we have a sense of obligation to help people who are suffering right now.”

After Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, people across Poland sprang into action to welcome and help refugees from the neighboring country. Poland has accepted more of the war's refugees than any other nation.

Local and international Jewish organizations also wasted no time in trying to meet the most urgent needs: to house and feed the Ukrainians, most of whom are women and children.

With the war about to enter its sixth month, the camp at the Lauder Morasha School in Warsaw reflects the type of programming being developed to meet the changing needs of refugees. Many Ukrainians realize they won’t be able to go home soon, or perhaps ever, said Helise Lieberman, the director of the Taube Center for Jewish Life and Learning.

Mornings were devoted to Polish, English and math lessons so the children will be in a stronger position to adapt to school. Many of the Ukrainian kids who arrived in Poland since February finished the Ukrainian academic year remotely but will be entering Polish schools in September.

Campers spent afternoons doing arts and crafts, playing sports and making excursions to city museums and parks. About a third of the 90 children who attended the camp are Jewish, according to Marta Saracyn, the head of the Jewish Community Center of Warsaw.

“It’s a lovely bubble for kids to be kids,” Saracyn said.

Some of the Ukrainian refugee mothers need to look for jobs, and some are severely depressed after being separated from partners and relatives back home, organizers said.

The Taube Center and the Jewish Community Center of Warsaw organized the camp in conjunction with the Jewish Federations of North America, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Joint Distribution Committee.

The Jewish Federations of North America recruited nearly 90 Russian-speaking educators and rabbinic leaders to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland and Hungary, and 10 helped out at the Warsaw camp, said Hannah Miller, who runs the volunteer program.

The 10 camp volunteers are Russian-speaking immigrants who left the Soviet Union decades ago, or the children of Russian Jewish immigrants. Only a couple spoke Ukrainian, so they mostly spoke to the children in Russian, which is also widely used in much of Ukraine.

Baird recalled painting the face of a boy who became upset when he realized she wasn't from Ukraine. “Why did you come here?” he asked her.

“Because you don’t need to be from Ukraine to help others," the rabbi answered, "you just need to be human."

The Jewish school where the camp took place is located blocs from the former Warsaw Ghetto, where Jews were imprisoned by German forces, killed and starved during the Holocaust before they were sent to concentration and extermination camps.

Poland was home to nearly 3.5 million Jews before World War II, most of whom were killed by German Nazi forces. But Jewish life has reemerged in the country since the fall of Moscow-backed communism in 1989.

“If this had happened 30 years ago, there would not have been Jewish communal institutions to provide relief and care,” said Lieberman, an American who was the founding principal of the Lauder Morasha School.

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Follow [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) 's coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Simon Harris pledges to hit the ground running as Ireland’s next taoiseach*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRB-YM51-DY4H-K0NB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 6, 2024 Saturday 6:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1399 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** The new Fine Gael leader vowed to inject ‘new energy’ into his party.

**Body**

Ireland’s incoming taoiseach Simon Harris has pledged to lead his party with a “new energy” as he vowed to hit the ground running as leader.

Ahead of his expected election as [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier in the Dail parliament next week, recently appointed [*Fine Gael*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fine-gael) leader Mr Harris addressed delegates at his party’s annual conference in Galway on Saturday evening.

His uncontested elevation to leader of Fine Gael came after Taoiseach Leo Varadkar’s shock resignation last month.

Mr Harris is to formally replace Mr Varadkar as the head of Ireland’s Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and [*Green Party*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/green-party) coalition government in the Dail on Tuesday.

In a wide-ranging speech at the close of the ard fheis at the University of Galway, Mr Harris identified housing; law and order; and support for small business as key priorities.

He also addressed recent tensions in Ireland over increased immigration rates, as he pledged to oversee a “fair” but “firm” system to manage migration into the country.

Launching a broadside against the main opposition party, [*Sinn Fein*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sinn-fein) , he said the electorate in forthcoming local and European elections faced a stark choice between “opportunity and outright opportunism”.

Mr Harris, who paid warm tribute to his predecessor Mr Varadkar, said he was “deeply honoured” to take on the “greatest challenge” of his life.

He described himself as a “proud Wicklow man” as he referred to his upbringing as the oldest of three children and the values instilled by his mother, a special needs assistant, and his taxi driver father.

The 37-year-old also spoke with pride about his wife Caoimhe, a nurse, and young children Saoirse and Cillian.

“Everything I do will be the grounded in the values my parents raised me with – hard work, compassion, and a desire to help those who need it the most,” he said.

“And everything I do will be with the ambition to create a better Ireland not just for Saoirse and Cillian – for all of our children.”

I will stand by our values as a party and our vision as a nation. A tolerant, inclusive and outward-looking society, which is fair, caring and secure

Simon Harris

He told delegates his political story began when his younger brother Adam was diagnosed with autism and he began campaigning for better information and services.

He characterised Fine Gael’s fundamental values as hope, enterprise, equality of opportunity, integrity and security.

“That is the Fine Gael I intend to lead, with a new energy,” he said.

On his expected election as taoiseach, he added: “If given this great honour, I will take office when time is short but there is much to do.

“Tonight, I promise you, we’re going to hit the ground running.

“I will stand by our values as a party and our vision as a nation. A tolerant, inclusive and outward-looking society, which is fair, caring and secure.

“I am going to match that vision with action.”

Mr Harris vowed to tackle Ireland’s housing crisis, pledging to build 250,000 new homes in five years.

I want to say to farmers and to rural Ireland, Fine Gael will never talk down to you on climate action. We will sit down and work with you and for you

Simon Harris

“I am of a generation where home ownership can feel out of the reach of many,” he said.

“To young people, I want you to know your future is here in Ireland. And I want your parents to know we will move mountains to get the children out of the box room and into a home of their own.

“We have to fix housing once and for all.”

Mr Harris pledged a package to support small business owners as he acknowledged they were “hurting” under the pressure of increasing costs.

He said Fine Gael was also the party of “farmers, fishermen and women and rural Ireland”.

Commenting on the challenges presented by climate change, Mr Harris stressed the need for a collaborative approach.

“I want to say to farmers and to rural Ireland, Fine Gael will never talk down to you on climate action,” he said. “We will sit down and work with you and for you.”

Mr Harris also vowed to help families struggling in the cost-of-living crisis.

He restated his ambition to raise the threshold for the higher rate of income tax to 50,000 euro (£43,000) and promised to further reduce the universal social charge burden on low and middle-income earners.

Mr Harris also pledged to break down barriers to education and improve access to childcare facilities.

The Wicklow TD also promised to take action to help people with disabilities.

On the wider health service, he said the focus would be on improving access and opening more beds and theatres and ensuring the training and recruitment of more GPs, consultants, nurses and therapists.

He said Fine Gael would always stand for law and order under his leadership.

“We stand for more gardai, with more powers and more resources to make our streets safe,” he said.

“We stand for tougher sentences for those who commit horrific crimes.”

It is time to have pride again in our capital city

Simon Harris

He said he would fast-track legislation to give judges powers to make sure “heinous criminals” serve long sentences before they are considered for release.

On the fall-out from November’s far-right influenced riots in Dublin, Mr Harris said he would immediately convene a Dublin city centre taskforce bringing together the council, retailers, business, community groups and gardai to chart a path towards a “safer and vibrant” city.

“It is time to have pride again in our capital city,” he added.

Mr Harris said Ireland needed a “fair and firm system” to better manage migration.

Outlining his support for the new EU migration pact, Mr Harris added: “We need to move away from the emergency use of hotels for housing asylum seekers. I believe we now have that plan.

“But the implementation will be key and engagement with communities is essential and leadership across government. We need to listen to people.

“The Irish people want to play their part. Irish people want to help. They already are.”

Speaking about the tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have fled to Ireland, Mr Harris acknowledged the influx had posed challenges.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Irish people could not be clearer. We are repulsed by your actions. Cease fire now and let the aid flow safely

Simon Harris

“Taking in families fleeing the war has brought significant pressures. But it is the right thing to do,” he said.

“Ireland, as a proud and committed member of the European Union, will always stand with the people of Ukraine.”

Addressing the conflict in the Middle East, Mr Harris issued a blunt message to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying Ireland was “repulsed” by his actions.

The comments drew a standing ovation from the Fine Gael membership.

“In Gaza we see a humanitarian catastrophe worsen before our eyes,” he said.

“We unreservedly condemn the massacre carried out by Hamas in October and again call for the unconditional release of all hostages.

“But we cannot and will not stay silent on the actions of Israel either.

“Reason has been replaced by revenge and by the bombing, maiming and death of children.

“Famine. A spectre no Irish person can bear. Anyone who can countenance deliberate starvation has lost their humanity.

“Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Irish people could not be clearer. We are repulsed by your actions. Cease fire now and let the aid flow safely.

“We need a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side, in peace and security.

Together, I promise we will deliver. With a new energy. Now let’s get to work

Simon Harris

“I reiterate, Ireland stands ready to recognise the state of Palestine.”

On [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) , Mr Harris spoke of the need to maintain positive co-operation.

“I am determined to work together on a north-south, east-west basis to improve the lives of everyone across these islands,” he said.

Mr Harris said the choice facing the electorate at local and European elections in June was the “starkest it has faced in generations”.

“A choice between opportunity and outright opportunism,” he said.

“Sinn Fein promises change. What they mean is they will change their mind at every chance.

“A party which promises utopia, but specialises in U-turns.”

He accused Sinn Fein of exploiting every challenge for its own gain.

In conclusion, the Fine Gael leader said he would work day and night to make people’s lives better.

“We will have your back. We will repay your trust,” he said.

“Together, I promise we will deliver. With a new energy. Now let’s get to work.”

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Micheal Martin, seen as sincere and a steady pair of hands, steps aside*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673S-74V1-JBNF-W3HG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 17, 2022 Saturday 3:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 894 words

**Byline:** By Grinne N. Aodha

**Highlight:** The experienced Cork politician has tried to make his mark on the international stage.

**Body**

Micheal Martin, Ireland’s shortest-serving taoiseach, was seen as a cautious, steady pair of hands at a turbulent time for Ireland.

The [*Cork*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cork) South-Central TD led the country through the worst of the [*Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/covid) pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and supported [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) following Russia’s brutal invasion.

But the housing crisis continues to plague the three-party coalition government, with the severe shortage of affordable housing now causing problems for recruitment in healthcare and education.

There are few political roles that Mr Martin, who is leader of Fianna Fail, has not held.

He has served as a councillor and Cork mayor and, since first entering Dail Eireann in 1989, has led the opposition and held several ministerial roles.

This includes the foreign affairs, enterprise, health and education portfolios.

That experience may have prepared him for his regular addresses to the country during the depths of the Covid-19 pandemic, when several harsh lockdowns were imposed across Ireland in order to keep the number of people in hospital as low as possible.

It has also led to speculation that he may ultimately be headed for a role on the European or global stage – possibly as Ireland’s EU commissioner.

Seen as a temperate Taoiseach compared with his predecessor [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) , Mr Martin also brought his diplomacy to tense exchanges of words over what to do with the Northern Ireland Protocol.

He also backed fast-tracking Ukraine’s application to join the European Union, a rare move for a non-eastern European country, and made a statement providing for 70,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

But Mr Martin’s coalition [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) had a fractious beginning for his party – losing two Fianna Fail agriculture ministers in its first two months.

Barry Cowen was forced to step aside after “a disagreement” with Mr Martin over a driving discretion, while his party deputy Dara Calleary resigned from the same role a month later, after attending a large golfing gathering as Covid cases in Ireland ramped up.

Despite a number of awkward moments with Fine Gael leader Mr Varadkar, who pipped Mr Martin at the post in announcing government decisions several times, the Fianna Fail leader was seen to have kept his cool while backbenchers’ tempers flared.

But his decision for Fianna Fail to take on the health and housing ministries has also lined his party up for the lion’s share of public fury and frustration with the Government.

Mr Martin has remained adamant that his Government’s plan is the only way to address Ireland’s housing crisis – through government incentives for developers to build, support and taxes to encourage the use of vacant properties, and grants to help make high rents and house prices more affordable for people.

Despite this, Ireland has seen homeless figures hit record numbers for four months in a row, now at 11,397 including 3,480 children.

The cost of buying a house and rent have continued to increase, and recent CSO figures show that residential building activity declined by 16% between July and September.

Mr Martin’s choice to appoint Stephen Donnelly, a recent Fianna Fail member, was also seen as controversial as it appeared to overlook party stalwarts.

That, and Mr Martin’s change of stance on abortion in 2018 – choosing to back liberalising Ireland’s abortion laws in a move that shocked parts of Fianna Fail – showed he is not afraid to defy his party.

He was later vindicated after the Irish public voted overwhelmingly to ease restrictions on the termination of pregnancies in the 2018 Eighth Amendment referendum.

Several murmurs of heaves against Mr Martin over the years have fizzled out, partly due to a confluence of crises and the lack of an obvious candidate to succeed the veteran Fianna Fail-er.

Having become leader of Fianna Fail at a time of crisis for the party, Micheal Martin leaves high office pledging to return his focus to his party’s future – preparing to enlist more women and younger people in preparation for the local elections in 2024.

The party has fallen from garnering 24% of first-preference votes in the 2020 general election, which won them 38 seats in Dail Eireann, to teetering around the mid-teens in the most recent polling.

Dear [*@MichealMartinTD*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) we will miss your soft-spoken ways and your constructiveness at the [*#EUCO*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/EUCO?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) table — always looking for a positive way forward and exploring compromise solutions. Thank you. We wish you all the best.Go raibh maith agat agus gach rath ort! [*pic.twitter.com/vNPzD8qLgx*](https://t.co/vNPzD8qLgx) — Charles Michel (@CharlesMichel) [*December 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/CharlesMichel/status/1603484205324935168?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He has repeatedly said that he will lead the party into the next general election, and dismissed poll numbers as underestimating support for his party.

If this is the case, he will need to decide whether Fianna Fail will consider going into government with the main opposition party Sinn Fein; a general election is due to be held before April 2025.

“I wish him and his the very best for the future, whatever that might bring,” Mary Lou McDonald said to Mr Martin in the Irish parliament during his last bout of Leaders’ Questions as taoiseach.

In the same debate, the confrontational independent TD Verona Murphy described Mr Martin as “courteous and balanced, generally speaking”, and said she does not doubt his commitment to public service or sincerity – a summary of how he has been viewed during his time in office.

**Load-Date:** December 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ban on allowing asylum seekers to work ‘pushes them into exploitation’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:672Y-MM71-JBNF-W2TM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 13, 2022 Tuesday 11:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 902 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Migration Advisory Committee calls for government to review arrangements amid labour shortages

**Body**

The government must review its ban on [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) working while they await decisions on their applications, an official report has said amid record backlogs.

The [*Migration Advisory Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migration-advisory-committee) (MAC) said restrictions were “pushing them into exploitative situations by preventing them from obtaining safe and legal sources of income”.

Its annual report said: “Individuals seeking asylum ordinarily have no right to work other than after their application has been pending for 12 months, and then only in a shortage occupation list role.

“The comparative restrictiveness of this rule, and the association between work restrictions and subsequent integration once refugee status is attained, are issues on which the MAC has previously commented.”

Professor Brian Bell, chair of the committee, told a press conference that it took the “evidence-based view that the harm caused by not allowing asylum seekers to work significantly outweighs any possible effect we could see on the other side”.

“We know of no significant evidence of harm that changing the policy would cause,” he said.

“Given the continued failure of the system to process asylum applications promptly, we are now getting more and more people who have been waiting more than six months.”

Professor Bell said the government’s position meant that tens of thousands of asylum seekers who are likely to have their claim accepted were being locked out of the labour market.

“We’re losing their skills and their human capital and that’s a real problem for the economy,” he added. “We continue to urge the government to reconsider that.”

The committee’s 2021 annual report said there was “clear evidence” of the harm the employment ban causes, and “little evidence” that it provides significant benefits.

It found that any migrants without permission to work “may enter the informal economy on poorer wages and conditions”, and be less able to challenge their treatment out of fear of being reported to the authorities.

The report published on Tuesday warned that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who were in the UK at the outbreak of the war and were excluded from three official schemes may be “particularly likely to seek work on the informal market and find themselves in an exploitative situation”.

The number of people waiting for asylum decisions has [*reached more than 140,000, with worsening delays meaning that many are living in limbo for years.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-figures-uk-grant-rate-b2232392.html%22%20title=%22UK’s%20asylum%20system%20‘collapses’%20as%20140,000%20people%20face%20soaring%20waiting%20times) Of those, 97,717 asylum seekers have not had an initial decision for more than six months.

Asylum seekers at risk of destitution must be housed by the Home Office, driving up huge spending on hotels, and those in accommodation are given £40.85 a week for all other costs.

A House of Lords amendment to the Nationality and Borders Act would have allowed them to work after six months waiting for a decision, but it was voted down by the government in April.

In August, the UN Refugee Agency said asylum seekers must be able to work after the same time period, finding that prolonged periods of financial hardship can lead them to “take up offers of work in unsafe and exploitative conditions”.

A report contained the accounts of a female trafficking victim who had “gone back into prostitution” after waiting more than a year for a government decision, Eritrean asylum seekers in domestic servitude and a group of young Vietnamese men being targeted by people “trying to re-exploit them in terms of nail bars or cannabis cultivation”.

Ministers have defended their position in the House of Commons, with immigration minister Robert Jenrick saying in November: “It is not wise to enable asylum seekers to work because there are already significant pull factors to the UK as a result of the relative ease of working here, access to public services and the fact that we have relatively high approval rates for asylum seekers. I am not persuaded that it would be wise to add a further pull factor to the mix.”

The MAC report said that migrants’ “real or imagined fear” of deportation and immigration enforcement makes them vulnerable to exploitation.

It said the government’s “compliant environment”, previously known as the hostile environment, policies could be “used as a tool to control or threaten migrant workers and trap them in exploitative working conditions”.

The MAC report warned that the exploitation of migrants is not being detected because “labour market enforcement is not well resourced”, and that checks had become so rare that they had a “weak deterrent effect” on companies paying below minimum wage or treating workers poorly.

“Lack of enforcement, limited penalties and the potential profits to be gained by flouting the rules may also lead employers to make calculations and choose to carry out an ‘efficient breach’ of labour law,” it added.

The committee called for the Home Office to look at funding increased enforcement through fees paid by employers.

The government said it took allegations of exploitation seriously and urged people to report abusive practices through formal channels for investigation.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The public rightly expects us to control immigration, which is why our points-based system delivers for the whole of the UK by balancing prioritising the skills and talent the UK needs with encouraging long term investment in the domestic workforce.

“We would like to thank the Migration Advisory Committee for its annual report and will consider the findings carefully.”

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine PM urges more military aid to counter Russia attacks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:672S-59J1-DY4H-K410-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 12, 2022 Monday 2:06 PM GMT

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**Length:** 956 words

**Byline:** Jamey Keaten

**Highlight:** Ukraine’s prime minister is appealing for Patriot missile batteries and other hi-tech air defense systems to counter Russian attacks, as more Russian shelling was reported on Monday in the eastern regions of Ukraine where Moscow is trying to make battlefield gains

**Body**

Ukraine’s prime minister is appealing for Patriot missile batteries and other hi-tech air defense systems to counter [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) attacks, as more Russian shelling was reported on Monday in the eastern regions of Ukraine where [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) is trying to make battlefield gains.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told French broadcaster LCI that Russia wants to swamp Europe with a new wave of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** by its targeting of infrastructure in Ukraine that has caused electricity and water outages for millions during freezing winter weather.

The provision of Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Ukraine would mark a major advance in the kinds of air defense systems the West is sending to help the war-torn country defend itself from Russian aerial attack. So far no country has offered them, although Germany has provided Patriot missiles to neighboring Poland, its NATO ally.

Millions of Ukrainians have already fled the country since the Russian invasion started on Feb. 24, and there are fears that many more could leave their homes during winter. Thousands of people have died and dozens of cities and towns across Ukraine have been reduced to rubble during the more than nine months of the Russian onslaught.

Ukraine also needs resupplies of artillery shells and modern battle tanks, Shmyhal said in an interview broadcast on Sunday night ahead of meetings in Paris this week to raise and coordinate more international aid for Ukraine. The more than 1,000 Russian attacks on infrastructure since October are designed “to trigger another wave of migration toward Europe,” he insisted.

The Kremlin has said attacks on Ukraine's energy supply system were a retaliation for what Moscow says was a Kyiv-orchestrated attack on the key, Russian-built bridge to the Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke on the phone with U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday. Biden sought “to underscore ongoing U.S. support for Ukraine’s defense as Russia continues its assaults on Ukraine’s critical infrastructure," the White House said.

Repeated Russian strikes on infrastructure have left millions of Ukrainians without power, heating or water throughout the country. Russian drone attacks near the Black Sea port of Odesa last weekend destroyed several energy facilities at once and left all customers except hospitals, maternity homes, boiler plants and pumping stations without power.

Ukraine’s power provider, Ukrenergo, on Monday said that the situation in the country’s energy system has remained difficult after Russian attacks, particularly in Odesa.

To defend against further strikes, Shmyhal reiterated previous Ukrainian calls for Patriot surface-to-air missiles — a highly sophisticated system that so far hasn’t been forthcoming. He also asked for more German and French air-defense systems that those countries have already supplied.

Ukraine needs large quantities of shells to respond like-for-like against Russian artillery, Shmyhal said. Russia fires 50,000 to 70,000 shells per day at Ukrainian targets and “we need at least one third of that quantity every day,” he added.

Organizers of the conference in France say they are expecting more than 45 nations and 20 international institutions to take part. A focus of the meeting will be rushing aid to Ukraine to meet its needs for water, power, food, health and transport during the tough winter months and sending a message to Moscow that the international community is sticking by Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the European Union's foreign ministers on Monday also were gathering in Brussels to discuss fresh sanctions to further punish Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney sharply condemned “deliberate targeting by Russia of civilians in terms of inflicting suffering on a broad population. ” He described Russia's actions as "a crime, in terms of both aggression and a crime against humanity.”

“This is one country invading another," he said. "Brutalizing civilian populations in order to try and get its way, and I think the world has to try and take a stand against that.”

On Monday, Ukraine’s Prosecutor General’s office said that two civilians were killed and 10 others were wounded in Russia's shelling of the town of Hirnyk in the eastern, Donetsk region.

“It was yet another Russian attack against civilians,” Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said on his messaging app channel.

The eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions together make up the Donbas, an expansive industrial region bordering Russia that Putin identified as a focus from the war’s outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought since 2014.

Russia in September unlawfully declared annexation of four Ukrainian regions — including Donbas — though it does not fully control them.

The latest fighting has focused in Donbas, particularly around the city of Bakhmut, after Ukrainian forces recaptured the southern city of Kherson nearly a month ago. Russian President Vladimir Putin is now seeking to make visible gains.

Russia has shelled Kostiantynivka, and fighting is going on around Avdiivka, Ðœarinka and Krasnohorivka in the same area, Ukrainian officials said.

The Ukrainian governor of the Russia-occupied Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said that a Ukrainian strike on Kadiivka on Sunday hit a hotel that served as headquarters for the Wagner group, a Russian military contractor. He claimed that hundreds of Russians were killed, a claim that couldn’t be independently verified.

Haidai also pointed to a difficult humanitarian situation in the village of Nevske, under Ukrainian control, where people live in basements following relentless Russian shelling.

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Follow AP’s coverage of the war in Ukraine: [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WH-WP71-DY4H-K4D1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 7:06 AM GMT

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**Length:** 943 words

**Byline:** Danica Kirka

**Highlight:** Britain’s new king will make his debut on the world stage Wednesday, three days later and 550 miles (885 kilometers) northeast of where he had intended

**Body**

Britain’s new king will make his debut on the world stage Wednesday, three days later and 550 miles (885 kilometers) northeast of where he had intended.

Although King [*Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles-iii) will be greeted with a hearty “willkommen” in Berlin rather than “bienvenue” in Paris, his goals remain the same: to cement Britain’s improving relations with Europe and show that he can help the U.K. win hearts and minds abroad just as his mother did so successfully for seven decades.

But the decision to cancel the first leg of his trip due to protests over planned pension changes in France may make it harder for Charles to make his mark during his first big international mission as monarch. And first impressions matter as Charles, 74, prepares for his coronation on May 6.

“Charles will have fewer opportunities to present himself,” said said Arianne Chernock, a royal expert and professor of modern British history at Boston University. “This means that he’ll need to be very disciplined about using those opportunities available to maximize his impact — there won’t be many second chances on this trip.”

Charles, who ascended the throne after the death of Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) in September, had something bigger in mind when this coming out party as king was announced.

Billed as a multi-day tour of the European Union’s two biggest countries, the trip was designed to underscore British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s efforts to rebuild relations with the bloc after six years of arguments over Brexit and highlight the countries’ shared history as they work together to combat Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Now everything rests on Germany.

The truncated trip starts Wednesday in Berlin, where German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will welcome Charles and Camilla, the queen consort, at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

The king is scheduled to give a speech to the Bundestag, Germany’s parliament, on Thursday. He will also meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz, talk to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and meet with British and Germany military personnel who are working together on joint projects.

The royal couple go to Hamburg on Friday, where they will visit the Kindertransport memorial for Jewish children who fled from Germany to [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) during the Third Reich, and attend a green energy event before returning to the U.K.

The king was urged to make the trip by Sunak, who during his first six months in office negotiated a settlement to the long-running dispute over post-Brexit trading rules for Northern Ireland and reached a deal with France to combat the people smugglers ferrying migrants across the English Channel in small boats. Sunak hopes goodwill created by a royal visit can help pave the way for progress on other issues, including Britain’s return to an EU program that funds scientific research across Europe.

This is the first big test of whether Charles can be an effective conduit for the “soft power” the House of Windsor has traditionally wielded, helping Britain pursue its geopolitical goals through the glitz and glamor of a 1,000-year-old monarchy.

The Windsors are among the most recognizable people on the planet. While their formal powers are strictly limited by law and tradition, they draw attention from the media and the public partly because of the historic ceremonies and regalia that accompany them — and also because the public is fascinated by their personal lives.

The late Queen Elizabeth II was the embodiment of this — the monarch everyone wanted to meet for tea, if for no other reason than that she’d been around so long.

Elizabeth’s influence stemmed in part from the fact that she made more than 100 state visits during her 70 years on the throne, meeting presidents and prime ministers around the world in a reign that lasted from the Cold War to the information age.

But questions remain about whether Charles has the same star power as his mother, dubbed “Queen of the World” by one biographer, Robert Hardman.

Charles has fewer years to make his mark and will not try to copy her, said Bronwen Maddox, who heads the Chatham House public affairs think tank in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london).

“He’s getting this (opportunity) towards the end of his life, and it’s very much a chance to make the best of it without claiming that it is the same, in any way, as his mother,’’ she said. ‘‘I think he will find his own way to do it.’’

Charles, a former naval officer who is the first British monarch to earn a university degree, is expected to insert heft where his glamorous mother once wielded star power.

As Britain’s head of state, the king meets weekly with the prime minister and retains his mother’s role as leader of the Commonwealth.

His visit to Germany will showcase these roles while also giving him an opportunity to highlight the causes he holds dear, like sustainability and the environment.

But there will also be a full dose of the pomp and circumstance that screams royal visit, starting with a ceremonial welcome at the Brandenburg Gate, the neoclassical landmark in the center of Berlin that has provided the backdrop to so much of German history. White tie and tiaras are expected to be on display during a state dinner at Schloss Bellevue, the German president’s official residence.

There will be plenty, therefore, to attract the crowds in Germany and demonstrate to people back home that Charles has eased into the role of monarch and chief diplomat.

“In some ways, Charles does not have to do very much for people to follow him because there’s the mystique of the institution,’’ Chernock said. “I think people are fascinated by his family and all of the drama surrounding it. So he could stand perfectly still and not utter a word and he would still draw crowds.”

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Prince William delights royal fans after being spotted dining out at ‘queer-friendly’ restaurant in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VG-1N91-JBNF-W1JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2023 Friday 7:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:** Meredith Clark

**Highlight:** The royal ordered a £7.50 pulled pork sandwich as he dined with Kensington Palace staff at the Warsaw restaurant

**Body**

[*Prince William*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-william) surprised unsuspecting patrons at the Butero Bistro in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) when he stopped in for some food on Wednesday night.

The [*Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-of-wales) dined at the Warsaw restaurant, which is described as a “queer space with comfort food,” alongside Kensington Palace staff during his trip to Poland, where he met with [*British and Polish troops*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/prince-william-ap-poland-ukraine-britain-b2306127.html) stationed near the Ukrainian border.

[*Pictures*](https://twitter.com/ThePopTingz/status/1638949904121733146?s=20) taken at Butero showed the prince dressed casually in a button-down shirt while sitting at a table with palace staff, as one restaurant worker leaned in to take William’s order. According to the [*Daily Mail*](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11894181/William-stuns-customers-enjoys-great-night-having-dinner-LGBT-restaurant-Poland.html) , the royal ordered a £7.50 ($9.22) Kanapka w chaÅ‚ce, or a Polish sandwich with pulled pork, served with fries and garlic mayo.

A source told the outlet that Prince William had asked to join Kensington Palace staff for dinner at a local restaurant they had booked nearby. Speaking to the Daily Mail, restaurant owner PaweÅ‚ Zasim said they “had absolutely no idea” the prince was coming.

“We had a table booked for 12 people under the name of Daisy,” Zasim said. “But then a bodyguard appeared and said that this wasn’t going to be a Daisy birthday party and then Prince William walked in.

“They said they had a good time, they spent three hours here with the other guests that were already here,” Zasim added. “He ate our sandwich in a braided roll with pulled pork. And he ate everything so I think he liked it.”

Butero Bistro is advertised online as a “queer space with comfort food”. Since its opening last November, the Warsaw restaurant has organised karaoke nights for local drag queens, and promotes itself as a [*LGBT*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lgbtq) + friendly establishment. A neon rainbow sign sits outside the restaurant, while its logo is made up of the colours of the rainbow.

The conservative government of Poland has made the eastern European country one of the least LGBT+ friendly countries in the European Union.

According to a [*2022 ILGA-Europe*](https://www.ilga-europe.org/report/annual-review-2022/) report, Poland does not recognise same-sex marriage, and the report warns that “an increasing number of Polish LGBTQ people are leaving the country as the political situation continues to worsen.”

A source told the Daily Mail: “It is valuable that he supported the community so abused by the current authorities in Poland.”

Prince William was spotted having dinner with his staffer at a LGBTQ+ restaurant in Poland. [*pic.twitter.com/aQQyPf7Syv*](https://t.co/aQQyPf7Syv) — Pop Tingz (@ThePopTingz) [*March 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ThePopTingz/status/1638949904121733146?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) While the royal family has yet to make an official statement about Prince William’s visit to the queer-inclusive restaurant, many fans saw the moment as a kind gesture and a subtle statement against Poland’s anti-LGBT+ ideology.“We love an ally,” said one person on Twitter.“He is making a statement against the Polish anti-LGBTQ laws,” said someone else.we love an ally— ant (comeback era) (@wildestblood\_13) [*March 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/wildestblood_13/status/1638950721293787137?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) to the people in the comments: he is making a statement against the Polish anti-LGBTQ laws— JW (@Jwatts3010) [*March 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Jwatts3010/status/1638970892280635393?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Warsaw restaurant where Prince William dined on Wednesday night has since made an unofficial shrine to mark the royal’s visit. In a video posted to Butero’s [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CqIxUUbI1hp) page on Thursday, an employee is seen taping a DIY sign with the words “Prince William” to the back of the chair in which he sat less than one day ago.“We are surprised too, but where else would he feel nice and safe than in our queer and loving space?” the restaurant captioned their Instagram post, per a translation. “We did what we do best – we fed. And the rest is history.” View this post on Instagram[*A post shared by Butero (@\_butero\_)*](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CqIxUUbI1hp/?utm_source=ig_embed&utm_campaign=loading)

Throughout the years, Prince William has often vocalised his support for the LGBT+ community.

In 2016, the now-Prince of Wales [*made history as the first member of the royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/prince-william-to-appear-on-cover-of-attitude-gay-magazine-a7083131.html) to be photographed for the cover of a gay magazine. While posing on the July 2016 cover of Attitude, one of the UK’s leading gay magazines, Prince William used the article to highlight issues of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying and the enduring mental health consequences of LGBT+-phobic speech.

The Prince of Wales [*arrived in Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-william-poland-ukraine-army-b2306084.html) on Wednesday to show Britain’s support for the country’s frontline efforts in helping refugees displaced by Russia’s war in Ukraine. The royal met with British troops in Rzeszow, a city in southeastern Poland, as he thanked soldiers for “defending our freedoms” and keeping “an eye on” the refugee crisis in Ukraine.

Speaking to British and Polish troops, William said: “I just wanted to come here in person to say thank you for all that you’re doing, keeping everyone safe out here and keeping an eye on what’s going on.

“So, just a big thank you for what you do on a day-to-day basis,” he added. “You’re doing a really important job out here and defending our freedoms is really important, and everyone back home thoroughly supports you.”

On Thursday, the prince placed a wreath at the [*Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/prince-william-ap-poland-ukraine-tomb-of-the-unknown-soldier-b2306574.html) in Warsaw, as he paid his respects to those who have lost their lives in past wars. The late Queen Elizabeth II and the late Duke of Edinburgh had laid a wreath at the tomb during their state visit to Poland in 1996.

Prince William also met with Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) at the Presidential Palace and visited a local food hall to speak with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. It marks William’s first trip to Poland since he visited in 2017 with his wife, the Princess of Wales.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[*As conditions for Syrians worsen, aid organizations struggle to catch the world's attention again*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FY-9KN1-DY4H-K1RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 14, 2023 Wednesday 5:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1048 words

**Byline:** Kareem Chehayeb

**Highlight:** Aid agencies will struggle to draw the world’s attention back to Syria at an annual donor conference hosted by the European Union in Brussels for humanitarian aid to Syrians

**Body**

Six months after she got the call informing her that her U.N. assistance would be cut, Najwa al-Jassem is struggling to feed her four children and pay rent for their tent in a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon’s eastern [*Bekaa Valley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bekaa-valley).

She once received food rations and cash that covered most of their modest monthly expenses. The family now only gets the equivalent of $20 a month, which just covers the rent for their cramped tent.

Her husband gets only sporadic day labor and “my kids are too young for me to send them to work the fields,” she told The Associated Press in the camp near the town of Bar Elias. “We’re eating one meal a day.”

Aid agencies will struggle to draw the world’s attention back to the plight of [*Syrians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syrians) like al-Jassem on Wednesday at an annual donor conference hosted by the European Union in Brussels for humanitarian aid to respond to the Syrian crisis.

Funding from the two-day conference will also go toward providing aid to Syrians within the war-torn country and to some 5.7 million Syrian refugees living in neighboring countries, particularly [*Turkey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/turkey) , Lebanon and Jordan.

This year, organizers aim to raise some $11.2 billion, though humanitarian officials acknowledged that pledges will likely fall short.

On Tuesday, a day before the conference, the World Food Program announced that it was faced with an “unprecedented funding crisis” and would cut aid to 2.5 million out of the 5.5 million people in Syria who had been receiving food assistance.

The conference comes as Syria’s protracted uprising-turned-civil-conflict has entered its 13th year, and after a deadly 7.8 magnitude earthquake rocked large swaths of Syria in February, further compounding its misery. The World Bank estimated over $5 billion in damages, as the quake destroyed homes and hospitals and further crippled Syria’s poor power and water infrastructure.

It also comes at a politically precarious time for refugees living in neighboring countries. Syrian President Bashar Assad recently received a major political lifeline with the return of Damascus to the Arab League, and Syria's neighbors have, in return, called for a mass repatriation of refugees.

Anti-refugee rhetoric has surged in neighboring Lebanon and Turkey, both dealing with economic and political crises.

In Lebanon, where officials have put the blame for the country’s economic crisis onto the country's estimated 1.5 million refugees, authorities have imposed curfews on refugees and restricted their ability to rent homes. Rights groups have said the Lebanese military has deported hundreds of Syrian refugees in recent months.

In Turkey, where Syrians were once welcomed with compassion, repatriation of the roughly 3.7 million refugees became a top theme in last month's presidential and parliamentary elections, which ended in a new term for incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Erdogan’s government for years defended its open-door policy, but has in recent years been building housing developments in areas of northwestern Syria controlled by Ankara-backed Syrian opposition groups, with the stated aim of encouraging refugee returns. Ankara and Damascus have also been holding talks in Moscow to improve strained relations.

The government has also carried out sporadic forcible deportations, while Erdogan's challengers took a harder line, vowing to deport refugees en masse.

While some Syrian refugees have voluntarily returned from Turkey and Lebanon, most say the situation is too volatile.

At the camp in Lebanon, Fteim Al-Janoud struggled to hold back her tears as she talked about how she and her husband can only afford to send one of her six children to school. But the refugee from Syria’s northern Aleppo province said the situation there is even worse, both in terms of security and material concerns.

“If the conditions were good and if our homes were fixed so we could live peacefully and comfortably, we wouldn’t have a problem going back to Syria, even with Assad still there,” she said.

Despite the deteriorating situation for Syrians, aid has dwindled in recent years, as donors rushed to support over 5 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and over 7 million internally displaced in the conflict-hit European country. The war in Ukraine, a global bread basket, also sparked a food inflation surge on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic that rocked the global economy for years.

"We see needs are increasing, and we also see that that donor funding is gradually going down,” said Ivo Freijsen, the U.N. refugee agency's representative to Lebanon, where some 90% of refugees live in extreme poverty and are dependent on aid.

“From a humanitarian point of view, it means that more people will be suffering,” he said. “We need to be seeking to see funding levels stay at the same level and actually increase.”

At last year’s conference in Brussels, donors pledged $6.7 billion, falling billions short of the U.N.’s $10.5 billion appeal, split almost evenly to assist Syrians inside the war-torn country and refugees. The funding shortage forced hospitals in opposition-held northwestern Syria to cut back services, while the U.N. World Food Program cut the size of its monthly rations for the more than 1 million people it serves in that area.

“We know that Ukraine has taken a big toll,” said U.N. Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Lebanon Imran Riza. “We know that Sudan has now become also quite a priority. It’s a difficult time and it’s a time that’s also following COVID and everything else that happened that hit economies so hard across the globe.”

Given those difficulties, he said international donors need to “move towards much more sustainable interventions” rather than remaining in crisis mode.

At the camp in the Bekaa Valley, Al-Jassem says she’s struggling to cope with mounting debts she and her husband have to cover unpaid rent and medical expenses.

But she’s more worried about the well-being of her children, who have lived their entire lives in a refugee camp in worsening conditions.

“The kids sometimes go to school without having breakfast,” she explained. “Their teacher would sometimes call me and ask why they didn’t bring a sandwich with them, and I would say it’s because I have nothing in the pantry.”

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Associated Press writer Abby Sewell in Beirut contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*William vows to keep ‘shining’ light on homelessness ahead of 40th birthday*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65RD-FFB1-DY4H-K1VJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 20, 2022 Monday 9:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 771 words

**Byline:** Tony Jones

**Highlight:** Diana, Princess of Wales brought her son to a homeless shelter when he was aged 11.

**Body**

The Duke of [*Cambridge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cambridge) has pledged ahead of his 40th birthday to continue “shining” a light on the “solvable issue” of homelessness – and to introduce his children to charities supporting rough sleepers.

William is the cover star of the latest issue of the Big Issue after he joined a seller on the streets of London earlier this month, and has written an article for the magazine about his experiences.

He described his time with vendor Dave Martin as “eye opening” and said he was recognised by those who stopped to buy the magazine, which allows the homeless to earn income by selling the publication.

In a question-and-answer article with Mr Martin, the duke, who turns 40 on Tuesday, described the Queen’s [*Platinum Jubilee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/platinum-jubilee) celebrations as a “lovely weekend” that provided a “moment of national unity” after a “difficult couple of years”.

Writing for the magazine, he said about the issue of homelessness: “And while I may seem like one of the most unlikely advocates for this cause, I have always believed in using my platform to help tell those stories and to bring attention and action to those who are struggling. I plan to do that now I’m turning 40, even more than I have in the past.

“So, for my part, I commit to continue doing what I can to shine a spotlight on this solvable issue not just today, but in the months and years to come.

“And in the years ahead, I hope to bring George, Charlotte and Louis to see the fantastic organisations doing inspiring work to support those most in need – just as my mother did for me.”

[*Diana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/diana) , Princess of [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) brought William to a homeless shelter when he was aged 11 to broaden the future king’s horizons and today he is patron of the homelessness charities [*Centrepoint*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/centrepoint) and The Passage.

Wearing a red vendor’s vest and baseball cap and official accreditation on his chest, the duke joined Mr Martin, who had volunteered to show William the ropes, outside a Sainsbury’s Local in Victoria, a 10-minute walk from Buckingham Palace.

News about the famous Big Issue seller soon spread through word of mouth and a queue formed, with people eager to meet the future king. But they had to buy the magazine and 32 copies, which would normally take his guide a week to sell, were snapped up in under an hour.

During his time on the streets, William chatted to a number of people who fled the war in Ukraine and he told the magazine: “We met two ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The daughter lives here, she’s brought her mum from Kyiv. Sadly they’ve lost a number of family members and most of their property. The grandmother is still out there.

“And then there was another gentleman who undid his shirt like Superman with a Ukrainian logo on there. He’s got his whole family over here and they’ve lost everything. From Mariupol.”

In the question-and-answer session, William suggested momentum for tackling homelessness, fostered by the Everyone In initiative where rough sleepers were moved into accommodation at the start of the pandemic, may have been lost – but he remained optimistic.

He told Mr Martin, 60, a Big Issue seller for 11 years: “I felt my birthday was a good opportunity. I wanted to make sure we were highlighting something that matters to me.

“Off the back of Everyone In, it started to feel that actually, this issue isn’t quite as big to tackle as we think. But it feels like it’s gone back to what it was before the pandemic.

“We can fix it. It is possible to – I never want to say completely end homelessness, because every day something else might happen for someone – but get on top of it more than we have done.”

He spoke about Diana’s influence on his public work, as they chatted at The Passage, a homeless charity based a few minutes walk from where they sold the magazine.

William said: “Ever since I came here with my mother, homelessness has stuck with me as an issue I want to fight for. I’ve done everything I can to raise the profile of the homeless, and I want to do a lot more.”

Asked by Mr Martin about the Jubilee celebrations, the duke replied: “It was a lovely weekend, thanks. It was a moment of national unity, I felt. I think it brought a lot of people together. I think it made everyone feel a bit better about themselves after a difficult couple of years.

In a lighter moment when Mr Martin presented William with a gift of some postcards of abstract art he had created, the duke confessed modern art was not his favourite.

The duke said: “I studied a bit of art history at university. Had to give it up. I kept falling asleep in the lectures. Terrible. We did a lot of Renaissance, which was amazing. But then once we got into modern art, I started to get a bit dozy.”

**Load-Date:** June 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office doubles time lone child refugees must wait to join family in UK as resources diverted to Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G5-F0B1-JBNF-W2HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 9:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 831 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: In one case, a 14-year-old Afghan boy alone in a refugee camp in Europe must wait up to four months to join his brother in the UK

**Body**

The [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) has doubled the time lone [*child refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/child-refugees) must wait to join family members in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) as resources are diverted to processing Ukraine [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) , The Independent can reveal.

Charities warn that [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) may be pushed to attempt dangerous journeys to reach British shores after it emerged that the department has increased its service standard for family visas - which include family reunion applications for minors -from 12 weeks to 24 weeks.

In one case, a 14-year-old Afghan boy who has been living in a refugee camp in eastern Europe after fleeing his country last summer has been told he may need to wait another four months -after already waiting two -for a decision on his application to join his brother in Britain.

An email sent from the UK's visa service to lawyers representing the boy, seen by The Independent, states it is "prioritising Ukraine visa scheme applications", meaning customers applying for other routes will "experience some delays in the processing of their application".

"We have therefore made the decision to temporarily amend our marriage and family service standard to 24 weeks, from our usual service standard for this route of 12 weeks,' it says.

The change, which occured on 11 May, affects all family visa applicants applying from outside the UK, which amounts to hundreds of thousands of people. The Home Office did not confirm how many of these were unaccompanied minors.

Campaigners say the move has left many families "devastated" and thrown into increasingly vulnerable circumstances as they cannot live alongside their loved ones.

Lawyers said the increased delays were "not inevitable" and the Home Office could have avoided them by removing "unneccessary red tape" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

It comes after[*it emerged*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/home-office-ukraine-visas-uk-prority-b2048912.html) the government has pulled staff out of other immigration functions and closed some entirely in order to divert resources to deal with its Ukraine visa schemes.

The UK is administering two routes for those fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion -the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine -both of which have themselves been beset with delays since opening in March.

Beth Gardiner-Smith, chief executive at Safe Passage International, which helps unaccompanied children to apply to reunite with relatives in the UK, said it was "beyond frustrating" that children in "precarious" situations in Europe were having to wait double the usual amount of time.

"We fear this delay in family reunion applications could cause some children we're working with to lose faith in the process and attempt to make dangerous journeys instead to reach their family," she added.

"Visas for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict should be processed as quickly as possible, but this should not come at the cost of refugees fleeing dangers and war in other places. The government must urgently invest in speeding up decision making and increasing capacity to ensure all those at risk are not left in danger."

Zoe Bantleman, legal director at the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, said people with family settled in the UK should not have to wait so long.

"These delays were not inevitable. Had the home secretary heeded calls to waive visa requirements and remove unnecessary red tape for Ukrainians, such delays could have been avoided."

Caroline Coombes, of Reunite Families UK, which supports people applying for UK family visas, said she had received a flurry of emails from applicants who were stressed and anxious about their visas and wait times.

"We appreciate the Home Office has been up against it processing much needed visas for Ukrainian nationals, but the extension to 120 days for the service standard has devastated many families we work with who have already waited too long to be reunited with their loved ones," she said.

"It is a horrendous fallout from the home secretary's decision to apply visa requirements to those fleeing war. Instead of making families wait even longer, the Home Office should be increasing staff numbers to deal with the backlogs."

There were already lengthy delays in the visa processing system before the Ukraine war hit, prompting lawyers to accuse the Home Office of attempting to "explain away" the waiting times by their response to the war.

Luke Piper, immigration lawyer and head of policy at the3million, which represents EU citizens in the UK, said: "There are increasing delays with decisions across the Home Office but this predates the Home Office's Ukraine response. We hear from so many people separated from their loved ones for months on end. Something more fundamental has happened inside the Home Office."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "We are prioritising Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine applications in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine, so applications for study, work and family visas have taken longer to process.

"UK visas and immigration (UKVI) are working to reduce the current processing times as quickly as possible."

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*House passage of $40B Ukraine aid bill expected, Senate next*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DV-19J1-JBNF-W403-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 11, 2022 Wednesday 12:36 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 827 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The House is debating a fresh $40 billion Ukraine aid package that beefs up President Joe Biden's initial request

**Body**

A fresh $40 billion [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) aid package headed toward House passage Tuesday as lawmakers beefed up President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) 's initial request, signaling a magnified U.S. commitment to thwart Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's bloody three-month-old invasion.

The measure was expected to win wide bipartisan support and had $7 billion more than Biden's plan from last month, evenly divided between defense and humanitarian programs. The bill would give Ukraine military and economic assistance, help regional allies, replenish weapons the Pentagon has shipped overseas and provide $5 billion to address global food shortages caused by the war's crippling of Ukraine's normally robust production of many crops.

The new legislation would bring American support for the effort to nearly $54 billion, on top of the $13.6 billion in support Congress enacted in March. That's about $6 billion more than the U.S. spent on all its foreign and military aid in 2019, according to a January report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, which studies issues for lawmakers. It's also around 1% of the entire federal budget.

"Time is of the essence, and we cannot afford to wait," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., wrote in a letter to colleagues. She said the measure "sends a resounding message to the world of our unwavering determination to stand with the courageous people of Ukraine until victory is won."

The measure was released as Washington has become increasingly assertive about its goals and its willingness to help Ukraine with more sophisticated weapons. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said recently the U.S. wants a "weakened" Russia that can't quickly restore its capability to attack other countries.

Russian attacks on Ukraine's southern port of Odesa have intensified in what seems an attempt to hamper deliveries of Western arms. Those weapons have helped Ukraine hold its own surprisingly well against its more lethal foe, but the grinding war is taking its toll.

[*Senate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senate) approval of Ukrainian aid seems certain, and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and other Republicans have echoed the need for quick action. But it was unclear when that would occur and changes in the measure were possible, with McConnell insisting that the measure be narrowly focused on the war.

"I think we're on a path to getting that done," McConnell told reporters Tuesday. "It needs to be clean of extraneous matters, directly related to helping the Ukrainians win the war."

Some Republicans used the election-season debate to accuse Biden of being unclear about his goals.

"Honestly, do we not deserve a plan?" said Rep. Michael Burgess, R-Texas. He said he agrees that Western countries must help Ukraine stand up to Russia but added, "Does the administration not need to come to us with where we are going with this?"

Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., attended Tuesday's separate Democratic and Republican Senate lunches and expressed gratitude for the support they've received. Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said Makarova told them her country has depleted its stockpiles of Soviet-era weapons and said continued NATO support is vital.

Coons said the Ukrainian's message was, "'Thank you, do more. We have a hard fight ahead. With your support, we can win.'"

The new measure includes $6 billion to arm and train Ukrainian forces, $8.7 billion to restore American stores of weapons shipped to Ukraine and $3.9 billion for U.S. forces deployed to the area.

There's also $8.8 billion in economic support for Ukraine, $4 billion to help Ukraine and allies finance arms and equipment purchases and $900 million for housing, education and other help for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the U.S.

To enhance the measure's chances in Congress, the House bill drops Biden's proposal to ease the pathway to legal permanent residency for qualifying Afghans who fled to the U.S. after last summer's American withdrawal from that country. Some Republicans have expressed concerns about the adequacy of security screenings for applicants.

In their biggest concession, Biden and Democrats had abandoned plans Monday to include additional billions of dollars to build up U.S. supplies of medicines, vaccines and tests for COVID-19. Republican support for more pandemic spending is waning and including that money would have slowed the Ukraine measure in the 50-50 Senate, where at least 10 GOP votes will be needed for passage.

Democrats hope to produce a separate COVID-19 package soon, though its fate is unclear.

Biden met in the White House Situation Room Tuesday with Pelosi and six other House Democrats who traveled recently to Ukraine and Poland. Afterward, Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo., a member of that delegation and former Army Ranger, said the Ukrainians need advanced drones and longer range weapons like artillery, rockets and anti-ship missiles that will help them push back the Russians.

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Associated Press writer Farnoush Amiri contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ministers rule out early election as focus shifts to race to succeed Varadkar*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKR-MJG1-JBNF-W0SG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2024 Wednesday 8:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1451 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** In a shock announcement, the Taoiseach announced his resignation on Wednesday.

**Body**

Irish government ministers have rejected calls for an early election following [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) Leo Varadkar’s shock resignation as focus shifts to the race to succeed him.

In an emotional address outside Government Buildings in Dublin on Wednesday, Mr Varadkar announced he would step down as premier when a successor is confirmed.

He also quit as leader of the [*Fine Gael*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fine-gael) party with immediate effect but made clear he does not intend to stand down as a TD for Dublin West in the Dail parliament.

Mr Varadkar said his tenure as Ireland’s leader had been “the most fulfilling time” of his life but said he no longer felt he was the best person for the job.

The announcement came after a turbulent number of weeks for the Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Green Party three party coalition.

Earlier this month, it was resoundingly beaten in two referendums on changes ministers had proposed to the Irish constitution.

Mr Varadkar’s resignation has prompted calls from Sinn Fein and other opposition parties in the Dail for a general election.

Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin and Green Party leader Eamon Ryan dismissed those demands on Wednesday, signalling a determination that the government should run its full term – which would see an election held in the first few months of next year.

Attention is now on the potential race within Fine Gael to succeed Mr Varadkar as party leader and Taoiseach.

Higher education minister Simon Harris, Justice minister Helen McEntee and Public Expenditure minister Paschal Donohoe are among the names touted as possible successors.

Deputy party leader [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) , who lost the last leadership contest in 2017, has ruled himself out of contention this time round.

Fine Gael members held a parliamentary party meeting and an executive council meeting on Wednesday night. At the first meeting it is understood Mr Varadkar pledged his unequivocal support for his successor.

Following the meeting of the executive council, it was agreed that nominations for the next party leader will open on Thursday morning at 10am and close next Monday March 25 at 1pm.

Candidates must be nominated by at least 10% (six members) of the parliamentary party, comprised of TDs, Senators and MEPs.

Should there be a leadership contest, voting for almost 20,000 eligible party members will take place across the country on Tuesday April 2 to Thursday April 4.

The new party leader will be announced on Friday April 5 in time for the party’s annual conference (Ard Fheis) on April 6, paving the way for the new taoiseach to be formally elected when the Dail returns after Easter recess.

Mr Varadkar said his decision to quit was both “personal and political”.

“I believe this government can be re-elected and I believe my party, Fine Gael, can gain seats in the next poll,” he said.

“Most of all I believe the re-election of this three-party government would be the right thing for the future of our country.

“Continuing to take us forward, protecting all that has been achieved and building on it.

“But, after careful consideration and some soul searching, I believe that a new taoiseach and a new leader will be better placed than me to achieve that, to renew and strengthen the team, to focus our message and policies, to drive implementation.

“And, after seven years in office, I don’t feel I’m the best person for that job anymore.”

Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald told Mr Varadkar’s government colleagues it was time for an election.

“Rather than limping on, and rather than passing the office of taoiseach amongst yourselves again, the correct democratic route at this point is to go to the people,” she said in the Dail.

Mr Martin said the coalition was based on parties, not personalities, as he insisted the coalition could continue without Mr Varadkar.

“I remain committed to the continuation of government, to the fulfilment of our mandate and to the implementation of the programme for government,” he said.

Mr Ryan said the resignation should not disrupt the work of the coalition.

“Why would it stop us doing anything? We have work to do. At Cabinet today there was a full agenda, there will be a full agenda next week,” he said.

Mr Varadkar’s surprise departure comes ahead of local government and European Parliament elections in Ireland in June.

Over the last year, 10 Fine Gael TDs have announced their intention to step away from politics at the general election, fuelling speculation of internal discontent within the party.

The comprehensive rejection of the Government’s proposed constitutional amendments was a significant blow to Mr Varadkar and other coalition leaders who had campaigned for “Yes Yes” votes in the plebiscites.

Cabinet ministers met in Dublin for the first time on Wednesday since the referenda defeats.

Mr Varadkar, 45, has also just returned from the US where he was involved in several high-profile engagements with President Joe Biden as part of traditional St Patrick’s Day celebrations.

He is currently serving his second term as Taoiseach.

Mr Varadkar, who first became premier in 2017, once insisted he would not remain in politics beyond the age of 50, albeit he later said he regretted making that pledge.

During his time as Taoiseach, Ireland passed a landmark referendum to liberalise its strict abortion laws in 2018.

Mr Varadkar also played a key role in the Brexit negotiations, with a crunch meeting with then prime minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) at a manor house on The Wirral in England seen as a significant moment in paving a way for the deal on the UK’s exit from the EU.

The agreement staved off the prospect of a hard trade border being introduced on the island of Ireland, but it did prompt years of further political turmoil, particularly within unionism in Northern Ireland, over the creation of a so-called Irish Sea border on the movement of goods between the region and Great Britain.

Mr Varadkar was taoiseach at the onset of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and announced a lockdown, in arguably his most famous address, while on an annual St Patrick’s Day trip to Washington DC.

In his first term as premier, Mr Varadkar led a minority government that was sustained in power by way of a confidence and supply deal with the then main opposition party Fianna Fail.

Following the 2020 general election, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail agreed to enter coalition for the first time – a seismic move for two arch rivals founded from opposing sides of Ireland’s civil war of the 1920s. The Green Party led by Mr Ryan joined as the administration’s junior partner.

The coalition deal saw Mr Martin serve as taoiseach for the first half of the mandate, with Mr Varadkar retaking the position at the mid point of the government term.

Mr Varadkar’s detractors will point to Ireland’s ongoing housing shortages and chronic problems within the health service as major government failings during his time as premier.

The political establishment in Ireland has also been under increasing pressure on migration issues in recent times, with an influx of tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and asylum seekers from elsewhere in the world heaping further strain on state services and accommodation stock.

In his resignation speech, the outgoing Taoiseach said politicians were human beings who had their limitations.

“We give it everything until we can’t anymore and then we have to move,” he said.

He said Fine Gael candidates in forthcoming elections had a “better chance under a new leader”.

“I know inevitably there’ll be speculation as to the quote unquote ‘real reason’ for my decision. These are the real reasons. That’s it. I have nothing else lined up, I have nothing in mind, I have no definite personal or political plans, but I’m really looking forward to having the time to think about them,” he said.

Mr Varadkar said there was never a right time to resign high office but he said it was as “good a time as any” to step down.

“Budget 2024 is done,” he added. “Negotiations have not yet commenced on the next one. Institutions of the Good Friday Agreement are working again (with the return of powersharing in Northern Ireland) and our trading relationship with the UK in the post-Brexit era is settled and stable.

“The new taoiseach will have a full two months to prepare for the local and European elections and up to a year before the next general election.”

Mr Varadkar thanked his fellow coalition leaders and his party colleagues for their support.

“Most of all, I want to finish by thanking the people of Ireland for giving me the opportunity to serve them,” he said.

“And I’ll promise I’ll keep working for Ireland and my community in any way I can in future.”

Mr Varadkar was applauded by Fine Gael ministerial colleagues as he finished his speech and walked back into Government Buildings.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Refugees could be sent to Rwanda for 'visiting friends'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DV-JNN1-JCS0-D0SW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 11, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 919 words

**Byline:** LIZZIE DEARDEN HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

**Body**

Asylum seekers could be sent to Rwanda for "spending a couple of weeks in Brussels staying with friends" while journeying to the UK, or for being found with foreign receipts and train tickets in their pockets. Home Office guidance - made public following threats of legal action by refugee charities - includes examples of reasons that people can be selected for removal under Priti Patel's new scheme.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have not been excluded, according to official documents that suggest that anyone who "travelled through safe third countries" like Poland or France can be considered. They state that asylum seekers may be sent to Rwanda if their claim is deemed "inadmissible" under government policy, and they arrived by a small boat or another "dangerous" method after 1 January.

A document on what constitutes "inadmissibility" says it includes people deemed to have a connection to a safe country that is not the UK or their home nation. That means that they have been recognised as a refugee in, travelled through, made an asylum application to or could have made an application to that country "on the balance of probabilities".

Guidance for Home Office staff gives examples, saying that an asylum seeker who "passed through Belgium" before arriving in the UK could be declared inadmissible. "An admission from the claimant that they had spent a couple of weeks in Brussels staying with friends while trying to find an agent to bring them illegally to the UK would likely constitute evidence that they had been in that particular country," it states.

"The decision would also need to consider whether the claimant has provided any exceptional circumstances as to what they could not have made an application for protection in that particular country."

The document states that even if asylum seekers deny having stayed in a safe country previously, "material in their belongings such as receipts and tickets from Belgian shops, services and transport showing time and freedom of movement in Belgium would likely meet the standard of proof required".

Staff must weigh up any evidence that the receipts did not belong to that person or that "exceptional circumstances" meant they could not stay in Belgium, the guidance adds. It says that removal to Rwanda should be considered if it "stands a greater chance" than removal to the country they are deemed to have a connection to.

Before Brexit, the UK was part of an EU-wide regulation that allowed the transfer of asylum seekers to countries they had previously stayed in. It saw Britain send thousands of people to France, Belgium and other countries deemed responsible for them, but the deal has not been replaced by the EU and individual nations have told The Independent they will not negotiate the bilateral "returns agreements" originally promised by the government.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHRC)has vocally opposed the Rwanda deal, saying it "evades international obligations and is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Refugee Convention". Officials have said that there is no international legal obligation requiring refugees to seek asylum in the "first safe country they reach", which is a key assertion underpinning the government's policies.

"If all refugees were obliged to remain in the first safe country they encountered, the whole system would probably collapse," the UNHCR added. "The countries closer to zones of conflict and displacement would be totally overwhelmed, while countries further removed would share little or none of the responsibility. This would hardly be fair, or workable, and runs against the spirit of the convention."

Under British law, asylum can only be claimed inside the UK and there is no visa for people wanting to reach the country specifically for that purpose. It means that people who are not eligible for limited resettlement schemes must travel independently to the country.

Refugee charities have repeatedly called for the government to set up alternative routes that remove the need for English Channel crossings rather than pursuing increasingly punitive "deterrents". The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants said the government was "not interested in taking the practical steps needed".

"They could easily issue humanitarian visas and new pathways for people to re-join family here, but instead they continue to forge ahead with cruel and senseless asylum plans," said interim chief executive Paola Uccellari.

"It's time Priti Patel stopped dreaming up diabolical ways to treat people seeking safety here - whether that's deporting people to Rwanda, or opening up prison-like asylum camps in rural Yorkshire. What we need are fair and effective asylum rules, which give people the chance to come here safely and build their lives in our communities."

Clare Moseley, founder of Care4Calais, said: "If this government truly wished to shut down people smugglers, they would allow all refugees in Calais to apply for visas, as they have done for Ukrainians. The question is, why has this cheaper, easier and more humane option not been considered?"

The home secretary rebuffed a Conservative MP's call for asylum processing in France earlier this year, telling parliament's Home Affairs Committee that it would "make France a big magnet for more migrants to come". Amid a series of potential legal challenges against the Rwanda policy and the removal of individuals notified that they have been selected for it, the Home Office insisted that the plans were lawful and that it would defend any case "robustly".

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Live updates | UK: Russia aims to take Mariupol before V-Day*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CT-8901-DY4H-K2YF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2022 Friday 7:11 AM GMT

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**Length:** 886 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The British military believes Russia wants to take the port city of Mariupol and its vast steel mill before its marks Victory Day on Monday

**Body**

LVIV, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - The British military believes [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) wants to take the port city of [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol) and its vast steel mill before its marks Victory Day on Monday.

The British Defense Ministry made the comment in a daily intelligence briefing it makes on Twitter.

The Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol has been the scene of weeks of fighting. It has a vast network of underground bomb shelters shielding fighters and civilians from Russian bombardment, though the site has been repeatedly struck by high-explosive bombs.

The British military said: "The renewed effort by Russia to secure Azovstal and complete the capture of Mariupol is likely linked to the upcoming 9 May Victory Day commemorations and Putin's desire to have a symbolic success in Ukraine."

It added: "This effort has come at personnel, equipment and munitions cost to Russia. Whilst Ukrainian resistance continues in Azovstal, Russian losses will continue to build and frustrate their operational plans in southern Donbas."

Victory Day marks the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in World War II.

\_\_\_

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Defenders inside Ukrainian steel mill refuse to surrender

- The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Interview: Belarus admits Russia's war 'drags on'

- Jill Biden to meet ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** during border visit

- US says superyacht owned by Russian oligarch seized in Fiji

Follow all AP stories on Russia's war on Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

LVIV, Ukraine - There are growing suggestions that Ukraine might try to widen its push to seize more territory from Russia outside of Kharkiv, its second-largest city.

Ukrainian chief of defense, Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, said Thursday that a counteroffensive could begin to push Russian forces away from Kharkiv and Izyum, which has been a key node in Russia's control of the area.

Ukraine in recent days has pushed Russia some 40 kilometers (25 miles) east of Kharkiv, which has been repeatedly struck by Russian shelling.

Further pushing the Russians away may spare the city from more artillery strikes, as well as force Moscow to divert troops from other areas of the front line to maintain its hold on territory there.

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LVIV, Ukraine - The Ukrainian military says the Russian effort to seize the steel plant in Mariupol continues.

The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces issued a daily statement Friday saying that "the blockade of units of the defense forces in the Azovstal area continues."

It added: "In some areas, with the support of aviation, resumed assault operations to take control of the plant."

Elsewhere in the country, the Ukrainian military said Russian forces are conducting surveillance flights of territory. In the hard-hit areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, Ukraine's military said it repulsed 11 enemy attacks and destroyed tanks and armored vehicles. There was no immediate acknowledgement of those losses by Russia.

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WASHINGTON - The Pentagon says the majority of Russian forces that had been around the port city of Mariupol have left and headed north, leaving roughly the equivalent of two battalion tactical groups there, or about 2,000 troops.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Thursday that even as Russian airstrikes continue to bombard Mariupol, Moscow's forces are still making only "plodding" and incremental progress as the main fight presses on in the eastern Donbas region.

He said he has seen no change in Russian behavior or momentum as May 9 draws near.

Russia celebrates Victory Day on May 9, the anniversary of the Soviet Union's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. There have been suggestions that Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) wants to tout a major victory in Ukraine when he makes his address during the traditional military parade on Red Square.

Kirby said the U.S. still assesses that Russia is behind schedule and not making the progress in the Donbas that it expected.

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MARIUPOL, Ukraine - A cleanup operation took place in the center of Mariupol even as Ukrainian fighters held out against Russian troops in the city's pulverized steel plant. The rest of the city is now under Russian control.

Municipal workers, as well as volunteers, were seen Thursday clearing debris near gutted, charred buildings, including the drama theater where hundreds died when the Russian military bombed it in March. Some workers hung a Russian flag on a tall utility pole.

One volunteer, who gave only his first name, Denis, said he was helping restore parks and war monuments so the city could celebrate Victory Day on Monday. Russia celebrates victory over Nazi Germany in World War II on May 9.

\_\_\_

KYIV, Ukraine - In his nightly video address Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described a "catastrophic" lack of access to medical services and medicine in areas of the country under Russian occupation.

In those areas, he said almost no treatment was available for those suffering from cancer and where insulin for diabetics was difficult to find or nonexistent. He said antibiotics were in short supply.

Zelenskyy also said that during the course of the war, the Russian military has already fired 2,014 missiles on Ukraine, while 2,682 flights of Russian warplanes have been recorded in Ukrainian skies. He said the destroyed or damaged infrastructure includes nearly 400 hospitals and other medical facilities.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Welsh miners send convoys of aid to Ukraine to repay help over 1984 strike*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJV-RNP1-DY4H-K4FB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2024 Saturday 1:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1388 words

**Byline:** Askold Krushelnycky

**Highlight:** ON THE GROUND: Askold Krushelnycky reports from Pavlohrad, southeastern Ukraine, where the latest in a number of convoys of vehicles and supplies is handed over to help Kyiv's forces defend against Russia's invasion

**Body**

It is a bond forged during the [*miners*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/miners) ' strike 40 years ago.

[*A trio of vehicles f*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-elections-results-news-b2513655.html) illed with drones, military equipment and medical supplies recently arrived in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) – to help them defend against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion – from [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) because of that bond.

One of the drivers was Wayne Thomas, who experienced the strike as a young miner and now, at 63, is vice-president of the UK National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

Six volunteers set off with two Mitsubishi SUVs and a Volkswagen “Transporter” from Pontypridd in Wales, where the donated vehicles and supplies had been gathered at a NUM property. They overnighted in Folkestone and next day went by train under the Channel to Calais and drove through France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Poland before crossing into Ukraine after four days.

The other principal convoy organiser was Mick Antoniw, 69, Welsh Assembly member and Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution of the Welsh Government (Wales’s equivalent of attorney general). A former member of the British Labour Party’s national executive, Antoniw was helping to bring convoys of aid to Ukraine for the ninth time.

This trip marked £1 million pounds worth of donations -15 vehicles plus various supplies -the group has sent to Ukraine since the full-scale war began on February 24, 2022.

Antoniw made contacts in the NUM because the firm of solicitors he belonged to before becoming a full-time politician often represented the miners’ union.

Another former miner and the “youngster” of the convoy at 35, was Carwyn Donovan, now an official of the Broadcast and Entertainments Union. The fourth driver was Jan Michaelis, 56, the technical director at the Welsh National Opera, who learned about the aid convoys from Donovan who represented the opera’s union members in negotiations while Michaelis sat on the management side of the table. The fifth was Roman Kozak, 69, who was born in Leicester, trained as a doctor at the Royal London Hospital and has lived in Canada since 1979.

Antoniw’s mother was Danish and his father, a refugee from Ukraine during the Second World War, as were both of Kozak’s parent. Both men have been interested in supporting Ukraine in various ways all their lives. Because both have been his friends from childhood, this reporter was invited to chronicle the convoy’s journey for The Independent.

During the miners' strike of four decades ago, Ukraine was still a part of the Soviet Union and a delegation of miners, headed by an official called Mykhailo Volynets from Ukraine’s largest coal mining region in Donetsk arrived to show solidarity with British comrades.

In 1989, Volynets rallied Ukrainian miners calling for independence from the USSR and when that came in 1991 he formed the Independent Trade Union of Ukrainian Miners – which joined the broader movement for democracy sweeping his country. It played an important role in mass protests in 2004 and 2014.

Following the full-scale 2022 invasion, the Ukrainian miners reached out to the NUM for help with vehicles and other supplies for the thousands of their members who had joined the Ukrainian military to defend their country.

Thomas explained that the miners had become especially close with the Ukrainian miners.

“And so when we were asked in 2022 for assistance it was a case of not ‘should we help?’ but ‘yes, and what do you need?’ And the NUM immediately sent £20,000 to the miners in Pavlohrad,” says Thomas.

Thomas has made five wartime trips to Ukraine. “The resolve of the Ukrainian people, all the people we’ve spoken to of all ages, is amazing. Their belief that their culture and country are worth fighting for leaves an enormous impression,” he says.

He adds that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had contributed much surplus medical and (non-lethal) military kit including night vision equipment, trench cooking equipment, warm clothing, boots, helmets, body armour and medicines.

His daughter, Danielle Edwards, who has been involved with the army cadet force all her life – as a cadet and later as an instructor with the rank of major – has also helped enormously with the MoD’s goodwill.

Antoniw said individual former members of Britain’s armed forces have been among the largest donors.

Donovan said he first became aware of Ukraine through Antoniw who he had come to know when Antoniw was the miners’ union’s solicitor solicitor. He had told Antoniw to call him if he ever needed help over in Ukraine. That’s what Antoniw did one summer Monday morning in 2022 and by the next Friday Donovan says he found himself as the co-driver of a vehicle heading on the first of his trips into Ukraine.

He explains the connections that inspired the group: “First of all there’s that inexplicable bond that exists between miners whichever country, a will to help your colleagues.

He adds: “What first struck me was the Ukrainians’ sense of resolve, a sense of quiet determination, that Ukraine would not be destroyed. And Ukrainians have a sense of humour when faced with tremendous, real risks. I think that’s fairly similar to working underground.

“In all the times I’ve been out here [Ukraine], I’ve never seen anyone cry despite all the sorrow. People have told me they will cry because they’ve lost loved ones -but only after victory comes. I wish I was that strong.”

One of the other drivers, Michaelis, says he spent a lot of time visiting relatives in communist East Berlin and felt the absence of free speech and saw how his family had to be cautious about how they acted and what they said. “That gave me an understanding of what an oppressive regime can do to people from very early on in my life.”

He recognises Ukrainians face the same crackdown on freedom if they are occupied by Putin’s forces. “If Ukraine doesn’t manage to stop Russia now, Russia may well be in Poland next and if they are there they are only 20 minutes away from my hometown of Berlin. Ukraine is fighting the fight for Europe.”

Kozak says that Ukrainians are living under conditions most of us can't even fathom. “I don’t think we can appreciate in the West, living in peace, the tension of an ongoing war with the risk of air attacks, bombing and shelling," he says. "It has been valuable to experience what Ukrainians are going through."

He adds: “I’m very impressed by the attitude of Ukrainians -they realise the risks but don’t allow the war to stop their lives or prevent them doing simple things, like going out for a beer and enjoying life. That spirit to keep going.”

Antoniw was born in England but fell in love with Wales and its culture when he studied law at Cardiff University.

He has worked hard to cultivate cultural links between Wales and Ukraine. Antoniw draws, as do Thomas and Donovan, comparisons between the suppression of the Welsh language and Moscow’s Russification program which threatened to eliminate the Ukrainian language.

Antoniw is proud Wales has welcomed 7,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, mainly women and children. Many of them have found homes in his constituency of Pontypridd. He has noticed on this trip a “gloom” among Ukrainians caused by the impasse in the US Congress that has led to a severe reduction of artillery ammunition and other supplies critical for Ukraine’s defence.

“I’ve noticed this time particularly concern but I don’t see less determination on the part of Ukrainians to carry on fighting," Antoniw says. " But the concern is to what extent can you rely on Western promises to deliver? People are being killed because promised military supplies haven’t come.”

He says he had faced criticism for spending so much time on aid for Ukraine, but responds that he uses his holiday time for the support work and “all volunteers pay for their own accommodation and food expenses so that every penny of donated money goes on aid.”

The three vehicles were handed over in Kyiv to people who in turn were driving them to military units where PRUP union miners from Pavlohrad serve.

Vitalyi Pyvovar, who picked up on of the vehicles, says some 5,000 of PRUP’s 25,000 miners are on the frontline at any time. About 400 members have been killed.

Pyvovar says: “We have had a long relationship with the Welsh miners. Many years ago they were facing hard times [because of the 1984 strike] and my father’s generation tried to help them. Now, when Ukraine is afflicted by troubles, they are helping us.”

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Labour has forced me into doing something unthinkable*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CJ-RMR1-F072-40W4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 5, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 31

**Length:** 809 words

**Byline:** HARRIET WILLIAMSON

**Body**

I'm not someone who would usually consider wasting their vote. I grew up understanding the importance of casting my ballot in elections, and was taken to polling stations in slightly smelly church halls by my parents when I only came up to their knees. I remember my dad lifting me up in the makeshift booth to look at the paper slip as he marked his cross. But faced with this year's local elections, I feel lost.

With the ongoing Partygate scandal, allegations of harassment and bullying in Westminster, sleaze, dodgy PPE contracts awarded to mates and the government's lacklustre - to put it incredibly mildly - response to the cost of living crisis, this election is a referendum on Boris Johnson and the Tories. Conservative MPs, the only people with the power to get rid of Johnson, will find out whether their leader, now widely considered to be a liar, is more of an electoral liability than an asset. The local elections are also a test for Labour under Keir Starmer, and it is here that my voting pencil falters.

When I was able to vote for the first time in 2010, I eschewed Labour for the Lib Dems in the aftermath of the Iraq war. The Lib Dems formed a coalition government with the Tories and reneged on their election promise to abolish tuition fees, tripling them instead. Under the coalition, the austerity programme of brutal cuts trashed the lives and life chances of millions of people. It's possible that I might have had some political trust issues after that.

I voted for Ed Miliband in 2015, and then for Jeremy Corbyn in two leadership and two general elections. Under Corbyn, the Labour Party had a vision for Britain and I knew exactly what its values were. With Starmer as leader, I genuinely have no idea what the party stands for. As we face a spiralling cost of living crisis, and the Tories attack our right to protest and criminalise refugees seeking safety, political values are perhaps more important than ever.

Starmer was elected Labour leader by party members on a platform of party unity and continuing the policy agenda of his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn. His 10 pledges, building on the Corbyn project, were useful in garnering member votes, but he was quick to discard them. As Aaron Bastani writes, Starmer's dishonesty is of a different breed to Boris Johnson's ridiculous, barefaced sort - but it is dishonesty nonetheless.

Over the past two years of Starmer's leadership, he has proved himself far better at attacking his own party and sacrificing the support of left-wingers and people of colour (including members, staff and MPs) than holding the increasingly shambolic and scandal-ridden Tories to account. Starmer hasn't had the media vitriol that showered his predecessor to contend with. Brexit's obviously a massive mess. Fixed penalty notices are flying all over the place. This should be a cakewalk (sorry!) for Labour.

Unfortunately, Labour feels like a party that has lost its way. The failure to back an open door policy for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was a particularly disappointing example of this. As was Starmer's professed disagreement with Amnesty International's analysis that the state of Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people amounts to apartheid.

The hope and energy that surrounded Labour with Corbyn as leader has evaporated, members have left Labour in droves and the party has undeniably shifted to the right. Starmer has gone to great lengths to distance himself from his predecessor, and Corbyn's common sense policies for tackling inequality and building a fairer Britain that doesn't operate in the interests of the privileged few have been kicked into the long grass.

One of the reasons for voter apathy in the UK may well be the poor opinion many people have of politicians - they can't be trusted and "they're all the same". Keir Starmer isn't doing much to counteract that narrative. Maybe I'm expecting too much from our political class, but leaders who will say anything depending on which way the wind is blowing and rip up their pledges as soon as they get their hands on power don't get my vote.

With the Tories in such obvious disarray, one might expect Starmer's approval ratings to be higher than 27 per cent, as of early April. Perhaps this is a product of the disdain with which left-wing voters have been treated, or the lack of a coherent vision - aside from transparent flag-waving strategies to win back people in red-wall seats, as though northern voters are easily swayed by a few union jacks and MPs in nicer suits.

If people want the Tories, they'll vote for them. Labour as a Tory-lite B team with a different colour palette doesn't promise transformative governance with a commitment to economic, social and climate justice at its heart. Do I want the Tories to do well today? Absolutely not. But I don't trust Starmer and I can't reward Labour under his leadership.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Delays processing Ukraine children's visas leave hosts 'at wits' end'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6591-1TP1-JBNF-W0YP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 23, 2022 Saturday 2:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 827 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** A group of would-be hosts will stage a vigil outside the Home Office calling for an end to "cynical and deadly" delays.

**Body**

[*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) people wishing to host ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes are "at their wits' end" because of delays processing visas for young children which are preventing families from reaching safety sooner.

Tim Boniface and his partner Jayne Coppinger are one of five households in Wysall, a village near [*Nottingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nottingham) , sponsoring Ukrainian families under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme.

After weeks of waiting they are now experiencing further delays because family members' visas are coming through at different times, despite them applying on the same day.

I am talking to my family daily, they are broken, they ask 'what is the problem?

Jayne Coppinger

The couple helped a mother and her two children apply over a month ago on March 22, but while Kataryna, 37, had her visa approved this week her four-year-old daughter and son, 14, are still waiting.

The boy is now saying he may return to his father in Ukraine because he has "no confidence in UK government to help them in their times of need".

Mr Boniface said he and his partner are "at their wits' end".

He told the PA news agency: "Jayne has constantly been working on keeping Kataryna's spirits high and thought when her visa was granted that we had finally come to an end of the turmoil, to find out that the children's visas have not been processed."

Ms Coppinger said the family has been living in temporary accommodation in Poland after fleeing Ukraine in early March, but they had to move out and seek new shelter in mid-April, which has caused them "a huge amount of distress".

Kataryna is having to inject herself with pain relief for her back, she said, describing the mother as "near breaking point with the pain, lack of sleep, uncertainty but still having to find the strength to single parent her children".

In one of several emails sent to the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) , her local MP and council, Ms Coppinger said: "I am talking to my family daily, they are broken, they ask 'what is the problem?'.

"I have no answers, but I am determined that if they do return to the Ukraine their blood will not be on my hands, as I have tried every avenue, am suffering myself with anxiety as to how to help the family.

"I have no support anywhere."

Government figures released this week show that around 71,800 visas have been issued to Ukrainians under the Family and Sponsorship schemes, but less than a third have arrived in the UK.

Another would-be host said she feels "helpless" for the Ukrainian family she is sponsoring after the mother's application was approved but her children are still waiting.

Kitty Hamilton helped Lesia, her 17-year-old son and five-year-old daughter apply for visas on March 28.

But while the mother has been given permission to travel they have been told the children's applications remain "under consideration".

Sending a photograph of her daughter to her sponsor, Lesia wrote: "This is our beloved Martha, who painted this beautiful picture of herself on a wheat field with flag of Ukraine.

"She also said that she wants peace and wants to return to home."

How would you feel as a mother who's been offered a visa while your children are 'under consideration'. I would be desperate, and I feel helpless which is why I've helped set up this vigil.

Kitty Hamilton

The family are waiting in Lviv after fleeing their home in Kyiv, and are under "enormous stress" with a recent attack occurring near where they are staying, Mrs Hamilton said.

The 53-year-old from London has organised a vigil outside the Home Office on Saturday afternoon - five weeks and one day since the Homes for Ukraine scheme started accepting visa applications - calling for an end to "cynical and deadly" delays.

The group of would-be sponsors said they are hearing stories of "lost visas", frustrations at a lack of information and MPs lobbying "fruitlessly" on behalf of their constituents.

They said they are particularly concerned about a growing number of cases where some family members have received visas while others are still waiting, despite applying at the same time.

She told PA: "How would you feel as a mother who's been offered a visa while your children are 'under consideration'.

"I would be desperate, and I feel helpless which is why I've helped set up this vigil.

"The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched with a spirit of Dunkirk bravado and actually 200,000 of us responded.

"We've already jumped through many hoops to get the visas done, have home inspections, pass DBS checks, daily emails to our MPs etc and here we are, still waiting. Where are the visas? It's that simple - where are they?"

The group intends to maintain a presence outside the Home Office every day between 2-4pm until the delays are resolved.

A government spokesman said: "The changes the Home Office has made to streamline the visa system, including simplifying the forms and boosting staff numbers, are working and we are now processing visas as quickly as they come in - enabling thousands more Ukrainians to come through our uncapped routes."

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Around one in five refugees granted Homes for Ukraine visas have arrived in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B4-0G21-JBNF-W3H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 10:11 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:6

**Length:** 842 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** As of Monday around 27,100 people had travelled to Britain under Ukraine visa schemes.

**Body**

Around a fifth of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been issued with visas under the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme have arrived in the UK, [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) figures show.

A total of 86,100 visas had been issued as of Wednesday under the Ukraine Family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme, the Government said.

But, as of Monday, just 27,100 Ukrainians had arrived in the UK, according to figures from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office).

This includes 11,110 people through the sponsorship route - 21.6% of the 51,300 people with visas granted.

Around 16,000 people have arrived under the family scheme - 45.8% of the 34,900 people issued visas.

Overall, less than a third (31.4%) of those granted visas under both schemes have arrived in the UK.

There are multiple cases where families are unable to travel to the UK because not all family members have received their permission to travel letters or visas.

There has also been widespread concern about the length of time it has taken for visas to be issued to refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Government officials believe some people applied for visas so they have the option of coming to the UK but are staying in countries bordering Ukraine so they can return home sooner.

Others may have applied but then changed their minds, deciding to stay where they are or travel elsewhere.

It must seem clear to this family that the Government here do not want them to come and the system for applying is disorganised and unhelpful

Debbie Farnfield, Ukraine family sponsor

Home Office minister [*Kevin Foster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kevin-foster) said suggestions that Ukrainian children are deliberately not being granted visas to prevent their families from travelling to the UK are "absolute nonsense".

Speaking on Thursday, Mr Foster admitted that some individuals in family groups "get a decision shortly after others in their party", adding: "But that is not a deliberate design or policy."

Overall, around 117,600 visa applications had been received as of Wednesday, including 42,900 under the family scheme and 74,700 under the sponsorship scheme.

Some 68.7% of visa applications made under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been granted, while the proportion granted under the family route is 81.4%.

Debbie Farnfield, from Marlow, Buckinghamshire, has been waiting for visas since late March for the family of five she is sponsoring who are in Poland.

The parents and two of their children were told earlier this month they could travel to Warsaw to collect their permission to travel documents, but had received no information about their five-year-old son's application.

However, when they arrived at the visa centre on Wednesday they were told they must all wait at least six weeks from when they got their biometrics done, on March 29.

Ms Farnfield, 68, said she feels "distraught" for the family, who are "very despondent".

She told the PA news agency: "It must seem clear to this family that the Government here do not want them to come and the system for applying is disorganised and unhelpful.

"How much longer must we, and others like us, apologise to these families being kept waiting in very poor conditions?"

I am so disappointed how our Government are treating people, and to be honest ashamed of being British at the moment, the whole situation is shameful

Jayne Coppinger, Ukraine family sponsor

Jayne Coppinger and her partner are one of five households in Wysall, a village near Nottingham, sponsoring families under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The couple helped a mother and her two children in Poland apply over a month ago on March 22.

Kataryna, 37, had her visa approved last week, her son, 14, received confirmation of his application on Monday, but her four-year-old daughter is still waiting.

Ms Coppinger said Kataryna, who has osteoarthritis, was admitted to hospital over the weekend after convulsing and passing out, which she believes is partly stress-related.

She said: "The stress level for the whole family, including father/husband back in Kyiv, is off the scale.

"I am feeling utterly helpless and emotionally exhausted, I am so disappointed how our Government are treating people, and to be honest ashamed of being British at the moment, the whole situation is shameful."

Katherine Klinger, a would-be host who is holding daily protests outside the Home Office over the delays, said she believes the disparity between Ukrainians arriving and the number of visas issued is largely due to family members receiving visas at different times.

She said: "I know of numerous cases in which a mother is granted a visa but not one of her children - or a child given a visa but not a parent.

"Therefore it appears as if the government is processing the visas fast and achieving high numbers but in effect families due to arrive are actually unable to travel."

A Government spokeswoman said: "We are processing thousands of visas a day - this shows the changes we made to streamline the service are working and we'll continue to build on this success so we can speed up the process even further."

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where is Transnistria? The pro-Russia breakaway region that risks being drawn into Ukraine war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659X-BS41-DY4H-K3NY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 27, 2022 Wednesday 11:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 893 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** The region in Moldova has suffered series of attacks as fears grow that it could be dragged into the conflict

**Body**

Moldova's pro-Russian breakaway region of [*Transnistria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/transnistria) suffered [*a series of explosions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/moldova-blasts-russian-breakaway-region-transnistria-b2065603.html) on Tuesday in which two radio masts in the village of Maiac, Grigoriopol, were damaged, a day after the ministry of state security in the city of Tiraspol was shelled.

No one was harmed in the blasts but the latest incidents, targeting Soviet-era anntennae that carry influential Russian broadcasts, prompted [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) to place its terror threat level on red alert following a meeting of its Security Council.

Moldova's liberal president Maia Saudu blamed the escalation of tensions on "factions from within the Transnistrian region who are pro-war forces and interested in destabilising the situation in the region" as [*Russia's war in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-news-russia-war-putin-update-b2066358.html) shows no sign of abating.

Transnistria's interior ministry has since claimed that [*one of its villages was fired upon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/moldova-ukraine-russia-transnistria-war-b2066386.html) from Ukrainian territory on Tuesday night while drones were allegedly spotted overhead.

Moldova, a nation of three million situated to the southwest of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , officially applied for [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu) membership on 3 March, as did Ukraine and Georgia, in response to [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's declaration of war. It has accepted an influx of more than 430,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the fighting commenced on 24 February, [*more per capita than any other country*](https://www.businessinsider.com/moldova-is-hosting-the-most-ukrainian-refugees-per-capita-2022-4?r=US&IR=T).

Like Ukraine, it is not a member of [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) and has a pro-Russia breakaway region in its east seeking independence - Transnistria.

That sliver of land between the east bank of the Dniester River and Moldova's border with Ukraine is home to 470,000 people and has been under the control of separatist authorities since 1992 when a conflict erupted between nationalists and those seeking to retain ties with Moscow in the wake of Moldova securing its freedom from the [*USSR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ussr).

Russia has retained a "peacekeeping" force of approximately 1,500 soldiers in Transnistria ever since, as well as a large arms depot, and its men were [*last put through their paces as recently as 2 February*](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/26/five-things-to-know-about-russian-backed-transnistria) , just three weeks before Mr Putin's "special military operation" in Ukraine began.

Transnistria is also kept on the hook economically by Russia through its provision of free natural gas, although not even Moscow recognises its claim to independence.

In fact, its hopes of statehood are only supported by three other regional breakaways with aspirations of their own: Abkhazia, Artsakh and South Ossetia.

But the absence of Nato's protective embrace does leave Moldova vulnerable in the event that Mr Putin should demonstrate any further expansionist ambitions and fears persist that Russia could be tempted to make such a move in order to provide it with a new platform from which to attack Ukraine from the west.

At present, Russia's military efforts remain concentrated on the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, and any potential move for Transnistria is currently considered unlikely given that it would require the conquest of Odesa first as Russia seeks to extend its land bridge across the south of the country.

But both Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and Russian deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko expressed their "concern" about the blasts on Tuesday, which Ukraine's foreign ministry claims represent a "planned provocation by the Russian special services" to draw Transnistria into the current conflict.

Denis Pushilin, leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), has meanwhile told RIA Novosti that the Kremlin should "take into account what is happening in Transnistria" when planning its campaign's next moves.

The prelude to Mr Putin's war in Ukraine saw the Russian president move to officially recognise the DPR and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) in the Donbas as independent nation states, declaring that its people were under attack from government forces and giving him a pretext to move Russian forces on to Ukrainian soil openly for the first time, having previously been satisfied to feed rebel fighters in the DPR and LPR with weapons and funding only, in the interest of plausible deniability.

Whether he might eventually be tempted to pull off a similar gambit in Moldova remains to be seen but appears all too possible.

The deputy commander of Russia's central military district, major general Rustam Minnekayev, was quoted last week by state news agencies as saying that his invading forces ultimately aimed to take full control of southern Ukraine, giving it access to Transnistria.

And, a week into Russia's war, a video emerged that showed Mr Putin meeting with his Belarussian opposite number [*Alexander Lukashenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexander-lukashenko) standing next to a map that [*appeared to suggest that Transnistria was a potential target*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/lukashenko-ukraine-russia-belarus-invasion-map-b2026440.html) , although Minsk moved hurriedly to insist the prop was inaccurate.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*British national killed and second missing in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B5-0MP1-JBNF-W2FD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 3:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 822 words

**Byline:** Aine Fo

**Highlight:** The families of both Britons are being supported.

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) national has been killed in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and a second is missing.

The families of both British nationals are being supported, a spokesperson at the Foreign Office said.

No further details were given.

Sky News reported that the pair may have been volunteers fighting against Russian forces, but this has not been confirmed.

In a statement the Foreign Office said: "We can confirm that a British national has been killed in Ukraine and are supporting their family."

On the missing person, the spokesperson said: "We are aware of a British national who is missing in Ukraine and are supporting their family. We are urgently seeking further information."

A small number of serving British personnel are believed to have gone absent without leave to join the resistance against the Russian invasion, while veterans and [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) without combat experience are thought to have also travelled to Ukraine.

There was initially confusion on the Government's position after Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) , in comments during an interview to the BBC on February 26, said she would "absolutely" support UK nationals who chose to fight for Ukraine.

However, she later rowed back on those comments, insisting she had been "expressing support for the Ukrainian cause" in her remarks, and that there are "better ways" to contribute to the country's defence.

Veterans minister Leo Docherty has previously written to armed forces charities to encourage those tempted to travel to the war zone to turn their efforts to helping the Ukrainian people from the UK.

Meanwhile, the latest Government figures show that around a fifth of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have been issued with visas under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have arrived in the UK.

A total of 86,100 visas had been issued as of Wednesday under the Ukraine Family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme, the Government said.

But, as of Monday, just 27,100 Ukrainians had arrived in the UK, according to figures from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office.

Overall, less than a third (31.4%) of those granted visas under both schemes have arrived in the UK.

There are multiple cases where families are unable to travel to the UK because not all family members have received their permission to travel letters or visas.

There has also been widespread concern about the length of time it has taken for visas to be issued to refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

A Government spokeswoman said: "We are processing thousands of visas a day - this shows the changes we made to streamline the service are working and we'll continue to build on this success so we can speed up the process even further."

We've constantly said that Russia should leave Ukraine sovereign territory so that hasn't changed

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace

Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) has said Britain and its allies need to help prise Russian forces out of Ukraine like "a limpet off the rock".

Mr Wallace said the UK would continue to supply weapons to the government in Kyiv and was looking at the options for providing anti-ship missiles.

The UK Ministry of Defence said despite the losses of the cruiser Moskva and the landing ship Saratov, Russia's Black Sea Fleet retained the ability to strike targets in Ukraine.

In its latest intelligence assessment it said the Russian navy has around 20 vessels in the area, including submarines.

Mr Wallace said it was vital that Ukraine, as a major grain producer, continued to have access to the Black Sea as an outlet for its exports.

"We have said we will source and supply, if we can, anti-ship missiles," he told Sky News.

"It's incredibly important that the grain that affects us all, the food prices, does get to get out of Ukraine, that the Russians can't control the Black Sea."

In a keynote speech on Wednesday, Ms Truss said the objective should be to drive Russia out of "the whole of Ukraine".

Mr Wallace said it had always been the position of the international community that Russia should withdraw from Ukrainian territory since President Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea.

However, he said there was "a long way to go" before the Ukrainians were able to reclaim the land lost in 2014.

He said the Russians appeared to be preparing to dig in to the territory they seized in the east of the country in their latest invasion.

"We've constantly said that Russia should leave Ukraine sovereign territory so that hasn't changed," he said.

"I think it's certainly the case that Putin, having failed in nearly all objectives, may seek to consolidate what he's got, sort of fortify and dig in, as he did in 2014, and just be a sort of cancerous growth within the country of Ukraine and make it very hard for people to move them out of those fortified positions," he said.

"So I think it's really about, if we want this to not happen, we have to help Ukrainians effectively get the limpet off the rock and keep the momentum pushing them back."

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How to send quick funds to family or friends in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656W-CK01-F072-400K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 13, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** MONEY; Pg. 47

**Length:** 809 words

**Byline:** REBECCA GOODMAN

**Body**

It has been almost two months since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and millions of people have been forced to flee their homes for safety. In the UK, several large campaigns have been organised to raise money for those affected, and the scheme for sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is under way.

But if you wish to support a friend or family member instead of donating to a large fundraiser, you'll want to be sure the money gets to them directly, securely and, crucially, as quickly as possible. In a world of online banking and money transfer apps, you might assume this would be relatively straightforward - especially given the quickly evolving situation in Ukraine and the urgent need for many to receive money for living costs or escaping the country.

When Simon Teale, 56, tried to send £100 to his friend living in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, he was surprised to find he was refused for procedural reasons that remain frustratingly unclear and ill-defined. He tried to use his banking app at first, but was told no international transfers could be made this way.

Next, he spoke to First Direct and a call centre operator said she couldn't make the transfer. He was called back the next day by the bank's 'account review team' and was asked for some more details, including the reason for the transfer and the payee's address.

Simon, a management consultant from Stratford-Upon-Avon, was then told the transfer would need to be checked and he would be contacted. He was told there are "strict guidelines to adhere to, especially if any payment is connected to a sensitive or selective sanctioned country," and that the payment was being assessed by HSBC, which owns First Direct.

Yet despite chasing this up, Simon, a First Direct customer for 30 years, didn't hear back. After several calls, he was told over a week later the payment would not go through. The situation in Ukraine was getting worse by the hour, and being able to get the money transferred became more and more urgent.

A direct reason wasn't given for the payment being declined, but he assumed it was because of issues with the ongoing conflict in the Donetsk region. While checks are in place for good reason, especially with sensitive transfers, what isn't clear is why it took over a week for a decision to be made, why it was left to Simon to do the legwork chasing First Direct for a response or why such a small amount was rejected.

"There should be a de minimis consideration, given the small sum involved - it's not like I'm sending the proceeds from selling Chelsea football club," said Simon.

First Direct did not provide a comment or explanation as to why the payment wasn't allowed, but said it had advised the customer as to the reason why it was not possible to make this international payment. When asked if international transfers were possible for anyone with a UK First Direct account to someone with a Ukrainian bank account, it did not provide a response.

Even more confusingly he attempted the transfer with Paypal - which is linked to his First Direct debit card - since then, and it was successful. UK Finance, the trade association for the UK banking and financial services sector, told The Independent international transfers were still being processed between UK and Ukraine banks.

A spokesperson for UK Finance said: "Anyone who wishes to transfer money from the UK to Ukraine should speak to their bank or payment provider who will be able to advise them on the options available."

There are lots of different ways to send money to those in need. You can try to make a payment via a UK bank. Many banks have specific information available online about transferring money to Ukraine. Lloyds, for example, confirmed that its customers could make transfers to Ukraine bank accounts. On these, the £9.50 fee would be refunded.

There are usually set fees for making international transfers, which can either be a percentage of the total amount or a flat fee. These are based on the sender and recipient's banks, the countries involved, and how much money is being transferred.

Payments via Paypal are another option, and these can usually be done with an email address or phone number. It costs five per cent of the transaction amount. The minimum fee is 99p and the maximum is £2.99. Several money transfer services also exist. Wise, previously known as Transferwise, confirmed transfers were possible from the UK to Ukraine, and sending £100 would incur a fee of 98p.

A Wise spokesperson said: "We're working hard to keep the route to Ukraine open, and as long as we are able to do so, we will continue providing our service to people needing to send money to Ukraine."

Money transfers are also possible via Western Union and MoneyGram, which can be made at the Post Office. Fees for these transfers have currently been waived if they're being made to someone in Ukraine.

**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How to get money to family or friends in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656S-9511-JBNF-W0GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 12, 2022 Tuesday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 807 words

**Byline:** Rebecca Goodman

**Highlight:** Millions of pounds have been raised for those affected by the Ukraine war but if you want to send money to someone you know, be prepared for a confused and confusing process. Rebecca Goodman reports

**Body**

It has been almost two months since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and millions of people have been forced to flee their homes for safety.

In the UK, several large campaigns have been organised to raise money for those affected and the scheme for sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is under way.

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**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Killing of Ukrainian civilians likely to be war crime, says Coveney*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6575-7BR1-DY4H-K2BN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 14, 2022 Thursday 2:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Mr Coveney was speaking during a visit to Kyiv on Thursday.

**Body**

The killing of Ukrainian civilians by Russian forces is likely to be a war crime, Ireland's Foreign Minister [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) has said.

Mr Coveney was speaking during a visit to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) on Thursday.

He was visiting areas in the Ukrainian capital directly affected by the Russian invasion, and meeting Ukraine's foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba and defence minister Oleksii Reznikov.

Mr Coveney said the visit took around ten days to arrange.

Speaking during a press conference with Mr Kuleba, Mr Coveney said it was a privilege to be with him and said he brought a strong message of solidarity from the Irish Government and people.

Mr Coveney also said Ireland is pushing for a "maximalist" package of sanctions against Russia.

Minister [*@simoncoveney*](https://twitter.com/simoncoveney?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is currently meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister [*@DmytroKuleba*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) in Kyiv.Ireland will continue to support [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) in response to Russia's unjustified invasion [*pic.twitter.com/IE2TKGuxUz*](https://t.co/IE2TKGuxUz) - Irish Foreign Ministry (@dfatirl) [*April 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/dfatirl/status/1514524730824568837?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He told the press conference he wanted to bring the "madness" of the war to an end."I also bring condolences. We don't know yet how many citizens have lost their lives due to this Russian aggression but we know it is many, and the brutality and violence, not only against soldiers, but against Ukrainian civilians is something that is likely to be determined as war crimes in the future."I am also conscious at this time that Ukraine does not want sympathy, it needs action and strong practical support in defending yourselves, and even though Ireland is militarily neutral, let me be clear we are not neutral on this war and conflict and the future of your country."Ireland has contributed 20 million euro (£16.5 million) to Ukraine and committed 33 million euro (£27.3 million) in military assistance and we are strongly advocating for a maximalist approach in sanctions against Russia as a deterrent in this war, and we believe we need to move beyond what has been agreed, to include oil embargo in a sixth package of sanctions.We believe that the most powerful countries in the world are accountable to international law and the atrocities against Ukraine citizens need to be part of a process to ensure full accountabilityIrish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney"We know Ukrainians dream of a different type of future, one that is based on democracy, stability and economic opportunity, and we believe those things can be achieved through full EU membership and Ireland will advocate that it happens as rapidly as possible."We believe that the most powerful countries in the world are accountable to international law and the atrocities against Ukraine citizens need to be part of a process to ensure full accountability."He is the first foreign minister on the [*UN Security Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un-security-council) to visit Kyiv since the war began.His visit came as Mr Coveney announced three million euro (£2.5 million) in funding to the International Criminal Court, with one million euro to be dispersed immediately to the office of the prosecutor.Mr Coveney's counterpart, Mr Kuleba, praised his bravery in visiting Ukraine.He said Ireland was among the first countries to extend its support to people fleeing the war.Met with [*@KarimKhanQC*](https://twitter.com/KarimKhanQC?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , Prosecutor of the [*@IntlCrimCourt*](https://twitter.com/IntlCrimCourt?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). We are unanimous that the investigation of russian war crimes must result in prosecution and sentencing. Once a lawyer -always a lawyer. Our joint efforts will bring justice. [*pic.twitter.com/wBL3GeVvc9*](https://t.co/wBL3GeVvc9) - Oleksii Reznikov (@oleksiireznikov) [*April 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/oleksiireznikov/status/1514580540191617025?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Speaking through an interpreter, Mr Kuleba said he was grateful for Ireland's support and 20 million euro in humanitarian support and assistance, as well as ambulances and medicines.

Mr Coveney also visited the ravaged town of [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha) , where suspected killings of civilians were uncovered.

He was given a tour of the city with Ukrainian special forces and the Garda Emergency Response Unit, and laid flowers at a memorial wall in Kyiv.

Mr Coveney said there has been "mass murder" of civilians in Ukrainian towns.

He said Bucha has been "completely devastated" and its "population ravaged" in recent weeks.

"It's a bit like Sutton is to Dublin, or Carrigaline is to [*Cork*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cork) , a large town on the outskirts of a big city, completely destroyed.

"If anybody tells me that that's not a crime, or a crime against humanity, well I need to be convinced.

"We are certainly ensuring that there will be an international legal infrastructure that can fully investigate all of those crimes."

A statement from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said: "His discussions with the Ukrainian government will focus on how Ireland can continue to provide political, security and humanitarian support to Ukraine, assist Ukraine in its application for EU candidate status, take forward further EU sanctions on Russia and hold Russia to account for its brutal and unjustified invasion."

Ireland has provided 20 million euro in humanitarian aid to the country and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in neighbouring counties, and 33 million euro in non-lethal assistance for the Ukrainian military through the European Peace Facility.

The DFA statement added: "Ireland has been at the forefront of putting in place a robust EU sanctions regime and of supporting international mechanisms to hold Russia to account for grave violations of international humanitarian law, including referring the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court."

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What to know as UK hosts Eurovision Song Contest for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686B-16F1-DY4H-K36R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 9, 2023 Tuesday 3:35 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1006 words

**Byline:** Jill Lawless

**Highlight:** The Eurovision Song Contest is returning to the U.K. for the first time in 25 years, but its heart will be in Ukraine

**Body**

Last week, Britain crowned a king. This week, it will help bestow Europe’s pop crown.

The Eurovision Song Contest is returning to the U.K. this week for the first time in 25 years, but the heart of the glitzy music competition will be in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Britain is hosting the event on behalf of the war-battered country, and organizers have vowed to make it a celebration of Ukrainian spirit and culture.

The contest will see musical acts from 37 countries perform original songs in the English city of Liverpool, with semi-finals Tuesday and Thursday and a grand final on Saturday watched by an estimated 160 million people.

For fans and first-timers alike, here’s an essential Eurovision guide:

WHAT IS EUROVISION, ANYWAY?

First staged in 1956, Eurovision was founded to help unite a shattered continent after World War II and to test nascent live-broadcasting technology.

Initially a sedate affair featuring crooners in ballgowns and tuxedos, it began to let its hair down during the swinging 60s and reached pop perfection in 1974, when ABBA won with “Waterloo,” propelling the band toward superstardom and jump-starting Sweden’s music industry.

Since then, the contest has expanded across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and beyond – Israel and Australia are both entrants – with ever-more elaborate staging and eye-popping costumes.

Eurovision also has become a celebration of diversity, with a huge LGBTQ+ following that celebrated when Israel’s Dana International became the contest’s first transgender winner in 1998.

Above all, the competition is a crash course in the continent's wonderfully varied musical tastes. Winners have ranged from Canadian chanteuse [*Celine Dion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/celine-dion) , who competed for Switzerland in 1988, to fright mask-wearing Finnish metalheads Lordi in 2006 and bearded Austrian drag performer Conchita Wurst in 2014.

Last year, Ukrainian folk-rap band Kalush Orchestra triumphed, delivering a morale boost for a country battling [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion.

Paul Jordan, an expert on the contest who is known as “Dr. Eurovision,” said the competition has become a treasured part of European culture.

“You can go to Spain, Slovenia, wherever --everyone’s heard of it,” he said. “They may not love it, they may not like it, they may not watch it, but everyone’s heard of it. Everyone’s got an opinion. I think it’s really powerful, and it’s a brilliant icebreaker.”

WHERE POP MEETS POLITICS

Eurovision is about much more than music. It’s diplomacy with a disco beat, a forum in which countries can boost their profiles and play out regional rivalries.

Organizers strive to keep pop and politics apart; overtly political symbols and lyrics are prohibited. But global tensions have often imposed themselves on the contest. Ukraine has several times used its entries to criticize Russia, winning in 2016 with a song about the expulsion of Crimea’s Tatars by Stalin in 1944.

Russia was banned from the contest last year after it invaded Ukraine. Belarus had been kicked out the previous year over its government’s clampdown on dissent.

Dean Vuletic, an academic expert on Eurovision, said that by banning Russia, Eurovision lost one of its biggest national audiences and “one of its most enthusiastic participants.”

“But Eurovision is also a platform on which values are expressed, around which values are constructed,” Vuletic said, and pressure from member nations forced the European Broadcasting Union, which runs Eurovision, to act.

Eurovision “has always reflected cultural, political and social change in Europe,” he said. “(It’s) a way to measure the zeitgeist in Europe.”

A MUSICAL MELANGE

Eurovision was long associated with fluffy 3-minute pop songs — previous winners include the likes of “La, La, La” and “Boom Bang-a-Bang.”

But Vuletic says it’s no longer “the contest with silly songs, innocuous lyrics that it perhaps used to be.” He says a third of this year’s entries deal lyrically with “toxic relationships, anxiety” and other mental-health issues. Another batch of songs are about war.

Musically, contestants range from pop ballads like “Power” by Iceland’s Diljá and relationship-breakup dance track “I Wrote a Song” by Britain’s Mae Muller to the electronica of “Heart of Steel” by Ukraine’s Tvorchi. Austrian duo Teya & Salena offer an offbeat tribute to Edgar Allen Poe, “Who the Hell is Edgar?” while Croatia’s Let 3 belts out antiwar rock opera “Mama ŠÄ&Oelig;!”

Eurovision’s complex voting system, which awards points from juries of music industry professionals as well as viewers across Europe, makes winners notoriously hard to predict.

Bookmakers’ favorites include Finnish entry Käärijä’s pop-metal party tune “Cha Cha Cha” and power ballad “Tattoo” by Sweden’s Loreen, who previously won the contest in 2012. Singer La Zarra, competing for France, is also highly ranked for her Edith Piaf-esque chanson “Évidemment.”

U.K.-UKRAINE FUSION

The U.K. stepped in to host the contest for Ukraine after last year's British entry, Sam Ryder, finished second. As Ryder put it: “It’s Ukraine’s party. We’re just inviting them to throw it at our house.”

The final will be co-hosted by Ukrainian singer Julia Sanina and will feature a performance by Kalush Orchestra and other representatives of Ukrainian culture. Several thousand ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Britain received tickets to attend.

Ryder’s strong showing last year with “Spaceman” helped transform Eurovision’s image in the U.K. Long viewed as a guilty pleasure – amid perennial grumbling over the country’s poor results --it now a source of pride and celebration.

Several U.K. cities competed to host the event, and winner Liverpool is in party mood. The port city that gave birth to The Beatles went through tough times as U.K. industry collapsed in the late 20th century. It has since reinvented itself as a hub for sports, culture and tourism – a resilience that fits well with Ukraine, Jordan says.

“It’s a real creative hub, and I think it’s going to be a brilliant host city — apart from the weather,” he said.

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For more [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) coverage of Eurovision, visit [*https://apnews.com/hub/eurovision-song-contest*](https://apnews.com/hub/eurovision-song-contest)

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Voices: There's a stark contrast between media coverage of Ukraine and Palestine - have you noticed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-8H91-DY4H-K0WW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 12:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 870 words

**Byline:** Rafeef Ziadah

**Highlight:** Palestinians already know the extent to which we are dehumanised and our narrative marginalised, but watching the Ukraine coverage has served as a reminder of the disparity and double standards, writes Rafeef Ziadah

**Body**

Like everyone watching the news over the last month, I have been deeply moved by scenes of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing the violence in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , and the destruction visited upon Ukrainian towns and cities.

As someone who has worked with refugees all my life, such images are unfortunately not unfamiliar to me. The biggest surprise, however, has been how such appalling events are reported.

Not long ago, refugees from countries like Iraq and Syria were attempting to cross the English Channel live on British television. This dehumanising spectacle was accompanied by senior politicians competing for who could sound "'toughest" in the face of this "threat".

Now, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being offered the dignified media coverage they undoubtedly deserve - coverage that has long been denied to those coming from countries which may be further away, but where British institutions and arms companies have been and currently are very much present.

I am Palestinian and, like so many other Palestinians, I have been astonished at the contrast in media coverage. Indeed, this topic of conversation comes up almost daily among Palestinians watching events unfold in Ukraine.

We know what it's like to be invaded, bombarded and occupied - we also know what it's like to mobilise, resist, and appeal for solidarity. What we have not experienced, particularly from western media outlets, is comparable supportive coverage.

A year ago, Palestinians were out in the streets of Jerusalem, raising their voices and putting their bodies on the line in protest at plans to expel yet more Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah.

Over the following weeks, Israeli occupation forces brutalised Palestinians in Jerusalem's Old City and inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound - and then, in the Gaza Strip, as high-tech missiles and bombs rained down on the occupied, blockaded and fenced-in enclave.

Palestinians have seen multiple, devastating offensives such as this. For those on the receiving end, it is an overwhelming horror. For those watching from a distance, there is the trauma of watching video clips of destruction - and anger at the dehumanisation of the occupied.

The Israeli army's talking points - created purely to justify and excuse killing and destruction - are uncritically repeated, rather than being treated with the derision they deserve.

Even when the Israeli army's talk of "human shields" or "targeting terrorists" is called into question, western media so often frames the events as two "equal sides" trapped in a "cycle of violence". But just because Israeli authorities have developed reams of legal-sounding excuses for bombing families as they sit in their homes, this doesn't diminish the atrocity of what is happening.

In the western media's coverage of the war in Ukraine, there is a clear framework of invader and invaded, occupier and occupied. Every particular development - from Russian military actions to Ukrainians taking up arms - is reported on through this basic framework.

But when it comes to [*Palestine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/palestine) , and a decades-old, exhaustively documented regime of colonialism, military rule and apartheid, we hear the same tired refrain of "this is too complicated".

This double standard has not just been played out in the media, of course. Palestinians have also watched as states and institutions have leapt to impose sanctions and other punitive measures against Russia - including the same politicians who stigmatise our appeals for boycotts as counterproductive and the same universities who dismiss our calls to end complicity in Israeli apartheid.

Indeed, the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) compares favourably - with respect to its careful, complicity-focused moral integrity - to some of the confused steps taken by way of protesting Russia's invasion.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Palestinians already know all too well the extent to which we are dehumanised and our narrative marginalised or mocked in western media - but watching the Ukraine coverage has served as a truly stark reminder of the disparity and double standards.

As has been widely noted on social media, the disparity in coverage of Ukraine versus Palestine (and other countries) has actually been highlighted - uncritically and unintentionally - by a number of western journalists in explicitly racialised terms. War is callously described as something inherent to the Middle East - atrocities happen over there, not here.

But it is not just about skin colour and Ukrainians "looking like Europeans". The double standard is also a reflection of western foreign policy, and the ways in which such policies and priorities can be reflected in media coverage.

While my thoughts continue to be with all refugees fleeing violence, I hope that Palestinian demands - of governments and of journalists - will now be heeded to end complicity in Israeli apartheid and cover, compassionately and fairly, our struggle for freedom.

Dr Rafeef Ziadah is Palestinian poet and a lecturer in politics and public policy at Kings College London

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ministers urged to remove 'needless bureaucracy' from Ukraine refugee scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6555-M4X1-F072-43CW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 5, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 845 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ministers are being urged to remove "needless bureaucracy" from refugee schemes for Ukrainians as it emerged those who have fled war are now facing destitution in Britain.

Calls are mounting for the government to allow refugees to apply to the Homes for Ukraine scheme from within the UK, and to provide local authorities with funding for those arriving under the family scheme, for which there is currently no support.

It has emerged that many of those who have arrived in recent weeks, both under the Home Office's family scheme and those without visas - who have ususally travelled through Ireland to reach the UK - are struggling to access housing, as well as having difficulties opening bank accounts, claiming benefits and getting their children into schools.

Some have inadvertently ended up in the UK asylum system, meaning they are denied the right to work and given little or no support money. Others had intended to stay with family but found that their relatives do not have space to house them, and had to register as homeless.

Despite the fact that 200,000 people in Britain have offered to host refugees under the Homes for Ukraine scheme - which enables Ukrainians to be housed by UK sponsors - a rule preventing people from applying to it once they are in Britain means they cannot benefit from these offers. Councils and charities are instead "scrambling" to house and support them.

Only 5,200 people have so far been granted visas under the Homes for Ukraine scheme out of 32,000 who have applied, of which 500 have actually reached the UK, according to figures from last Friday.

It comes as The Independent revealed that the Home Office has shut down parts of its ordinary immigration and visa system - reallocating resources to deal with its bureaucratic Ukraine scheme.

Travellers report that priority and super-priority visas are not currently available and ministers have apologised for "any inconvenience caused". Standard visas from elsewhere are also subject to delays.

Shadow levelling up secretary Lisa Nandy accused ministers of "wasting the amazing generosity" of people who have offered to open their homes to refugees, and called the inability to move between the schemes "needlessly bureaucratic".

"Councils, charities and ordinary people have stepped up in Ukraine's hour of need. They urgently need more information and support," she told The Independent.

Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action, said the fact that Ukrainians arriving under the family visa scheme were falling into homelessness and destitution "completely undermines the protection this government says it is offering to those fleeing Russian bombs".

He said the "simple solution" was to urgently allow Ukrainians already in the UK to apply for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which would "immediately open up funding to local authorities to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that need it".

Figures released by the Local Government Association (LGA) this week revealed that at least 144 newly arrived Ukrainian households have presented as homeless in the UK since the start of the war.

Oleksandr Polishchuk, a volunteer at Support Ukraine, a charity in London, said it was helping dozens of refugees who were struggling to access basic services on arrival to Britain.

"In many cases they don't have cash, they don't speak English. It's complicated. Sometimes they need housing, they need clothing. In most cases they've come with a bag, but not much," he said. "Some need medication and they don't know where to get it from. People are struggling to get their kids into schools. They don't know how to apply for benefits. The language barrier is huge."

He called on the government to enable people already in the UK to switch to the sponsorship scheme: "There are tons of people who will take them. This is a nation which gave the Kindertransport. We're in that situation. There are so many people who want to help.

"Ukrainians don't want to be a burden. They didn't come here to be on benefits. They want to work, they want to earn their keep. A lot of people would apply to the sponsorship scheme if they could."

A government spokesperson said: "Everyone coming to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine family scheme will have access to healthcare, education, benefits and job support on the same footing as UK nationals.

"These schemes are designed to ensure people who are coming to the UK fleeing the Russian invasion are provided with accommodation by their family or sponsor, and are only open to those applying from outside of the UK."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*World news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-2Y81-JCS0-D44K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 26, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 24

**Length:** 933 words

**Body**

Great Barrier Reef hit by fresh bleaching

Australia's Great Barrier Reef is suffering from its sixth mass bleaching event since 1998, and the second since 2020. Officials said yesterday that it has occurred due to rising temperatures. The world's largest natural reef system is struggling against global warming and ocean acidification. Aerial surveys of 750 reefs showed widespread bleaching taking place, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) and Australian Institute of Marine Science confirmed. "The bleaching observed from the air was largely consistent with the spatial distribution of the heat stress experienced," the GBRMPA said in a statement.

Reefs are bleached when stressed coral ejects algae from within its tissue, depriving it of a food source. Coral can starve and die by turning white as its carbonate skeleton is exposed if conditions do not improve. Officials said that bleaching was observed in multiple parts of the reef's four management areas. In a statement, the Australian Conservation Foundation said it was a blow to the "tourism industry ??? and to everyone who loves this incredible natural wonder". The Great Barrier Reef stretches 2,300km down the Queensland coast in Australia and attracts more than 3 million tourists every year.

India's ties with China 'disturbed' by border standoff

India's foreign minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said his country's relationship with China cannot return to normal as bilateral ties remain "disturbed" because of a contested border area. In a press conference after a three-hour meeting with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi yesterday, Dr Jaishankar said he was "very honest" in discussing India's issues with Mr Wang over an almost two-year border standoff in the Himalayan region. "Frictions, tensions arising from China's deployments since April 2020 cannot be reconciled with a normal relationship between two neighbours," Dr Jaishankar said. The two Asian powers positioned weaponry and soldiers in several locations in the northern Himalayan region of Ladakh in June 2020. The situation has spiralled into a string of violent clashes.

Mr Wang landed in New Delhi late on Thursday evening after visiting India's rival Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Dr Jaishankar said more work was needed to improve relations between Delhi and Beijing. "If you ask me if our relationship today is normal, then my answer is, 'No, it is not normal'. Our effort today is to sort out the issue in its entirety," he added. In a statement, Mr Wang urged India and China to speak in one voice for the world to listen and resolve differences.

Belarus president and family sanctioned by Australia

Australia has imposed sanctions against Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko, members of his family, and 22 Russians in its latest action condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Marise Payne, the minister for foreign affairs, said the measures had been imposed on Russian "propagandists and disinformation operatives" including senior editors from organisations such as Russia Today, the Strategic Culture Foundation, InfoRos and NewsFront. Belarus, the authoritarian state lying to the north of Ukraine, has supported Vladimir Putin's invasion. The Australian government has now sanctioned a total of 32 pro-Kremlin propagandists "reflecting the strategic importance of disinformation in Russia's attempts to legitimise Putin's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine", Ms Payne said yesterday.

Australia imposed sanctions on Mr Lukashenko and his family members for their continuous "strategic support to Russia and its military forces in their assault on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine", a statement added. Sanctions have also been placed on the president's wife, Galina Lukashenko, and their son Viktor, who previously held senior national security roles in the Belarusian government.

Polish president in plane scare

A plane carrying Andrzej Duda was yesterday forced to make an emergency landing as the Polish president travelled to meet Joe Biden. Mr Duda had been flying to meet his US counterpart in the southeast city of Rzeszow when a defect caused the Polish air force aircraft to return to Warsaw. The head of Mr Duda's office, Pawel Szrot, said the Polish leader did not face any danger and later boarded a different aircraft and headed back to Rzeszow. Mr Biden has travelled to Poland to get a firsthand look at international efforts to help some of the millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the Russian invasion in their country, and to speak to American troops bolstering Nato's eastern flank. TV footage showed him sharing pizza and chatting with several military personnel.

India denies entry to UK scholar

India has deported a renowned University of Sussex anthropologist without giving an official reason for doing so. Filippo Osella, an anthropologist and scholar, was hoping to attend a conference yesterday in Thiruvananthapuram city, located in the southern Indian Kerala state, about its traditional coastal communities. Local media reported that he was denied entry after his arrival at the international airport in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. "He was denied entry as per orders from higher officials. No reason can be revealed," an immigration officer at the airport's Foreigners Regional Registration Office, was quoted as saying by the Indian Express newspaper.

Dr Osella also confirmed to Indian Express via an email from the Dubai airport where he was awaiting a flight back to the UK, that he had been deported from India. He said the authorities did not give him any explanation.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK seeks to hit Kremlin with ban on exporting luxury goods to Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-3811-JBNF-W422-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 1:38 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 832 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** G7 leaders have agreed to take steps to deny Russia 'most favoured nation' status on key products.

**Body**

The Government is intending to further ramp up pressure on the Kremlin with plans to ban exports of luxury goods to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in the latest move to isolate Vladimir Putin.

Details of the plans will be set out in the coming days, Downing Street said.

It came as [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) joined with other G7 leaders on Friday to commit to further increase the pressure on the Russian president's regime.

The group agreed to take steps to deny Russia "most favoured nation" status on key products, which No 10 said would significantly reduce the ability of Russian businesses to export.

Sharing the news on Friday evening, Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said the UK stood "united with our G7 partners", and would "continue strengthening our response" to put a halt to Russia's aggression against its neighbour.

But Labour said the ban on luxury goods "should not have taken this long".

Nick Thomas-Symonds, Labour's shadow international trade secretary, said: "Labour has been calling for weeks now for a ban on luxury goods being sent to Russia, so it is welcome that the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) have finally listened - but it should not have taken this long.

We stand united with our G7 partners and we will continue strengthening our response to stop Putin's invasion of Ukraine [*https://t.co/LO89n5QeuR*](https://t.co/LO89n5QeuR) - Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 11, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1502361625701109773?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"We cannot allow Putin, and his cronies in Moscow, to live a Mayfair lifestyle while they kill innocent people in their illegal invasion of Ukraine."

The announcement follows Britain's sanctioning of nearly 400 Russian parliamentarians, with ministers seeking to "tighten the screw" on Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine.

Earlier on Friday, Ms Truss said 386 members of the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, would be banned from travelling to the UK and any assets they had in the country would be frozen.

The Government originally announced its intention to sanction the parliamentarians last month over their support for the Ukrainian breakaway regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

Meanwhile, former Tory foreign secretary [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) argued the Russian invasion of Ukraine was "the biggest failure of Western foreign and security policy in our lifetimes".

Writing in The Daily Telegraph, he said: "It happened because we forgot the most fundamental lesson of the Cold War: the power of deterrence."

He added: "Instead of peace through strength we caused war through weakness."

Mr Hunt also suggested the UK should increase spending on "defence, aid and soft power" to at least 4% of GDP over the next decade.

The Government was also reported to have come under fire from French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday for its policy on taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

According to the Guardian, at the end of an EU summit in Versailles Mr Macron said insisting visa applications to the UK were made in person in Brussels and Paris had further exacerbated circumstances for those fleeing the war.

On Thursday, Home Secretary Priti Patel announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.

In response to Mr Macron's reported remarks, the Home Office pointed to previous comments from Ms Patel, which stated: "We are now making the process quicker and simpler by removing the need to physically visit visa application centres for many of those who are making the perilous journey across Europe."

In an update on Friday evening, the Ministry of Defence said in the past 24 hours Russian air and missile forces had conducted strikes against the western Ukrainian cities of Lutsk and Ivano-Frankivsk.

Earlier, the UK's permanent representative to the United Nations accused Russia of bringing about "wild, completely baseless and irresponsible conspiracy theories".

It came as the UN security council met at Russia's request to discuss claims levelled by Moscow about biological activities in Ukraine.

Dame Barbara Woodward said Russia must not be allowed to "abuse its permanent seat" on the council "to spread disinformation and lies".

Prime Minister Johnson has previously expressed fears Russia is spreading a "fake story" that the US or the Ukrainians have chemical weapons in Ukraine as a pretext for an atrocity.

The Ukraine crisis is expected to be a topic for discussion when Mr Johnson meets Irish premier Micheal Martin for talks on Saturday.

The sanctioning of nearly 400 Russian parliamentarians in the Duma on Friday followed the announcement on Thursday that seven more oligarchs linked to Vladimir Putin, including Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich, were being subjected to similar measures.

The Duma move was first announced on February 22 and ministers are yet to target all the members of the Federation Council, the Russian parliament's upper house.

The UK has now sanctioned more than 500 high-value individuals and entities since the invasion of Ukraine began, while Russian aircraft - including oligarchs' private jets - are banned from the UK.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: The Tories are blaming everyone but themselves over the refugee crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650Y-RX31-DY4H-K10X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 12:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 836 words

**Byline:** Andrew Grice

**Highlight:** 'Ministers are still fighting like rats in a sack,' one Whitehall source said. 'There is no overall plan; they are competing for headlines'

**Body**

The public's remarkable response to the scheme to take ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) into their homes, with more than [*120,000 people registering*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ed-davey-ukraine-government-uk-government-liberal-democrat-b2036727.html) on the [*Homes for Ukraine*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/) website, shows how out of touch the government was in its slow, grudging reaction to the migration crisis.

A blame game is now underway inside the government. Ministers blame civil servants, notably at the Home Office, while officials rightly reply that the culture is set at the top by the politicians. In fact, both groups should have prepared for this emergency, since the US and UK had been warning them for weeks that Russia planned to invade Ukraine.

[*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's initial response was poor and reflected the "keep them out" mindset of the Brexiteers, which translated on Ukraine into "keep the numbers down" - harsh and totally wrong in a war.

Some Tory MPs believe ministers suspect the generous public mood in the heat of the Ukraine battle might not last, and that they fear Boris Johnson's strategy of never being outflanked on the right might be in danger. Indeed, Nigel Farage is back on the scene; he never really went away. Although he is focusing on net zero and fracking for now, he could easily reissue his [*immigration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/immigration) hit. A study by the centre-right Onward think tank found that a "Faragist Newkip" party could [*potentially cost the Tories 53 seats*](https://www.ukonward.com/reports/blue-wall/) at the next election, wiping out their majority.

The problems are not only Patel's fault. When the home secretary tried to correct her mistake and allow many more Ukrainians in through a new humanitarian route, allies say her plan was vetoed by [*Steve Barclay*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-refugees-boris-johnson-home-office-b2034368.html) , the new Downing Street chief of staff. Whitehall insiders tell me there is chaos behind the scenes - hardly the reset moment Johnson wanted from his new No 10 team as he tried to draw a line under Partygate.

While his Tory critics will not try to push Johnson out during the Ukraine crisis, they are not dead, merely sleeping. So his machine needs to perform better if he is to prevent a return to domestic hostilities when the real fighting stops.

"Ministers are still fighting like rats in a sack," one Whitehall source said. "There is no overall plan; they are competing for headlines." Michael Gove, the levelling up secretary, was handed control of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a sign of Johnson's frustration with Patel.

Her allies insist she has suffered from the same under-performance from officials which cost previous home secretaries Amber Rudd and Charles Clarke their jobs. "The Home Office has got form on this, it has developed a habit of saying what it shouldn't, couldn't and won't do rather than finding quick solutions to problems," said Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory leader.

Yet Patel has form too. She kept her job even though she was found to have broken the ministerial code by bullying staff. When she was floundering over migrants crossing the Channel in small boats last year, she invoked the words of another predecessor, John Reid, to describe her department as "not fit for purpose".

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True, there are institutional problems at an inflexible Home Office, where the "we always do it this way" mentality delayed the recognition that a different approach was needed on Ukraine. Yet the buck should stop with the politicians. The default position for ministers is to blame the civil service "blob".

Incredibly, they somehow still manage to blame today's problems on the last Labour government. Gove claimed that Labour invented the "hostile environment" strategy on illegal immigration; yes, the words were uttered in 2007, but it was the Tories who embraced them as a culture. The department responsible for both crime and immigration instinctively regards migrants as criminals; sadly, that will be entrenched by the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Johnson blames the looming energy crisis on Labour's failure to invest in nuclear power. Today, Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, blamed an obstructive House of Lords for the years-long delay in bringing in legislation making it easier to sanction oligarchs. Yet it was ministers who repeatedly delayed an Economic Crime Bill. The Intelligence and Security Committee told Johnson "urgent action" was needed over Russian money more than two years ago. It has become law now only because of the war.

After almost 12 years in power, it's about time Tory ministers start to accept some responsibility, not least for their own legacy of 10 years of austerity - clearly one factor in an overstretched, under-resourced Home Office machine.

Johnson, after nearly three years in office, can no longer get away with the trick of claiming his administration is "new". He lost valuable public goodwill during Partygate, probably forever. So there will be a ceiling on his wartime recovery in the opinion polls. And one day, the voters will surely tire of hearing the Tories blame someone else.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rayner's display at PMQs fell short of her reputation as a Commons performer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6514-SJM1-JCS0-D0WW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 17, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

**Length:** 804 words

**Byline:** JOHN RENTOUL CHIEF POLITICAL COMMENTATOR

**Body**

Angela Rayner is a great parliamentary performer, so the prime minister's absence in the Gulf was a chance for her to shine. She was up against Dominic Raab, the deputy prime minister whose role in the past has been to make Boris Johnson look good by not being as bullish as him, and to make Rayner look good by acting as her foil.

The Labour side of the house, and the press gallery, were looking forward to a bit of colour and entertainment, a change from Keir Starmer's usual dry, over-prepared performance and Johnson's waffle. But it went badly for Rayner from the start. The mood of the Commons was wrong for her boisterous approach to politics. Prime Minister's Questions started when MPs knew that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe had got as far as Tehran airport, but it was too early to be sure that she would definitely be free.

Rayner went ahead and asked about her anyway, with a gratuitous question about whether Boris Johnson's "lazy comments" as foreign secretary had "worsened the situation". This struck such a discordant note that Labour MPs behind her, who had come for the show, studied their phones intently, pretending to check for news from Iran.

Of course, Johnson's mistaken reference in 2017 to Zaghari-Ratcliffe visiting Iran to train journalists worsened the situation, but now is hardly the time to mention it, especially when, as Raab rightly told her, the responsibility for Zaghari-Ratcliffe's plight is entirely that of Iran's "despotic regime".

Rayner switched subject and asked three questions about whether Raab or the prime minister had overruled intelligence advice against nominating Evgeny Lebedev, the owner of The Independent, for his peerage. As the answer was "no", this line of questioning failed to get off the ground.

She was reduced to repeating what Starmer had said last night about the prime minister "going cap in hand from one dictator to another" asking them to produce more oil and gas. That doesn't mean that a Labour government would be doing anything differently, and indeed, it wasn't even a question. As her attack on the Tory record - "they have had 12 years to reduce our reliance on foreign oil" - grew longer and longer, it prompted Conservative MPs to make more and more noise.

Eventually, she said: "I ask the deputy prime minister: is their only plan to keep on begging?" Raab started to say that Jeremy Corbyn, whom she had wanted to be prime minister, had taken Putin's side over the Salisbury poisoning. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the speaker, interrupted to complain that Raab was offering a "history lesson", but then he seemed to change his objection, saying that Raab was straying from "the prime minister's responsibilities".

At the time of the Salisbury poisonings in March 2018, Jeremy Corbyn stated: "The attack in Salisbury was an appalling act of violence, which we condemn in the strongest terms. The Russian authorities must be held to account on the basis of the evidence and our response must be both decisive and proportionate."

Raab thanked the speaker and carried on making the point about Rayner's support for Corbyn, quoting her as saying that Corbyn was a strong leader and that she "can't wait for him to become prime minister". It was a cheap shot, but it was more effective than anything Rayner could muster. For her sixth and last question she did a tour of Labour's greatest hits, from a windfall tax on energy companies "enjoying profits they didn't even expect" to a government who "partied while the country was in lockdown".

Raab disdained this by praising the British people for their generosity towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** (a subject Rayner hadn't mentioned, just as Starmer hadn't mentioned it last week), saying that this was what the government was focused on "while she is in her social media echo chamber".

It wasn't a great parliamentary moment, but Rayner lost the expectations game. Boris Johnson has handled the detention of dual nationals in Iran badly, but today was not the time to point it out - especially when the government has negotiated a deal that not only secured the release of Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori, but may even have made progress on the nuclear issue and on Iranian oil and gas exports.

Nor is it clear that Labour has a credible alternative policy to find sources of energy that are not tainted by murderous dictators. Johnson is just as keen on renewables as Labour is, and Labour is just as keen on nuclear power as he is.

The two absent protagonists will be happy with the way Prime Minister's Questions went. Johnson because Rayner failed to dent the government, and Starmer because Rayner failed to live up to her reputation for outshining him in the Commons. After her overlong, flailing show of unconvincing indignation, many Labour MPs will, for once, be looking forward to having Starmer back next week.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*War is raging in Europe - why are William and Kate on a holiday tour?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652G-1Y51-DY4H-K341-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 3:09 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 919 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

While war rages in a European country, I find it hard to understand how a future king and queen of England can leave for a "royal holiday tour" in the Caribbean like celebrities.

While they go scuba diving, people are dying in Ukraine. Even though the UK is not involved in the conflict at present, it seems like bad judgement and responsibility on their part to indulge in leisure pursuits in the sunshine instead of remaining at home to monitor events.

Another reason why the [*monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/monarchy) is in its last throes.

Peter Fieldman

Madrid

Energy security

The contents of the government's energy security strategy remain speculative, but one thing is for certain. It will have major implications for how the UK generates, stores, and consumes energy.

Make no mistake, the UK is in desperate need of a homegrown [*clean-energy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/clean-energy) system that simultaneously breaks our dependence on volatile international markets and lessens the financial burden on UK households.

This, however, cannot be achieved through imposition. We welcome the business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng's comments about loosening planning permission, which in truth, was needed years ago and would have helped to save consumers from the sky-high prices they are seeing today.

And while the push back from cabinet now is understandable, it is beholden upon ministers and MPs alike to inform and explain the rationale to their constituents, and to make the connection in the hearts and minds of communities. Early public engagement is absolutely fundamental and goes hand in hand with support.

It is time for the UK to be braver and bolder. To cast the net wider and take a holistic view of the whole energy network. To reinvent the whole energy system. I hope these plans move ahead swiftly so we can begin building the infrastructure that will power the UK for years to come.

Phil Thompson

CEO, Balance Power

Nationality and Borders Bill

I read [*Jon Stone's article*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/borders-nationality-bill-refugees-msf-b2041671.html) (Borders Bill will make UK most 'anti-refugee' country, 23 March) with dismay but no little surprise. The home secretary Priti Patel and her department are, I believe, behind the curve of public opinion and this will come back to haunt them.

The national outpouring of support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has been a flashing signal to the government that the public want a fair and transparent way of dealing humanely with displaced men, women and children.

It is shameful that the reasonable House of Lords amendments did not see the charitable light of day and it is draconian business as usual.

Desperate people fleeing heinous regimes should not be penalised or criminalised by harsh strictures. I agree with the charities and Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, that Britain is indeed better than this, but you wouldn't know it from this government in their negation of the fundamental necessity to align oneself with desperate people and walk in their shoes for a change.

Judith A Daniels

Great Yarmouth

Political expediency

Since the lifting of all restrictions, the number of reported Covid cases has been steadily rising. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising.

Whilst currently the number of deaths has not risen dramatically, that could all be about to change. Meanwhile, of course, dying from the virus is one thing, but many of those who are infected suffer from long Covid afterwards which can be incredibly debilitating for many months - if not years.

That it was unwise of the government to scrap all the restrictions is a very contentious point. Certainly, many scientific experts were - understandably - extremely dubious about doing so.

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For Boris Johnson, given the choice of not scrapping restrictions and having to face a no confidence vote in Parliament or scrapping them and remaining prime minister it was a no-brainer.

Suddenly, easing the continuing pressure on the NHS is not important anymore, despite it being a major priority from the beginning of the pandemic and the main reason behind the lockdowns. Those likely to unnecessarily suffer from long Covid are likewise irrelevant from his perspective just as long as he, Boris Johnson, keeps his job.

Linda Evans

London

Fairer voting

[*Sean O'Grady succinctly explains*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/politics-explained/boris-johnson-election-parliament-vote-b2041433.html) why Britain needs a Dissolution and Calling Bill in order to aid a fairer voting structure.

This current Tory party is, by anyone's (other than their) standards, morally corrupt. They have paid lip service to the needs and desires of the British people while using various nefarious methods to achieve their aims.

I have, when younger, voiced the opinion that the Lords needs to be at least reorganised, if not scrapped, but now I feel that they are the last bastion of sanity.

If the present government is not corralled by law, morality, empathy or common sense, then what hope is there for Britain in the future.

Keith Poole

Basingstoke

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Flaws in visa scheme could lead to homelessness crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6549-R9N1-F072-424T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 1, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 821 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Labour has warned that shortcomings in the government's Ukraine visa scheme could lead to a "homelessness crisis" in the UK. MPs have called on ministers to urgently issue guidance to local authorities after it emerged that nearly 150 newly arrived Ukrainian households have presented as homeless to councils.

Figures published by the Local Government Association (LGA) revealed that at least 144 households have registered as homeless since the Russian invasion started, of whom 44 arrived under the family scheme, 36 under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 64 whose status was unknown.

In the House of Commons yesterday, Mike Amesbury, shadow minister for the department for levelling up, housing and communities (DLUHC), cited the figures, and warned that there were "real fears of a homelessness crisis if sponsorships break down".

Addressing the minister for homelessness Eddie Hughes, he added: "What urgent guidance and support is his department giving councils on these cases?" In response, Mr Hughes said that given his role he had a "very keen interest" in the matter, adding: "We will be investigating to ensure that we completely understand what has led to that situation."

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each Ukrainian refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a route thatallows Ukrainians without family members in the UK to be hosted by members of the British public. But councils receive no money for those arriving under the family scheme, which allows ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to join UK-based relatives.

Clive Betts, Labour MP and vice-president of the LGA, questioned why councils were not being given funding for those arriving under the family scheme. "It can't be justified that councils are getting £10,500 on the sponsorship scheme, but when refugees come under the family scheme, apart from the housing checks, they have to do everything else as a council to support those refugees," he said.

Mr Betts called on the government to grant councils access to the database of sponsors so they can match up those presenting as homeless with those who want to house them. "The whole reason we've got the sponsorship scheme is that councils don't have enough readily available homes to house people," he said. "The choice is putting these people up in temporary accommodation or hotels, or matching them up with the generous offers sponsors want to make in those communities [???] Can the government just get on with it?"

There is mounting anger among MPs from all parties about visa delays facing Ukrainians applying to both the family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine route grows. Tory MP and former housing secretary Robert Jenrick told ITV's Peston show on Wednesday night that he had applied to sponsor a Ukrainian family 10 days ago but was yet to receive any response.

"We filled in ours within a couple of hours of them going live on Friday before last, 10 days later we haven't heard anything. And so I've got a very anxious family," he said. "We've heard absolutely nothing and that is frustrating. It was frustrating for us, but more importantly, we now have a family who are in Kyiv, extremely worried, about to leave their home [...] try to make a new life if only temporarily in the UK, and they're on tenterhooks waiting for the Home Office to let them know if we can make it happen.

"So I do think it's been a bumpy start, that is often the case with these schemes and it sounds like it's ramping up now quickly, but I certainly hope that's the case. We just don't want to let these families down."

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said in the House of Commons yesterday: "The visa system is simply not working. It is leaving thousands of families in limbo because of Home Office bureaucracy. This is Kafkaesque. What on earth is going on? And why is the home secretary so totally incapable of getting any grip on this despite repeated questions we have asked?"

Official figures show 31,200 visa applications have so far been received under the family scheme, of which 22,800 have been issued, and 28,300 have applied to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, of which 2,700 have been granted. The government has continued to refuse to reveal how many Ukrainians have so far arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, promoting Ms Cooper to ask: "Why on earth is it too early to tell us? They should be able to give the basic facts."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Angela Rayner failed to live up to her reputation as a great parliamentary performer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-7RH1-DY4H-K301-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 3:40 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:3

**Length:** 834 words

**Byline:** John Rentoul

**Highlight:** The deputy Labour leader struck all the wrong notes in Prime Minister's Questions, writes John Rentoul

**Body**

Angela Rayner is a great parliamentary performer, so the prime minister's absence in the Gulf was a chance for her to shine. She was up against Dominic Raab, the deputy prime minister whose role in the past has been to make Boris Johnson look good by not being as bullish as him, and to make Rayner look good by acting as her foil.

The Labour side of the house, and the press gallery, were looking forward to a bit of colour and entertainment, a change from Keir Starmer's usual dry, over-prepared performance and Johnson's waffle. But it went badly for Rayner from the start. The mood of the Commons was wrong for her boisterous approach to politics. Prime Minister's Questions started when MPs knew that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe had got as far as Tehran airport, but it was too early to be sure that she would definitely be free.

Rayner went ahead and asked about her anyway, with a gratuitous question about whether Boris Johnson's "lazy comments" as foreign secretary had "worsened the situation". This struck such a discordant note that Labour MPs behind her, who had come for the show, studied their phones intently, pretending to check for news from Iran.

Of course, Johnson's mistaken reference in 2017 to Zaghari-Ratcliffe visiting Iran to train journalists worsened the situation, but now is hardly the time to mention it, especially when, as Raab rightly told her, the responsibility for Zaghari-Ratcliffe's plight is entirely that of Iran's "despotic regime".

Rayner switched subject and asked three questions about whether Raab or the prime minister had overruled intelligence advice against nominating Evgeny Lebedev, the owner of The Independent, for his peerage. As the answer was "no", this line of questioning failed to get off the ground.

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Eventually, she said: "I ask the deputy prime minister: is their only plan to keep on begging?" Raab started to say that Jeremy Corbyn, whom she had wanted to be prime minister, had taken Putin's side over the Salisbury poisoning. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the speaker, interrupted to complain that Raab was offering a "history lesson", but then he seemed to change his objection, saying that Raab was straying from "the prime minister's responsibilities".

At the time of the Salisbury poisonings in March 2018, [*Jeremy Corbyn stated*](https://twitter.com/jeremycorbyn/status/973971196889980929) : "The attack in Salisbury was an appalling act of violence, which we condemn in the strongest terms. The Russian authorities must be held to account on the basis of the evidence and our response must be both decisive and proportionate."

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It wasn't a great parliamentary moment, but Rayner lost the expectations game. Boris Johnson has handled the detention of dual nationals in Iran badly, but today was not the time to point it out - especially when the government has negotiated a deal that not only secured the release of Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashoori, but may even have made progress on the nuclear issue and on Iranian oil and gas exports.

Nor is it clear that Labour has a credible alternative policy to find sources of energy that are not tainted by murderous dictators. Johnson is just as keen on renewables as Labour is, and Labour is just as keen on nuclear power as he is.

The two absent protagonists will be happy with the way Prime Minister's Questions went. Johnson because Rayner failed to dent the government, and Starmer because Rayner failed to live up to her reputation for outshining him in the Commons. After her overlong, flailing show of unconvincing indignation, many Labour MPs will, for once, be looking forward to having Starmer back next week.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: What I learned helping refugees at the Moldova-Ukraine border*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651M-G4W1-DY4H-K2KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2022 Saturday 5:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 843 words

**Byline:** Ethan Schwartz

**Highlight:** What has been done by Vladimir Putin in recent days and weeks will take months or years to overcome

**Body**

On the drive down from Chisinau, the sun was shining. I turned to one of my colleagues and pointed it out. In more than a week in Moldova, it was only the second time I'd seen sunshine.

When we got out of the car at Palanca the sky had turned grey, soft flakes of snow began to fall. The cold seeped through every layer, burrowing deep into my bones.

Palanca is a flashpoint in the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis Europe has seen in decades. It's also a grey, almost liminal, space. Deep in the Moldovan hinterland, yet only 30-odd miles from Odessa, brown mud and jagged, bare trees abound. Small communities try everything they can to help their neighbours, attempting to bring some measure of solace and support to a world suddenly ruptured.

We walked over to the big white and blue tent with the beer company logos. When we asked to set something up for mothers and babies, this was all they had. We had kitted it out well: heaters, chairs, a changing table, a raised platform with plastic grass for children to sit and play.

Still, it's not enough. Not enough space, not enough chairs, not enough warmth, not enough light.

Every day, thousands of people cross the border here. The tents were at the crossing itself, down a small road, one lane each way. Quickly, this small cluster grew - more tents, more cars, more people coming, day and night.

This inevitably became a bottleneck, with government officials, local volunteers, relief workers, and journalists jostling for space with cars, vans, and buses. People were everywhere. There were no signs, no announcements. Families would wait in the tent for hours, unsure where to go, what to do, who to speak to, and who even knew they were waiting.

About three or four days after we first made it to the border, the president visited Palanca and instructed the local authorities to move everything - the tents, the food, the buses, the cars - to a field about three kilometres in. So, the next day, everything moved.

Our new teammates didn't believe me when I said it looked a lot better now. The cars and buses had somewhere to park. There were people calling out destinations like "Chisinau" and "Bucharest" - and on good days the new arrivals only had to wait a few minutes, or maybe an hour or two, before they moved on.

But how do they decide where to go? For those who don't have a clear destination in mind, there's precious little information available about what options are open. In the chaos and the cold, decisions have to be taken quickly. It's hard to guarantee the choices people make will keep them safe.

Some we met wanted to keep moving. Some just spoke about returning home. Others showed us videos of bombed-out buildings, their homes in ruin. Some wanted to help, offered to go around with us as we handed out blankets or information sheets with guidance on managing children's stress in times of crisis.

Many waited anxiously for news of relatives, friends, or distant acquaintances, still in line on the other side. Many held their children - or their pets - under blankets, shivering, trying to get warm.

The village after Palanca is Tudora. Many Tudora residents have opened their doors to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The local pastor organised volunteers to staff the mother and baby tent day and night. His church has become a warehouse, stuffed to the brim with diapers and blankets and other necessities. We worked together to make sure these local communities have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to provide support for as long as they are needed. This will go on for a long time.

Even if the war ends tomorrow, Palanca will still be here. The thousands of Ukrainians who have already passed through will still be here or in shelters in Chisinau or with relatives in Athens, Oslo or Berlin. What has been done in recent days and weeks by Vladimir Putin will take months or years to overcome.

I got back into the car and tried to warm my hands. I had heating and snacks. I had a warm bed in a Chisinau hotel.

Our team will be here for at least a year, maybe three or four, but I'm able to go home.

In the fog driving to the airport, I could barely see what was coming down the road.

Ethan Schwartz works for IsraAID, the international humanitarian aid NGO. As part of the Emergency Team in Moldova, responding to the Ukrainian refugee crisis

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Across Europe, Ukrainian exiles pray for peace back home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651V-8KT1-DY4H-K05D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 4:55 PM GMT

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**Length:** 852 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Across Europe, Ukrainians have gathered for church services to pray for peace in their war-torn country

**Body**

Alona Fartukhova has been coming to Berlin's Ukrainian Orthodox Christian community every day since she arrived in [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) five days ago from war-torn Kyiv. The 20-year-old refugee has been attending daily prayers for peace and helped organize donations for her compatriots back home.

On Sunday, Fartukhova joined dozens of other Ukrainian worshippers at a red brick stone church in the German capital who sang together, lit candles, and received blessings from the head of the community, Father Oleh Polianko. Later they put medical crutches, sleeping bags, diapers, big boxes of gummi bears and countless jars of pickles - which were piling up everywhere inside the church - into big cardboard boxes to be send to Ukraine.

"It's some help for our army, and it is ... a lot of things for children" said the university student, who fled by herself and is now living at a hotel in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) , as she stacked boxes onto the church pews. "It is so good that a lot of people support us, we really appreciate it."

Across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) , Ukrainians gathered for church services on Sunday to pray for peace in their war-torn country. Newly arrived refugees mingled with long-time members of Europe's 1.5 million-strong Ukrainian diaspora at houses of worship all over the continent from Germany to Romania to [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Since Russia attacked Ukraine more than three weeks ago, over 3.38 million people have fled the country, according to the United Nations refugee agency. Most have escaped to neighboring Poland, Romania or Moldova, but as the war continues many are moving further west.

Germany has registered more than 200,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** but the real numbers are expected to be much higher as Ukrainians don't need a visa to come to Germany, and federal police only register refugees entering Germany by train or bus. Ukrainians coming to Germany from Poland by car are normally not registered.

Members of Germany's Ukrainian immigrant community, which counts around 300,000 people, have not only been raising money and collecting donations, but also driven the goods to the border and beyond and on their way back to Germany have taken along refugees. Families already living in Germany have squeezed together to accommodate refugees and are helping them find jobs and get their kids into schools.

The diaspora Ukrainians' religious communities - mostly Christian Orthodox, but also some Catholic and Jewish communities - have been leading refugee initiatives and have also become an anchor for those worrying about their families back in the war.

Polianko, who heads the 500-member-strong Orthodox Christian community in Berlin, held some one-on-one prayers on Sunday with worshippers who were especially distressed. He then gave blessings "for the souls of our soldiers who are fighting in Ukraine, and also for the souls of our soldiers who have died in Ukraine."

Because the Berlin community has been so overwhelmed by donations, they temporarily moved from their small church building in the city's Hermsdorf neighborhood to the bigger church of the Lutheran Philippus Nathanael community in Berlin-Friedenau. Here, they have plenty of space to organize donation drives and a wide driveway for trucks picking up the boxes, says Andriy Ilin, the deputy head of the community.

The Lutherans are currently holding their own services in a nearby community center.

"Initially, they offered us the church for March, now they've extended it to April, and they kindly let us know that if we need it beyond that, they will allow that too." Ilin said.

Elsewhere in Europe, local worshippers also opened their churches to welcome Ukrainians.

In Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, locals and refugees alike assembled for an Orthodox prayer service on Sunday.

Angelica Gretsai, a refugee from the northern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, lit candles just before the religious service in Russian began at a small Sfintul Gheorghe church.

"(I pray) for peace of course, for peace in Ukraine, for these two peoples (Russians and Ukrainians ) to make up, for this war to be no more," Gretsai said adding that she was yearning to go back home and be with friends and family.

"I'm basically alone here, it's the first time I came to Moldova,' she said, adding that she was staying with some distant relatives she had never met before. Moldova has welcomed more than 360,000 refugees since Russia invaded Ukraine.

In Suceava, Romania, south of the Ukrainian border, locals and new arrivals from Ukraine held a service together at St. John's church. Romania has welcomed more than half a million refugees from Ukraine since the beginning of the war and several of them found their way to the church service.

Ariadna Belciug, a local resident at the service, said she was praying "especially for the children, because no one deserves to go through these times."

"I pray for them to be all right, to be safe and for better days for them to come," Belciug added.

\_\_\_

Nicolae Dumitrache in Chisinau, Moldova and Eldar Emric in Suceava, Romania contributed reported.

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Follow all [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) stories about Russia's war on Ukraine at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine).

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin has 'crossed the threshold of barbarism' with Ukraine invasion - PM*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652F-WB51-DY4H-K2G4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 2:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 809 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson said the West 'should not hesitate to go further in strengthening sanctions and providing further defensive military aid to Ukraine'.

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has "already crossed the threshold of barbarism", [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has told ministers, as he faced calls to go further and faster in allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) told his Cabinet on Wednesday that the West "should not hesitate to go further in strengthening sanctions and providing further defensive military aid to Ukraine", in the face of increased aggression by the Kremlin in its invasion of the country.

Ukraine's ambassador to the UK said on Wednesday that the country needed more long-range anti-tank weapons from western allies.

Vadym Prystaiko told Sky News: "We didn't have enough in the first place. So, we're running out of weaponry.

"That's what we'll be seeing in the week to come.

"Tomorrow, President Zelensky will talk to Nato, the whole of Nato, and we will see how can we replenish our stocks and what we can have that has a much longer range and is stronger than ever.

"We have enough weapons to stop tanks immediately when they approach us.

"But to clear out our land we need to have something with a much greater distance."

Mr Prystaiko also defended Mr Johnson's apparent comparison of the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) resistance to Brexit at the Conservative Spring Forum in Blackpool at the weekend.

"I was sitting in the front row when I listened to it," he said.

"I didn't see this reaction coming. Because what we heard in the room, what I heard myself, is that actually we are fighting for freedom - the freedom to do what the nation wants to do."

But he added that the UK's problems with the EU were incomparable to the Russian/Ukrainian war.

"If we wanted to leave something like the Soviet Union, we had to have the right, and look at the differences", he said.

"You believe you have problems with the European Union when you left, it's not a problem.

"If you compare it to what we have with Russians when we left the Soviet Union, they came to kill us for this decision."

In the Commons, Mr Johnson was under pressure to speed up support for those fleeing Ukraine and heading for the UK.

York Outer Tory MP Julian Sturdy told Mr Johnson that he welcomed the changes to the visa process to allow applications to be processed more quickly, but that the situation had intensified further since then.

At Prime Minister's Questions, he said: "Our response must still move much, much faster, with a shift to processing applications in the UK, cutting the red tape and bureaucracy so we can match the scale of Europe's worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War."

The Prime Minister said moving applications online had accelerated the process and it was the "instinct" of the UK to "be as generous as possible".

Some 15,800 visas had been issued under the Ukraine family scheme as of 5pm on Tuesday, the Home Office said.

So far, there had been a total of 33,500 applications submitted, according to provisional data published on the department's website.

It comes as a third extract of a hoax call between Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) and an imposter posing as Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal was published on YouTube.

In it, Mr Wallace discussed previous desires for Ukraine to join the Nato defence alliance, an ambition that has riled the Russian leader.

The Ministry of Defence has warned the clips are "doctored" pieces of propaganda released by the Kremlin, but officials have so far failed to get them removed from YouTube.

With Home Secretary Priti Patel also targeted and more touted from Mr Wallace, officials fear further videos emerging during the emergency Nato summit on Ukraine on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the UK's former defence attache to Moscow has claimed warnings that Mr Putin would wage war were consistently ignored in favour of City banks harvesting Russia's corrupt wealth.

Retired air commodore Carl Scott said he warned of the "inevitability of conflict in detail, regularly" during his period in Russia between 2011 and 2016.

He said the Russian president's aims were "never concealed", having instigated "colossal" militarisation, the distortion of the public narrative and clampdowns on dissent.

The former attache wrote in a letter to the Financial Times: "The list is remorseless, the consequences could not be ignored. But they were.

"It was not until I returned to the UK on the eve of our withdrawal from the EU, a manoeuvre which greatly emboldened those in Moscow, that I understood how our society had changed in the years I was serving overseas.

"All was subjugated to the City, all served the interests of our lucrative status as a safe haven for corrupt, and corrupting wealth. The values we were demanding of other nations had long since faded from our own actions.

"I despair at the decisions Putin has taken, but even more at the prospect of finding credible leadership at home in the UK among those who have compromised so long with his regime and the wealth it offered."

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The 'tax-cutting chancellor' hasn't actually cut any taxes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651J-8GT1-F072-41KY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 19, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 18

**Length:** 812 words

**Byline:** TOM PECK

**Body**

For those of us not quite understanding why it is that Putin bombing Ukraine gets a British prime minister off the hook for almost certainly breaking the law and then lying about it in the House of Commons, there are some sudden signs of cautious optimism.

With far more egregious events occurring elsewhere, the question of Johnson's own personal egregiousness had kind of gone away, but owing to frankly poor diary management from whoever's in charge, the Conservatives have foolishly allowed for their own spring conference in Blackpool to go ahead. Which is now precisely one day in, and the tagline across the lectern really might as well be: "No We Really Are Like This. Had you Forgotten?"

Rishi Sunak kicked things off. "My priority is cutting taxes," he said, just as he said at the budget in November, during which he announced the largest peacetime tax rises in decades, and which prompted The Daily Telegraph to describe the speech as "The Death of Conservatism".

It's never entirely easy to know what exactly is going on with Sunak, mainly because he is very significantly less bright than he thinks he is. There is, quite possibly, part of him that really does believe he actually is cutting taxes, even as he raises them to the highest level since the end of the Second World War.

And even as he ploughs on with a rise in national insurance contributions, which will cost normal families hundreds of pounds a year, in the face of an unprecedented energy crisis and the first major war in Europe in 80 years, he really does do so at the same time as talking about his mission: his grand belief in lowering taxes.

It is not easy to see quite how he'll get away with it (other than, inevitably, cutting them again before the election.) You can usually get away, in politics, with saying one thing and doing precisely the other, but people do tend to notice when their monthly take home pay goes down, and it's clearly because the chancellor who loves cutting taxes keeps raising them by mistake.

Oliver Dowden, the party chair and chief culture warrior, has been welcoming literally dozens of delegates of Blackpool, telling them that what the British people want to see "is a bit more Conservative pragmatism and a bit less net zero dogma".

And this, no doubt, is itself a bit of Conservative pragmatism from the chairman, in the sense that it was barely months ago that he was personally swanking about at Cop26, issuing grand public pronouncements about the number of tech companies he had convinced to sign up to net zero, which apparently no one cares about anymore so, don't worry, neither does Oliver Dowden.

Matt Hancock, meanwhile, is still trying to make Matt Hancock happen, this time by positioning himself as the frontman for the Ukrainian refugee effort, making his ever more desperate bid to throw open his new home to as many refugees as possible as public as he possibly can.

Around 200,000 British people have signed up to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. And what Matt Hancock has in common with absolutely all of them is that he isn't in the government in any way. All that sets him apart from the other 200,000 selfless individuals is that he is the only one that has been busily pitching opinion pieces and doing TV interviews about his own selflessness, as Richard Madeley wasted absolutely no time at all in telling him.

If the war in Ukraine has got Johnson off the hook, you would think your average cabinet minister would have the sense to at least not publicly admit it. People are dying in their thousands, after all. But enter Jacob Rees-Mogg, for whom breaking the public safety rules you've made yourself and then lying about them, has now been exposed as the "fluff" that it always was.

Does it need to be pointed out that 150,000 people died, and that absolutely everybody led very miserable lives for a very long time, to try and keep that horrific figure down, and that that kind of thing isn't really fluff?

Probably not. Nor is it worth dwelling yet again to one of the enduring storylines of the past six years, which is that all Rees-Mogg seems capable of doing in public is embarrassing himself.

Meanwhile, Peter Cruddas - the former Tory party treasurer whose peerage last year was in no way linked to the vast amounts of his own private treasure the party continues to receive - has been on the radio. Boris Johnson, he says, "is the best thing to happen to this country in a generation".

Look, it's never easy to know precisely what's meant by a generation, not least as Johnson has prematurely killed one off and personally sired another, and each of us are entitled to our opinions.

If he thinks that Johnson is better than the worst financial crisis since the great depression, better than Covid and better than the first major European land war since the 1940s then, well, maybe we'll concede that it could at least go to a photo finish.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: I want to host a Ukrainian refugee - but thanks to a broken housing market, I can't*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650Y-K141-JBNF-W309-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 11:59 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 784 words

**Byline:** Harriet Williamson

**Highlight:** There just isn't space for another person to live comfortably or with a basic level of privacy in the home I rent - and affording a place with a spare bedroom in London is out of the question

**Body**

The government's Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme was launched on Monday, allowing UK residents to offer ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) a rent-free space in their home (or a separate residence), for at least six months. Within the first few hours of the government's scheme going live, [*nearly 100,000 people had registered*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-homes-for-ukraine-refugees-b2035511.html) their interest, and I wish I'd been one of them.

I'd love to open my home to a Ukrainian person or family who need a safe place to live - but I can't.

I live in a one-bedroom flat. There just isn't space for another person to live comfortably or with a basic level of privacy in the home I rent - and affording a place with a spare bedroom in London is out of the question. Even if I was renting a larger property, I'd have another hurdle to overcome in the form of my landlord - they would have to give their permission before I could put my name down.

I'm not alone, either. Most of my London-based friends of a similar age don't own their homes - they rent rooms in house shares, the majority of which don't have spare bedrooms. Even living rooms are in short supply, because they get converted into extra bedrooms to provide yet more revenue for the landlord.

In London, the[*average house price stands at £530,469*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/halifax-house-prices-wales-ukraine-scotland-b2029930.html) , according to the latest figures from Halifax. Over half a million quid - and that's the average. House prices across the UK generally have hit a new record high of £278,123 - the strongest growth since 2007.

The UK is in the grip of a [*housing crisis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/housing-crisis). There isn't enough social housing for those who need it, and there's a dearth of truly affordable homes, particularly in the capital where many industries - including the media - are concentrated.

Too many young (and young-ish) people are struggling to get on the property ladder, largely because they're busy paying whacking great rents to private landlords every month, which makes saving for a deposit a bit of a pipe dream. You can give up every small pleasure (thanks for the tips, [*Kirstie Allsopp*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/kirstie-allsopp-house-buying-netflix-b2009120.html) ), but unless you're living rent-free with family, or receiving a hefty chunk of gifted cash from them, it's not going to be enough to secure you that all-important deposit.

For me, owning a home represents safety, security and adulthood. Everyone should have a fighting chance of being able to achieve this. It seems a bit topsy-turvy that people can be in full-time work and yet a modest first home is still an absolute fantasy.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

How many people want to share their space with refugees but can't because of housing issues? In London, particularly, space is tight. Many people are paying eye-watering rents in return for very small, overcrowded or unsafe housing. With a housing market that is massively weighted in favour of the wealthy - and people who are already homeowners - we can only hope that they will be generous enough for all of us.

In terms of the [*Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/) , there is still the nagging suspicion that this is the government's way of passing the buck on to a more compassionate public and essentially washing its hands of the issue, and questions about what support will be provided, both for traumatised refugees and hosts without training or skills in this area.

Nevertheless, I'd always rather there were more ways of helping refugees than fewer, and the volume of initial sign-ups shows that many of us are ready to share what we have with those fleeing Putin's devastating war.

It might sound like I'm making the current refugee crisis about me - but the UK government made it about me when they passed the responsibility for housing Ukrainians fleeing horrific violence over to the public.

Of course, there are other ways I and others in a similar situation can help refugees, including giving money, volunteering or donating emergency relief items. It's just a shame that a broken housing market means that we can't offer shelter, too.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Liz Truss fears peace talks are a 'smokescreen' for further Russian aggression*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651H-WR61-JBNF-W3B0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 19, 2022 Saturday 1:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 853 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Ms Truss noted it was up to president Volodymyr Zelensky how his country approached the negotiations.

**Body**

The Foreign Secretary has warned peace talks between [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and Russia might be being used as a "smokescreen" for the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) to regroup troops for a fresh offensive.

[*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said it was up to president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) how his country approached peace talks.

But in an interview with The Times she said she feared the negotiations - which have been said to have made some progress - were a "smokescreen".

Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) told the Scottish Conservative conference in Aberdeen he had pledged to send more defensive weapons to Ukraine after speaking to Mr Zelensky on Friday.

He said he was "more convinced than ever" Russian president Vladimir Putin's military venture would fail.

Mr Johnson is due to address the Conservative Spring Forum in Blackpool on Saturday, where he will likely again address the conflict in Ukraine.

Britain's chief of defence intelligence said Mr Putin was now fighting a "war of attrition", after initial expectations of a quick conflict were dashed.

Lieutenant General Sir Jim Hockenhull said the Kremlin has been forced to switch tactics, turning to the "reckless and indiscriminate" use of firepower which will inevitably lead to more civilian casualties.

Ms Truss said that if Moscow was serious about peace talks being held with Ukraine, they would not be using such methods.

She told The Times: "If a country is serious about negotiations, it doesn't indiscriminately bomb civilians that day."

Ms Truss said she was "very sceptical" about the talks the two countries were holding, and added: "What we've seen is an attempt to create space for the Russians to regroup."

She said: "We don't see any serious withdrawal of Russian troops or any serious proposals on the table."

The minister told newspaper "the Russians have lied and lied and lied. I fear the negotiation is yet another attempt to create a diversion and create a smokescreen".

But she said: "Of course, Ukraine as a sovereign nation is fully entitled to undertake any negotiation process it sees fit."

Western officials warned that the Russians have "enormous" stocks of artillery ammunition meaning they could maintain their bombardment for weeks.

However, Gen Hockenhull said that, more than three weeks into the campaign, it is clear the Kremlin has still not achieved any of its initial objectives.

"It has been surprised by the scale and ferocity of Ukrainian resistance and has been bedevilled by problems of its own making," he told journalists.

"Russian operations have changed. Russia is now pursuing a strategy of attrition. This will involve the reckless and indiscriminate use of firepower.

"This will result in increased civilian casualties, disruption of Ukrainian infrastructure and intensify the humanitarian crisis."

Ms Truss told The Times: "What we've seen is an attempt to create space for the Russians to regroup. Their invasion isn't going to plan."

Mr Johnson said now was the time to "tighten the vice" on Moscow.

I spoke to President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and praised the steadfast resistance of the Ukrainian people in the face of aggression.The UK stands with Ukraine - we will send further defensive aid and they have our full backing in the negotiations.- Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1504853460126257163?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"I am more than ever convinced that Putin will fail," he said.

"He will fail, because in his catastrophic venture in Ukraine he fatally underestimated the heroism and the resolve of the Ukrainians to fight.

"He underestimated western unity.

"And among other things, by the way, he underestimated the passionate commitment of the people in this country to help."

Earlier, Health Secretary Sajid Javid said the PM was being hailed a hero in Ukraine.

Speaking at the Conservative Spring Forum in Blackpool, Mr Javid said the support offered by the UK had "prompted a British Ukrainian man, who stopped me in my constituency almost exactly this time last week, and he said to me 'the next time you see Boris you tell him, in Ukraine he's a hero'."

Elsewhere at the conference, Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said 100,000 places had been created in schools for children fleeing Ukraine and virtual lessons created during the coronavirus pandemic had been translated into Ukrainian.

Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove confirmed more than 150,000 households had now offered to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the majority of whom have made their way to Poland.

Former prime minister David Cameron announced on Friday he was driving a "small lorry" to the Polish border with Ukraine with supplies.

It comes as Mr Putin, Russia's President, made a rare public appearance to address a mass flag-waving rally at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium to mark the eighth anniversary of his country's annexation of Crimea.

He praised the efforts of Russia's forces, declaring: "Shoulder to shoulder, they help and support each other."

As many as 7,000 Russian troops have died so far in the fighting, including four major generals and a number of other senior officers, American sources estimate.

In its latest intelligence update, the Ministry of Defence said Russia had been forced to shift to a "strategy of attrition".

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Now is not the time to call for PM to quit - Starmer*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-6BK1-JBNF-W19F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 1:33 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 797 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The Labour leader said it was more important to show unity in the face of Russian aggression.

**Body**

Sir Keir Starmer has all but withdrawn his previous calls for [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) to resign as he said the country needs "unity" in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Labour leader said there was still "a basic question of trust" in the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) , but that for now the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) was "concentrating on the job in hand".

Speaking on the BBC's Sunday Morning programme, Sir Keir said Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) wanted to divide the West, and therefore it was very important "we demonstrate unity".

He said: "I do think there's a basic question of trust (in the Prime Minister) and it does seem a long time ago now we were talking about all of the allegations that Prime Minister faces.

"Of course, he is still being investigated by the Metropolitan Police. I do think there's an issue of trust."

The Metropolitan Police are investigating 12 alleged breaches of coronavirus restrictions over eight dates where parties or gatherings have been reported across Downing Street and Whitehall.

Sir Keir appeared to have put his calls for the Prime Minister to resign over the partygate saga on hold for now.

"I'm very clear as the leader of the opposition, leader of the Labour Party, that when it comes to standing up to Russian aggression, and standing in support of Ukraine, it's very important in the United Kingdom and in our politics that we show the world that we're united and, therefore, whatever the challenges and frustrations and criticism I have of the Prime Minister, and I've got many on this issue, there is unity, and it's very important that we demonstrate that unity," he said.

When asked if he would therefore withdraw his call for Mr Johnson to resign immediately, he said: "Look, at the moment the Prime Minister is obviously concentrating on the job in hand and we stand united as the United Kingdom on that issue."

He told ITV News: "In a time like this, it's very important that the public have trust in their leaders. But I can tell you in the debate in Parliament tomorrow, we won't be talking about partygate.

"We will be absolutely focused on the amendments that we need to pass to toughen up the sanctions regime. So, our challenge to the Government tomorrow is to go further and to go faster on this."

A Labour source later added: "Our position is unchanged, we haven't withdrawn our call for Boris Johnson to resign."

Shadow defence secretary [*John Healey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-healey) said it was right to set aside calls for the Prime Minister's resignation.

"Those hard, underlying questions that ultimately Boris Johnson will have to return to answer about his law-breaking, about the parties in Downing Street, the police investigations will come back," he told Times Radio.

"But for now we must stand with other European nations and Labour gives its full backing to the extent the Government will stand by and support the Ukrainians' resistance in Ukraine against the Russian invasion, and the toughest possible sanctions to help isolate and cut Russia out of the international system."

Sir Keir said his party supports the Government but he wants to see them going "further and faster".

He told ITV News: "Everybody understands why we can't have a no-fly zone, why direct military assistance is not possible. That means sanctions have to be the strongest we have ever seen, the most effective we've ever seen. And in order for sanctions to work, you need to know what property the oligarchs have got here in the United Kingdom.

"At the moment, the Government is saying that they will have to register that ownership but they'll have six months to do that. Now, our concern is that in that six months, there's time to sell property and therefore it'll never be registered, never be sanctioned.

"That should be 28 days. So, I want to push the Prime Minister much further than that and we'll be trying to do that tomorrow."

Sir Keir said there is also another area where the Government could move.

He added: "That is in relation to those oligarchs who have been using our courts to suppress critics and challenges, expensive legal cases that close down challenge and free speech.

"We want to see the Government go much further there. There's going to be an amendment tomorrow in Parliament."

The Labour leader added: "So, yes, we support what the Government is doing, but we do think they could go further and faster, and we are going to be pushing them to do that tomorrow on that issue."

Read More

[*Ukraine-Russia war news: Zelensky responds to nuclear plant attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-war-b2028568.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*More than 80,000* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *could arrive in Ireland, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ireland-department-of-justice-department-of-justice-europe-dublin-b2029680.html)

[*Hampshire couple take Molly the motorhome to help people fleeing Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-hampshire-andover-un-refugee-agency-gofundme-b2029669.html)

[*Former head of Orange Order must abide by Labour values - Sarwar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/labour-orange-order-north-lanarkshire-scotland-islamophobia-b2029668.html)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Revealed: Exploitation fears as Homes for Ukraine scheme plagued by fake sponsor offers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:678X-GHB1-JBNF-W19P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 10, 2023 Tuesday 9:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Government failures risks exploitation of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, charity said

**Body**

Councils have been flooded with bogus [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) refugee sponsorship offers and basic vetting checks have been missed putting [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) at risk of exploitation, a charity has warned.

Half of all applications received by one London council were false while others were left scrambling to check the details of people who didn’t exist after government officials failed to verify prospective sponsors, a review has found.

In one case, a council’s [*Homes for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/homes-for-ukraine-renting-housing-crisis-b2194414.html) (HfU) response team was sent to a kebab shop after fake addresses were given on the government’s expression of interest form. Another council had “Mickey Mouse” and “Vladimir Putin” sent as potential sponsors, while some refugees handed over tens of thousands of pounds to scammers.

The report by migrants’ charity Work Rights Centre will be published on Tuesday but an extract shared exclusively with The Independent reveals that the Home Office had in some cases issued visas for Ukrainians before councils had time to conduct proper safety checks.

The data and communication issues made exploitation a very real prospect for Ukrainians who arrived under the scheme, the charity said.

Lisa Nandy MP, shadow levelling up, housing and communities secretary, said that government ministers were warned before its launch that a “DIY” Homes for Ukraine scheme would not be good enough.

“They ignored calls for the government to play a role matching sponsors and refugees and in enforcing safeguards to protect vulnerable people,” she said.

“This report lays bare the shameful consequences of the government’s failure to properly play its part,” Ms Nandy added.

The latest Home Office data on 15 December, showed 253,700 applications have been received, and 206,700 visas were granted under the Ukraine schemes. Of these, 175,000 were made and 145600 were issued under HfU.

The report, titled On the frontline: London councils’ responses to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, drew from in-depth interviews with response teams from 12 council areas in London, which between them oversaw 36 per cent of HfU arrivals in the capital.

Local authority officers shared disturbing examples of Ukrainian families who, eager to be matched with a sponsor as soon as possible, had fallen victim to scammers. One interviewee said: “A family paid £55,000 to someone in the UK who promised them a visa and a house.

“The same thing happened to their cousin. Another person paid £2,000 for a visa, and was asked for £1,000 on arrival. We had to step in and stop it.”

Without robust controls, any user with malicious intent could submit a fake expression of interest to the Department for Levelling Up, the report found.

One local government official told researchers: “At some point, there were so many applications, I thought it was Russian bots.

“The so-called sponsor entries were noisy, email addresses were not real and the addresses used were often businesses ... It got to a point where we were asked to go out and visit these addresses which included a smoke shop, or a kebab shop.”

They continued: “In the end, over half of the entries turned out to be completely false.”

The percentage of viable hosts was much lower than the initial pool of interest, with one council estimating that “fewer than 10 per cent of sponsors who express interest actually respond”.

There were also cases where real sponsors, who had volunteered to host one family, had their information used on multiple visa applications.

The report also found Home Office had often granted visas before sponsors had been properly checked, causing significant safeguarding concerns.

In some cases, after sponsorship checks had failed, councils found the application had already been approved and the refugee had already arrived in the country.

In at least one instance, a council had to stop a sponsorship arrangement when it came to light that the host had a criminal record.

“We have had to move a woman because of a sponsor’s DBS record,” they said. “In other cases, visas are issued for children before they are issued for parents, and the system looks like the children have left – then we call Ukraine to speak to the parents because we have interpreters, and find out that isn’t the case.”

Adis Sehic, a co-author of the report, said it was clear that there was a “longer-term tension at play here between councils dealing with increased duties and responsibilities while facing diminishing resources at the same time”.

“The potential exploitation of Ukrainians highlighted by our research indicates that there has been a lack of strategic coordination at the level of central government departments, namely DLUHC and the Home Office, meaning that visa processing has been out of sync with local authority checks.”

Georgia Gould, chair of London Councils, said: “Councils have faced – and continue to face – immense challenges, including in verifying information, ensuring arrivals are safeguarded, and securing appropriate accommodation for Ukrainians when their hosting arrangements come to an end.”

A spokesperson for mayor of London Sadiq Khan said the report “rightly highlights that the design of this scheme left Ukrainians at risk”.

“Local government and charities were forced to step in to ensure it was workable, and did an incredible job to meet the needs of thousands of Ukrainians in need of sanctuary,” they added.

A government spokesperson said: “The Home Office only issues visas once robust checks have been completed. Councils are then required to conduct in-person welfare checks once a Ukrainian has arrived, and are alerted as soon as an application is made to complete DBS checks on all individuals in a sponsors’ household.”

A government spokesperson added that it is “our priority has been to ensure those in danger can reach safety as quickly as possible”.

**Load-Date:** January 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Those responsible for Child Q's racist treatment should be sacked*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6515-W7G1-DY4H-K1P7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 1:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 894 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

The clearly racist treatment by [*Metropolitan Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/metropolitan-police) officers of a black 15-year-old schoolgirl in a Hackney school was truly shocking.

Those officers, and the teaching staff who stood by as the poor child was subjected to the most unspeakably humiliating strip search should be ashamed of themselves. That the girl's mother was not informed, nor given the opportunity to attend the young girl's ordeal, makes the police and teachers' behaviour even more disgraceful.

The fact that the search found absolutely no drugs merely adds to the unforgivable event.

I am glad to see that Hackney Council leaders and London Mayor Sadiq Khan are taking up this utterly disgusting case. The Metropolitan Police can hardly withstand yet another significant scandal.

I look forward to confirmation that those responsible will be sacked without delay. The young victim deserves nothing less, and an apology would be adding insult to injury.

Patrick Moore

Norwich

Tulip Siddiq

Boris Johnson has been quick to claim credit for the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliife, even though his cack-handed comments in parliament contributed to the extension of the poor woman's detention, while Liz Truss has also eagerly seized a photo opportunity.

However, many people have worked towards Nazanin's release, and the politician who has done most is her MP Tulip Siddiq, who has campaigned tirelessly all these years.

Oh wait - she's an opposition MP, isn't she? Must keep quiet about her contribution, then.

Sam Boote

Nottingham

A family reunited

Is there a more balanced, brave and pragmatic man than [*Richard Ratcliffe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-richard-husband-reunion-b2037630.html) ? I have no doubt in my mind that he and his family will embark on this journey together, with the supreme tenacity and stoicism they have all shown during these long and torturous six years.

Yes, there will be problems and normal family life will be a struggle after all the trauma and setbacks. But he is correct, getting the basics right, enjoying reassuring family activities and placing their daughter Gabriella at the heart of their long and hopefully wonderful journey back, will see them through to the other side of this ghastly affair.

This indeed will be the start of a beautiful renaissance of their lives together, which was so cruelly interrupted.

Judith A Daniels

Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

Tyrants and dictators can strike deals too

What a sad picture it was to see Boris Johnson courting the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) in the pursuit of a ready solution to reduce reliance on Russian oil and gas.

Not just sad because of the individuals involved and what they represent, but because it is yet another example of where short-term expediency takes us away from the hard and gruelling task of doing what we know we need to do to wean ourselves off supposedly cheap energy resources, the price of which includes damage to people, to lands, to our climate and to future generations.

As the invasion of Ukraine has surely shown us, once again, that the search for just and sustainable solutions to many problems doesn't lie in our lazy and short-termist tendency to strike deals that deliver short-term solutions.

The answer isn't to turn our face from atrocity because over time, each failure to keep focus on the good only encourages those whose focus lies elsewhere. We know tyrants and dictators can strike those deals just as well as we can. We also know that what separates us from them is the drive to find answers that deliver to individuals within the context of common good.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

It's easy to blame individual politicians when they fail to represent us. We can and do occasionally have a socially responsive moment, as has the desire to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** forced the hand of the government.

Let's not let it rest at that. Through local elections, through the next general election, through continued pressure applied to those who deliver public and private services, the burden is now on us to show that we will no longer accept a binary fight between good and bad, between what suits us now and the right actions aimed at the future.

Let's force our politicians to realise that we want more than that, and that if they do not deliver, then they need to make way for others who will.

Gary Wiltshire

Scallastle, Isle of Mull

Red tape

I see that ex-unelected bureaucrat and former whisky salesman, David Frost, who once railed against unelected EU bureaucrats and was vocal in promising less red tape after [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) is now admitting, although only for touring musicians at present, that his deal actually increased red tape.

If this scenario played out on a third-rate TV sitcom I'd probably be laughing by now.

Robert Boston

Kent

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Putin faces 'dramatic increased response' if he uses chemical weapons*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YW-J9C1-DY4H-K4CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 10:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 825 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** A British minister warned Russia not to cross that 'line' during its invasion.

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) would face a "dramatic increased response" from the West if he crosses the "line" of using chemical weapons in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , a Government minister has said.

[*Chris Philp*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chris-philp) , the technology minister, echoed allies' warnings that the Russian president appears to be fabricating a "false narrative" online in preparation for such a "barbaric" attack.

He promised details of a new humanitarian route for refugees fleeing the invasion to seek sanctuary in the UK in the "very near future" after the scheme was hit by delays.

Downing Street billed the "sponsored" route for Ukrainians without family links to come to the country this week, but [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) now says it will come on Monday.

The Prime Minister expressed fears the Kremlin is spreading a "fake story" that the US or the Ukrainians have chemical weapons in Ukraine as a pretext for an attack.

Mr Philp told Times Radio: "Clearly the use of chemical weapons, especially in an invasion where there are a very large number of civilians, would be an outrage against humanity.

"So I would say to anybody in Russia thinking about this: do not cross that line, do not inflict any more misery and suffering on the Ukrainian people.

"It will trigger an increased response from the West, there's a dramatic increased response, there's no question about that.

"I'm not going to speculate about the form that's going to take or pre-empt it, but that's a line that Russian governments should not cross."

The technology minister singled out the Russian embassy in the UK, which has had a separate post branded "fake news" removed by Twitter, over disinformation.

He told Sky News the embassy was "creating a false narrative that Ukrainians are considering using chemical weapons, which is clearly ridiculous and totally untrue".

Under growing pressure for the Government to do more to help the millions fleeing Ukraine, Mr Philp suggested councils as well as families would be able to welcome in refugees.

"We're going to be making announcements in the very near future about a scheme for UK local authorities, and indeed UK families, to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, we've announced that principle and the details of how that scheme works will be laid out in the very near future," he told Sky News.

The Prime Minister has said Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove will on Monday outline details of the new route.

The invasion of Ukraine is a paradigm shift on the scale of 9/11. How we respond today will set the pattern for this new era.In my speech [*@AtlanticCouncil*](https://twitter.com/AtlanticCouncil?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) I set out how the world must work together to stop Putin's offensive in Ukraine[*https://t.co/0G6Z5M4VlU*](https://t.co/0G6Z5M4VlU) [*pic.twitter.com/pCk6J2qhvT*](https://t.co/pCk6J2qhvT) - Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1502044002320896000?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Refugees would be allowed to stay for an initial period of 12 months, during which they will be entitled to work, claim benefits and access public services.Officials will match them with offers of free accommodation from sponsoring individuals and organisations, who will be vetted to ensure it is safe and secure.The Telegraph said those offering housing would have to agree to take the refugees for a minimum period - potentially six months - and demonstrate that they meet appropriate standards.The move comes after Home Secretary Priti Patel was urged to do more to make it easier for those coming to the UK through the existing family route.On Thursday, Ms Patel announced that from Tuesday people will be able to apply online for a visa and will no longer have to go to a processing centre to give their biometrics.Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -11 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/9SIvyYxJxe*](https://t.co/9SIvyYxJxe) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/6agVnIHuZn*](https://t.co/6agVnIHuZn) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 11, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1502161078125355013?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

It followed criticism that the UK's response has been painfully slow in the face of the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, with about 2.2 million having fled the country.

However the British Red Cross said the quickest way of fixing the problem would be to remove the requirement for a visa, while the Refugee Council said Ms Patel's announcement "does not go anywhere near far enough".

Meanwhile, the Government announced it was sanctioning seven more Russians linked to the Putin regime, including Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich.

Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said the UK and other allies need to keep up the pressure with further measures - including a freeze on all Russian banking assets.

"We must double down and ramp up the global pressure on Putin. We must go further on sanctions to keep tightening the vice," she said in a speech in Washington.

"We want a situation where they can't access their funds, they can't clear their payments, their trade can't flow, their ships can't dock and their planes can't land."

The Ministry of Defence warned Russia could be re-posturing for a "renewed offensive" in Ukraine, "probably" including assaults on the capital Kyiv.

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Lack of Executive must not hinder refugee plans, Stormont ministers are warned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-P4H1-DY4H-K11C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 4:42 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 877 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Amnesty International has written to those ministers who remain in place, calling for urgent action to prepare to accept people fleeing the war.

**Body**

The absence of a functioning [*Stormont*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stormont) executive cannot lead to [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) turning its back on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, ministers have been warned.

[*Amnesty International*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/amnesty-international) has written to those ministers who remain in place at Stormont and the head of the civil service Jayne Brady, calling for urgent action to ensure the region is prepared to host people fleeing from the conflict.

The call came as humanitarian efforts to collect and send supplies to Ukraine continue across Northern Ireland.

An anti-war protest in [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) on Saturday also saw Ukrainians living in the region lead a march through the city centre to denounce the Russian invasion.

Amnesty has raised concerns that the absence of a first minister and deputy first minister may hamper the official response to the crisis in Northern Ireland.

The Stormont Executive was shorn of its ability to take significant policy decisions last month when DUP [*First Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/first-minister) Paul Givan resigned in protest at Brexit's Northern Ireland Protocol. His move automatically removed Sinn Fein deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill from her post.

While other ministers continue to head up their respective departments, they are unable to make major policy decisions.

In normal circumstances, the first and deputy first ministers have responsibility for issues related to refugee settlement in Northern Ireland.

Any response from Stormont would be line with a UK-wide policy on accepting refugees.

The Government in London is facing calls to offer temporary settlement to any Ukrainian fleeing their homeland, having so far limited it to those who have relatives already in the UK.

The EU has offered a three-year visa waiver to all Ukrainians, meaning the criteria for relocating to the Republic of Ireland is currently wider than it is for Northern Ireland.

The letter from Amnesty International's programme director in Northern Ireland Patrick Corrigan, which has been seen by the PA news agency, makes it clear that the political situation at Stormont must not hinder plans to accept Ukrainians.

Ukrainians living in Northern Ireland lead a march through Belfast city centre calling for an end to the war. [*pic.twitter.com/f5xS37rsFR*](https://t.co/f5xS37rsFR) - David Young (@DavidYoungPA) [*March 5, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DavidYoungPA/status/1500156938558058504?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "The absence of a First Minister and deputy First Minister cannot result in us turning our back on the people of Ukraine during their time of need amidst this human rights catastrophe," wrote Mr Corrigan."We urge Executive Ministers to work together to impress upon the UK government of the need to establish rapid, safe and legal routes immediately and to work with devolved governments in the preparation of these plans."We must offer to welcome refugees as part of a UK-wide approach, while learning and applying the lessons from past and current resettlement schemes to provide fast and appropriate support to those who need it, including by joint work with statutory and non-statutory agencies across Northern Ireland."Given the unique position of Northern Ireland, considering our border with the Republic of Ireland which has rightly lifted all visa requirements, we must also prepare to offer support to those who may arrive via this route."He added: "Over the years, this region has played its part in providing sanctuary to those fleeing conflict and persecution. We must take steps now to do so again."Mr Corrigan wrote: "We urge you to work with ministerial colleagues and with officials to ensure that Northern Ireland is acting urgently to offer refuge to those in need."The devolved governments in Scotland and Wales have already been in contact with the UK government to urge them to do more to welcome refugees and to offer to assist in resettlement."Under the EU's visa waiver, the Irish government is already welcoming people who have been forced to flee. The same message of sanctuary, accompanied with the necessary practical preparatory work, must come urgently from Northern Ireland."Volunteers have been writing messages of hope onto the boxes bound for Ukraine,the emotion level is high as we filled one lorry, hope is what keeps us going,the feeling of doing something in a situation we can't control[*#PeopleHelpingPeople*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/PeopleHelpingPeople?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#UkraineAppeal*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UkraineAppeal?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#foyleaid*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/foyleaid?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#Hope*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Hope?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/nxGWHR3Tma*](https://t.co/nxGWHR3Tma) - Ryan McCready (@Ryan\_McCready) [*March 5, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Ryan_McCready/status/1500137600610455555?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

In the letter, Mr Corrigan also called on Stormont ministers to urge the UK Government to drop legislative plans for asylum seekers in its Nationality and Borders Bill, which is part of its New Plan for Immigration.

He said the bill would "punish and push back" Ukrainians if they arrive in the UK outside specific resettlement schemes.

Volunteer efforts continued in Northern Ireland across the weekend as a range of groups in different areas gathered donated supplies for eastern Europe.

In Londonderry, the Foyle Aid initiative saw a 24-tonne lorry packed with donations set off for the Poland/Ukraine border.

Ulster Unionist councillor Ryan McCready, a former soldier who served as a military advisor in Ukraine, helped co-ordinate the collection along with the YMCA in Derry.

Addressing volunteers before the lorry set off, Mr McCready hailed the spirit of co-operation across the city.

"Everybody from every sector of this city came together and made it a reality," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: What does the world's response to Ukraine mean for the future?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-JP01-JBNF-W52T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 9:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 810 words

**Byline:** Eric Lewis

**Highlight:** Sweden and Switzerland understand that neutrality is no longer an option in an interconnected world. Qatar has stepped up to try to make up the shortfall in global energy markets. Even China has sounded an uncertain trumpet

**Body**

"The world is too much with us," Wordsworth wrote two centuries ago. He was lamenting the pace of commercial life and the loss of contact with nature. Today, history presses down with a relentless fury unimaginable in earlier times. The digital age, just a few decades old, gives us access to events around the world in real time.

It also allows those who wish to unleash evil to do so with greater speed and lethality. Smart weapons, including battlefield nuclear weapons, raise the prospect of focused destruction just short of the Mutually Assured Destruction that maintained a measure of stability from 1945 to today. Cyberattacks can shut down energy grids, financial markets and government networks in microseconds. Viruses spread and mutate from wet markets in China to every country in the world at the speed of jet travel.

In recent threats, we have moved from existential threats to democracy in the United States, from alpha to delta to omicron, to concentration camps incarcerating a million people Muslims in Xinjiang, to crackdowns in Kashmir locking down millions more, while humanitarian and human rights crises in Yemen and Egypt and Gaza and Libya and elsewhere continue unceasingly. And we can barely pay attention to less acute but no less pressing global crises like climate change.

And now Ukraine. A land war in Europe with one of the most powerful armies of the world invading a courageous citizen army outnumbered in men and material by major multiples. Putin's blitzkrieg tactics have stalled - did he not learn the lessons of Napoleon and Hitler about the fearsome Eurasian winters? - but we should make no mistake. The early humiliation of the Russian Army will only lead to massive escalation.

Thankfully, there has been unity, consistency and energy in the world's response. It is remarkable that Germany has come off the fence and pulled the plug on a crucial energy source in Nord Stream 2. It has not traded honor for gas. Qatar has stepped up to try to make up the shortfall in global energy markets. Saudi Arabia needs to do the same.

Hungary and Poland have been no beacons of liberty and its leaders have followed a Putin-esque model of illiberal democracy presided over by a single leader extinguishing pluralism and dissent. But they know their own neighborhoods, and have made a clear commitment to the west and to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Sweden and Switzerland understand that neutrality is no longer an option in an interconnected world. Even China has sounded an uncertain trumpet, abstaining on a resolution at the UN Security Council, while making unconvincing statements suggesting that this crisis is the fault of anyone but the author of unprovoked aggression.

The global community has been far greater and unified than at any moment since 9/11. But that unity was fleeting and was squandered by the disastrous moral and political failures of the Bush administration. It is essential that international organizations, national leaders and NGO's maintain their focus on Ukraine as well as on the surrounding countries of the old Soviet Empire and the Warsaw Pact, many of which have their security guaranteed by Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. Putin cannot call our bluff again as he did in 2013 in Syria and 2014 in Crimea.

But Putin's Hitlerian incursion must prompt a wider strategic and moral accounting. Why Ukraine, but not Xinjiang or Rwanda or Syria or Myanmar? Ukraine is strategically crucial but we must think through whether we are valuing white European lives differently. Are we paying attention because there are large, politically important constituencies of Ukrainians and neighboring countries in the United States and elsewhere in Europe? What do we do when moral principles do not overlap with our geostrategic or political agenda?

The United States cannot be the world's policeman, but we should still consider: What are the criteria for effective action in Ukraine and in other flashpoints around the world, today and in the months to come? Are sanctions enough to bring an autarkic country run by a leader seething with grievance to its knees? Will the provision of weapons come soon enough to make a difference or will they only increase the bloodshed? What can we do on a long-term basis to prevent the destruction wrought by leaders for life who often turn toward brutality and irrationality as their isolation grows and they confront their own mortality? Significantly, this final question is one that we as Americans now need to ask in our own country as well as in other places.

The Biden administration is negotiating the Ukrainian crisis skillfully, although at the moment it is not reflected in political support. Many Americans seem more interested in Critical Race Theory and gas prices than the fate of the post-war world - but it's important we remain as globally engaged as never before.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*This moment could bring about better ties with the EU*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-RK81-F072-43P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 3, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 26

**Length:** 861 words

**Byline:** ANDREW GRICE

**Body**

Could there be a tiny silver lining to the massive dark cloud of the Ukraine crisis, if the close cooperation between the UK and EU on sanctions against Russia ushers in a more grown-up relationship between London and Brussels? Some Tory backbenchers dare to hope so.

Of course, it would be better if the UK were still at the EU table. Having covered EU summits for 30 years before the UK walked out, I'm sure our status as a leading Nato member would have given us real clout in the EU's current debates, whatever the tensions with its members on other issues.

Pro-Europeans rue the UK's absence and even think Brexit was one factor that emboldened Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine. "Brexit has weakened Britain,undermined ourfriends and allies,and played its part in breaking such ahard-earnedpeace in Europe," said Richard Corbett, the last leader of Labour's MEPs. Michael Heseltine, the president of the European Movement, said: "I am ashamed that the country that in my lifetime saved European democracy has now absented itself as others determine Europe's response."

If this crisis has proved one thing, it is the strength of multilateral organisations. Nato, which Emmanuel Macron diagnosed as having "brain death", is suddenly alive and kicking. So is the EU, and it would be even stronger with the UK in it. One day, the "UK" seat at the table will be taken by "UKR" and Ukraine, which knows you don't have to sacrifice sovereignty to be a member.

Perhaps all is not lost. The cooperation on sanctions offers a ray of hope for a better UK-EU working relationship. The EU's remarkably quick, united and tough response has erased the Brexiteers' caricature of a bloc plagued by sclerotic decision-making and a "lowest common denominator" approach, especially on foreign policy, in which the convoy moved at the pace of its slowest member. The EU has surprised itself by outperforming its response to previous crises, such as on Greek debt, the annexation of Crimea, Covid and even Brexit.

UK ministers claim they "led the way" on arming the Ukrainians but the EU has, surprisingly, caught up. Germany's decision to supply arms and boost defence spending is a watershed moment; the UK will now need to catch up by raising its defence budget to protect eastern Europe. One of the alleged benefits of Brexit was that the UK could be more agile in imposing sanctions. But the EU sanctioned members of the Duma and the RT television channel before the UK.The suspicion grows that some oligarchs will sell their UK assets while the government delays moving against them.

The bad news for pro-Europeans is that appearancescan be deceptive.Revealingly, one EU diplomat told me: "There is good coordination on sanctions.But the UK goes to the US to agree a line before they then come to us." Another said: "Washington is still driving the process. The UK is not in the [EU] picture and relies much more on Nato for the overview."

I'm told therehave been differences behind the scenes: for example, theUS (and therefore the UK) wanted a United Nations resolution based on a total condemnation of Russia, while the EU's instinct was for a slightly softer line.

Johnson's top priority is to hug the US administration close and repair the damage done by the Afghanistan debacle - another own goal that encouraged Putin. His priority hasn't changed in the past week. Nor have the populist instincts of his government, as witnessed by its slow, grudging response towards accepting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, on which the EU - despite its deep divisions on migration - did the right thing by opening its borders, and quickly.

Johnson had the nerve to claim: "The UK is way out in front in our willingness to help with refugees." Yet it is the slowest member of the European convoy and the government's true colours were revealed when the immigration minister Kevin Foster suggested Ukrainians should apply for seasonal work visas.

This populism means Johnson wants to "keep Brexit alive" because he believes it is Keir Starmer's weak point. It is why he indulges in Brussels-bashing and childish, counterproductive Macron-baiting ("Donnez-moi un break") to grab easy headlines. It is why "Global Britain" senselessly avoids cooperating with the EU on foreign and defence policy and would rather talk to individual member states than the EU institutions that have proved their worth in this emergency.

Perhaps Johnson will come to realise that the UK and EU are stronger together in the face of their common enemy in Putin; the irony is that the US would prefer such a united Europe. Growing up and having a more grown-up EU relationship would help Johnson throw off his untrustworthy image in foreign capitals and be taken more seriously on the world stage.

But can this leopard change his spots? Perhaps we will have to wait for the now delayed succession and Rishi Sunak, rightly keen to stop Johnson stumbling into a trade war with the UK's biggest trading partner, or Liz Truss, sensibly taking a constructive approach to EU negotiations on the Northern Ireland protocol because she can see the global big picture. It may fall to one of them to end Johnson's playground politics with the EU.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson U-turn will hasten sanctions on Putin cronies*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XJ-P2D1-JCS0-D36D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 5, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 878 words

**Byline:** ANDREW WOODCOCK POLITICAL EDITOR

**Body**

Boris Johnson has backed down on plans to allow Russian oligarchs 18 months to register ownership of luxury properties in the UK, slashing the proposed "grace period" to six months. And he announced plans to streamline the process of sanctioning individuals with links to Vladimir Putin by removing the legal requirement for government lawyers to show that measures are "appropriate" before implementing them.

But the changes fall well short of demands from Labour, who had called for a maximum 28-day delay before registers must be updated to identify the true owner of a property rather than a shell company. Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy said the government's tardiness in dealing with Russian "dirty money" in London had left the UK trailing behind the US and EU in imposing sanctions on Putin's cronies in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Mr Johnson's decision to amend the Economic Crimes Bill before it comes before the Commons on Monday amounts to an admission that Britain has been unable to impose sanctions as swiftly as its American and European allies, who have already imposed them on hundreds of individuals.

Legislation passed in the wake of Brexit, designed to allow the UK to operate its own regime independently of the EU, included the requirement for a watertight legal case to be established for each individual targeted - something officials admit could take months. Removing the "appropriateness" test will allow the designation of groups, permitting the UK to align its sanctions lists with those of Washington and Brussels.

Those named could have travel bans imposed on them, as well as asset freezes that would prevent them from selling, renting, visiting or even repairing their UK properties, which have a total estimated value of well over £1bn. Deputy prime minister Dominic Raab has even suggested the homes could be seized and used to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

London has so far sanctioned only 15 oligarchs, including Alisher Usmanov, who has had financial links to Arsenal and Everton football clubs. Critics have warned that delays will allow billionaires who fear being put on the UK blacklist time to sell off their assets and move their money abroad. Putin associate Roman Abramovich has announced plans to sell Chelsea FC, though there has been no official indication that he is being considered for sanctions.

Meanwhile, ministers said that keeping a six-month grace period for property registration would help crack down on money while giving people with legitimate reasons to hold property in overseas entities time to comply.

Mr Johnson said: "The UK has led the way with the toughest package of sanctions against Putin's regime, and we're bolstering this with new powers in our arsenal to go further and faster. We will ramp up the pressure on those criminal elites trying to launder money on UK soil and close the net on corruption. They will have nowhere to hide."

But Mr Lammy responded: "It is totally unacceptable that Putin-linked oligarchs who should have already faced sanctions are being allowed to move their money around because of government incompetence. Ministers should have introduced the laws needed to work in lock-step with our allies and partners months ago, not be left sanctioning hundreds fewer individuals and entities than the EU and the US.

"We welcome the government's U-turn, under pressure from Labour, to tighten the law so we can move on more oligarchs tied to Putin's regime, but we must also move faster, acting against these individuals in???days, not months."

As well as making changes to the way in which wealthy individuals are dealt with, Britain is to step up action against Russia's oil and gas industries. Sanctions imposed by London in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine have so far focused largely on the banking and defence sectors. However, The Independent understands that the focus will move next week to measures directed at the energy industries that earn Russia much of its international revenues.

Yesterday, the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, used meetings with allied counterparts in Brussels to urge the west to wean itself off Russian energy supplies as a key means of imposing a cost on Putin for his aggression. The EU foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, did not rule out the suspension of EU gas imports.

While sanctions have disrupted much of Russia's trade with the outside world, gas and oil supplies have kept flowing, and the spike in global prices has done much to offset the impact on Moscow of losses elsewhere. The UK imports only about 3 per cent of its gas from Russia, compared with about 40 per cent for the EU, which also gets 25 per cent of its oil from its eastern neighbour.

Measures already announced in the financial sector are believed to have had a knock-on impact on Russian energy firms, for instance by stopping Gazprom from continuing to raise billions for investment from the London markets, as it has in recent years.

Also likely to be next in line for UK measures is the services sector, with the Treasury already taking action in the insurance market. In addition, legislation is expected to give longer-term effect to the exclusion of Russian aviation from UK airports, after it was initially introduced last week through temporary orders.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'A child running from bombs': UK couple fear for teenager fleeing Russian attack on Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VY-N5R1-DY4H-K3BX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 8:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 792 words

**Byline:** Zoe Tidman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: 'I don't care what the government says. I'll be driving to Poland to get my daughter,' Jason Owen from Southampton says

**Body**

"Do you know where she slept last night? On the underground," Jason Owen tells The Independent.

This is how his 16-year-old stepdaughter spent the first night of the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr Owen lives hundreds of miles away with his Ukranian wife -Evelyn's mother -in [*Southampton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/southampton). And they desperately want the teenager to flee [*the warzone*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-war-kyiv-invasion-latest-b2022971.html) to join them.

So do her grandparents, both in their 80s, who were with the teenager in the Kyiv underground on Thursday night.

Mr Owen says: "They're saying to my wife: 'You need to get your daughter out. We cannot look after her'."

So far, this has not proved easy. The 54-year-old stepfather was hoping to make use of emergency measures for [*British nationals to get family members out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/damian-hinds-ukraine-uk-government-britons-home-office-b2018157.html) of Ukraine, where the threat of a Russian attack had loomed for weeks before the all-out invasion on Thursday.

But the Owen family do not qualify, as this was for family members of Britons in Ukraine -rather than those living back in the UK.

"What they're basically saying, if I was in Kyiv getting bombed, I can bring her. But because she's been bombed on our own, I can't," Mr Owen says.

Now, his teenage stepdaughter is making her away across Ukraine -where Russia stepped up its offensive and [*moved into Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-invasion-ukraine-kyiv-latest-war-b2023118.html) on Friday -in the hope of making it to Poland.

"A child running from [*bombs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bombs) ," he says.

Russian missiles pounded Kyiv on Friday, families cowered in shelters and authorities [*told residents to prepare Molotov cocktails*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-army-age-lifted-b2023117.html) to defend Ukraine's capital, as fighting continued elsewhere across the country.

It has been estimated the invasion [*could drive up to 5 million people to flee abroad*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/russia-ukraine-invasion-warning-us-b2022001.html) , with reports that [*at least 100,000 people are already uprooted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ukraine-refugees-us-statement-white-house-b2022955.html) in the country where fuel, cash and medical supplies are running low.

As fears rose about a Russian invasion, the UK [*told British nationals in Ukraine to leave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-invasion-russia-uk-us-putin-b2013417.html) the country.

The UK government said it would also waive visa application fees for family members of its citizens who usually live in Ukraine.

Mr Owen says this waiver would have sped things up for his stepdaughter. But their rejection came through on Friday and the family was told to apply through the normal route -which he feared would take several months to sort.

He says he cannot risk waiting that long to get his stepdaughter to safety.

"I don't care what the government says. I'll be driving to Poland to get my daughter," Mr Owen says.

It was unclear what would happen after that -but he hoped she could come to the UK as a refugee fleeing a warzone. "Maybe what I'll do is take her to France and put her in a dinghy. You just become desperate."

He feels the emergency measures have only looked at one side of the equation: families of Britons living in Ukraine. "What about people who've got kids that are there?"

Others worry for their parents living in Ukraine, such as Natasha Kucherova from Cambridgeshire.

She told The Independent her Ukranian mother and father spent Thursday night in a bomb shelter in Kviv, where her mother had been for radiotherapy treatment. They are now trying to flee back to their hometown further west.

"It's scary. No one imagined this type of war could happen in the 21st century. I am feeling terrible that I am unable to help my parents. I admire them for their bravery. I admire people of Ukraine," she says.

Meanwhile Helen Ross Revutsky, who lives in London but has been in Ukraine for several months to care for her mother, says she feels stuck in Cherkassy, in cental Ukraine.

"I can't find how I can leave this town. I have the information the roads are closed and there is no petrol at gas stations. And what should I do if I have an elderly mother with me who can hardly walk," she tells The Independent.

She had to stay in Ukraine despite the government's plea for British citizens to return to the UK because of her mother's treatment.

"I'm worrying very much because Cherkassy is not too far from Kyiv," she says.

Thousands of Ukrainians have crossed into neighbouring countries to the west in search of safety. But it emerged on Thursday night the UK [*had not set up a route for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-visas-b2022567.html) hoping to seek asylum in the country.

Ukraine says [*more than 100 people have been killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-news-russia-war-deaths-b2022806.html) and hundreds more wounded since Russia launched its attack by land, air and sea on Thursday.

A government spokesperson said its priority remained supporting British Nationals living in Ukraine and dependents who want to leave the country. "We are working around the clock to process visa applications and are processing many applications in a matter of hours," they said.

The spokesperson added: "We are working with other European countries to ensure that responses to any migration issues are practical and in the best interests of the Ukrainian people."

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How many of us would offer a home to a Ukraine family?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-KG01-JCS0-D51D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 8, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 37

**Length:** 806 words

**Byline:** JENNY ECLAIR

**Body**

Call me naive, but I genuinely didn't believe this could happen. Obviously, I knew there were ugly rumblings over Russia and the Ukraine, but I never thought that one man could inflict so much pain and chaos - while the rest of the world stood by and watched.

"Surely someone will kill him," sprang to mind, which is what a lot of people have been saying, but is ultimately a bad idea. Still, I can't help myself wondering, sometimes: "Why can't someone simply assassinate Putin? Someone close, who pretends to be on his side and then betrays him and saves the world?"

In a film this would happen, and the assassin in question could be played by Voldymyr Zelensky, the heroic Ukranian leader who - already, in his own lifetime - has won Ukraine's Strictly Come Dancing and been the voice of the Ukrainian Paddington Bear. Beat that, Boris.

Turns out, though, that in an emergency I am not capable of rational grown-up thought. Because I don't know enough about world politics or Nato, I find myself responding like a schoolgirl: "Just kill him" (to be honest, after seeing the footage of this catastrophic war, given the chance, I would do the job myself).

It's a very odd feeling, seeing a deliberate manmade disaster unfold in real time as we go about our daily business. I think many of us thought that the worst we would see in our cozy little lives was the pandemic. Surely, once that was in retreat, we deserved many years of ease and contentment?

After all, as a universe, we'd gone through something pretty traumatic together. Surely that gave us a shared experience and some kind of perspective on the world? I genuinely thought, post-Covid, that even if we struggled to get back on our feet financially we'd feel a sense of global optimism and dare to relax and have some fun - after all, the worst had happened and more of us had survived than we ever dared hope. Ha!

"How dare he, how dare he," I find myself muttering instead, my hatred intense - but utterly futile. Like many people, I can only take small doses of the news and much to my shame, I find that for whole swathes of the day I can blank out the entire situation, distracted by Wordle and the fact that I'm in the middle of filming a telly job which I love, while living on the 20th floor of a high-rise hotel in Manchester for the duration.

Last time I was here, recording the same show, it was November 2020 - the city was in level 3 lockdown and the entire place was eerily deserted. Now, the puddles of post-Friday night puke are back on the Saturday morning pavements and once again the city is a thriving, raucous hub. People are dressed up and ready to party, Covid seems to be on the back foot and there's a celebratory air.

Only now and then it catches you: how dare we have fun while the Ukrainians suffer?

How can we go about our normal routines, running baths, boiling kettles and putting a wash on, while millions of people have seen their water and electricity cut off and their homes bombed?

Less than two weeks ago, they were doing what we're doing: eating pizza, making telly shows and spending weekends throwing up on pavements. Now, women are giving birth in underground bunkers and the old sit huddled on makeshift seating, surrounded by their possessions, dazed by this cruellest turn of events.

Apart from donating, what can we really do? Watching the generosity of the other European nations is humbling. They are stepping forward to offer shelter without hesitation. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being met at railway stations in Hungary, while on other platforms, travellers lucky enough to live in other countries are arriving for their weekend city breaks. It's the same story in Germany, Poland and Moldova.

How many of us in the UK would offer our homes up to a Ukrainian family? Our hearts say yes, but the reality is daunting and exhausting.

If we're honest, most of us struggle to cope with our nearest and dearest for more than a few days over Christmas - massive props to anyone who opens their home to traumatised strangers without a shared language in common.

The utter weirdness of this situation beggars belief. While all my sympathies lie with the people of the Ukraine, I can't help wondering how countless westernised Russians and their children must feel in this country, right now. It must be pretty weird to be completely accepted one day and feel like an utter pariah the next.

How do the Ukrainians in this country deal with Russian workmates? What would you do if you'd booked a trip of a lifetime to Russia? Visiting St Petersburg has always been a dream for my partner - not anymore.

Less than a fortnight ago, not many people (hand on heart) knew the colours of the Ukranian flag, never mind their national flower. We do now, because, in a war played out on the TV screens in our living rooms, there is no such thing as blissful ignorance.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*China's slowing economy in spotlight as legislature meets*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-T8R1-JBNF-W04S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 4:38 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,AMERICAS,US POLITICS; Version:2

**Length:** 869 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The annual meeting of China's mostly ceremonial legislature usually showcases grand, long-term plans

**Body**

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) 's ruling [*Communist Party*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/communist-party) is temporarily turning away from its longer-term ambitions to focus on pulling the economy out of a slump as the country heads into the annual meeting of its ceremonial legislature.

The [*National People's Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/national-peoples-congress) , usually used to showcase big initiatives, is overshadowed this year by a "policy pivot" begun in December by President [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) 's government to revive anemic consumer spending and housing sales.

[*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) is easing off multi-year campaigns to cut surging debt that Chinese leaders worry is dangerously high, rein in carbon emissions and narrow the gap between a wealthy elite and China's poor majority.

"They probably need to be put on the back burner for this year, while actively prioritizing stabilization goals," said Helen Qiao, the chief China economist for Bank of America.

The NPC session, which opens Saturday, takes place against a backdrop of Russia's attack on Ukraine, which has pushed up oil prices and added to uncertainty over a global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

China's economic growth slid to 4% over a year earlier in the final three months of 2021, down from 18.3% in the first quarter, after a crackdown on borrowing in the real estate industry set off a plunge in construction, a major employer.

Manufacturing was hurt by power shortages, weak export demand and anti-disease controls that cut off access to major cities. Share prices of e-commerce and other internet companies plunged after Beijing tightened control over the industry.

In response, ruling party leaders in December promised tax cuts for entrepreneurs who generate jobs and wealth. Banks were ordered to lend more.

"The defining theme for 2022 could be a race between slowdown and stimulus," Larry Hu and Xinyu Ji of Macquarie Group said in a report. However, they said, "stimulus is so costly that they don't want to overdo it."

Forecasters expect Premier Li Keqiang, the No. 2 leader and top economic official, to announce an annual growth target as low as 5%. It would be the lowest in decades but better than last year′s anemic 2.3% growth.

Companies and investors will watch how large a budget deficit the ruling party will allow.

"A lot of people were asking me recently if we can see a significant step up in the pace and intensity of policy easing during or after the NPC," Qiao said.

However, it might be too early to expect more changes while Chinese leaders are waiting to see how the economy performed in January and February. Qiao said they want to avoid resorting to their traditional tool of encouraging spending on real estate, which might push up politically sensitive housing costs and debt.

"While many people are saying, maybe there is something big coming out, I am a nonbeliever," she said.

The meeting of the NPC's 3,000-plus delegates does little lawmaking. The high-profile event is used to announce broad goals for the economy, social welfare and other issues. Companies and the public wait months to learn details of policy changes.

Over the past two years, however, Li has tried to reassure the public by using the NPC to announce measures that put more money in consumers' pockets.

This year's NPC was cut to one week from the traditional two and takes place under strict anti-disease controls. News conferences will be held by video link. Few big gatherings are scheduled.

China was the first major economy to rebound from the pandemic in 2019, allowing Xi's government to shift its focus back to structural changes aimed at nurturing self-sustaining growth based on consumer spending instead of trade and investment.

Meanwhile, Beijing launched anti-monopoly and information security crackdowns on e-commerce and other internet companies. It pushed them to divert money from their core businesses into initiatives like rural job creation and developing processor chips and other technology to reduce reliance on U.S. and other foreign suppliers.

The crackdown on debt that Chinese leaders worry is dangerously high has pushed some smaller real estate developers into bankruptcy. One of the biggest, Evergrande Group, is struggling to avoid defaulting on 2 trillion yuan ($310 billion) owed to banks and bondholders. Uneasy apartment buyers have put off purchases, fueling a downward industry spiral.

After the growth slump, "the basic policy tone this year has turned to stability," said He Fan, a professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University's Antai College of Economics and Management.

The "policy pivot" suggests the peak of efforts to control internet companies and real estate debt "are behind us," Hu and Ji said in a report.

Forecasters expect debt to creep back up as banks lend more and Beijing pumps money into the economy through higher spending on public works.

"Without infrastructure investment, it is difficult to stabilize the economy," said He.

\_\_\_

AP researcher Yu Bing contributed.

Read More

[*One million* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee as Kherson falls to Russia -live*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-update-kyiv-explosion-putin-news-b2027373.html)

[*Why has Russia invaded Ukraine? The conflict explained*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-b2026550.html)

[*Sign The Independent's petition to help the people of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-russia-petition-help-b2025628.html)

[*Live updates: Fitch downgrades Russia's credit rating*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-international-paralympic-committee-russian-direct-investment-fund-fitch-b2027451.html)

[*Russian athletes out of Paralympics in stunning about-face*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/international-paralympic-committee-ukraine-andrew-parsons-beijing-international-olympic-committee-b2027432.html)

[*Asian stocks rise after Fed chair supports smaller rate hike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/jerome-powell-fed-beijing-shanghai-kharkiv-b2027405.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Britain fails to set up refugee route as thousands flee Ukraine after Russian invasion*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VR-H9S1-DY4H-K09M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2022 Thursday 7:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 866 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** No safe and legal route for Ukrainians to travel directly to UK for asylum as exodus begins

**Body**

Britain has not set up a route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach UK shores, it emerged last night, as thousands headed to the border following the Russian invasion.

The UK has stopped accepting [*visa applications*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visa-applications) from Ukrainians stuck in the country, meaning there is no safe and legal route for them to seek asylum in Britain unless they have British relatives.

Countries surrounding [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are braced for an exodus and the [*UN Refugee Agency*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un-refugee-agency) has warned of "devastating humanitarian consequences".

The United States has predicted that up to five million people could be displaced by the conflict, and Poland alone is preparing to receive up to one million refugees.

Steady lines of people carrying backpacks and dragging suitcases formed at border crossings on Thursday, hours after Russian tanks rolled across Ukraine's eastern borders.

The International Rescue Committee urged states to commit their support publicly, withsenior representative and former French minister Harlem Désir telling The Independent: "This should not be looked at as another migration crisis. This is a crisis of war. It should not be business as usual, we need real support for the Ukrainian people."

Boris Johnson told the House of Commons on Thursday that 1,000 troops had been put on standby "to help the humanitarian exodus in neighbouring countries" and insisted the government was helping British nationals.

However, an announcement on the Home Office website said: "Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine (who aren't immediate family members of British nationals normally living in Ukraine, or where the British national is living in the UK), are currently unable to make visa applications to visit, work, study or join family in the UK."

It said the UK visa application centre in Kiev was closed and all related services in the Ukrainian capital have been suspended.

Dependents of British nationals can apply in the city of Lviv, in western Ukraine, but Ukrainians without close British relatives can only obtain UK visas if they reach centres in Poland, Romania, Hungary and Moldova.

Priti Patel has announced visa concessions for Ukranians who are already in Britain for work, study and tourism, extending the time period before they must leave the country.

But there has been no announcement of a resettlement scheme or other measures in response to an expected exodus of refugees, despite offers of help from numerous other countries.

Mr Johnson's spokesperson said: "In terms of refugees, obviously it's relatively early time at the moment. But we have provided support already to help at the border should we start to see a humanitarian crisis emerge, and obviously we are ready to deploy that."

The Independent understands that the government expects many Ukrainians to stay in eastern Europe in the short term, or in Schengen countries where they can stay visa-free for 90 days, and is not immediately bracing for a rise in small boat crossings.

Ministers are pressing ahead with plans to make arriving in the UK "without permission" a criminal offence punishable up to four years in prison, which would apply equally to asylum seekers of all nationalities.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) previously called the plans "deeply concerning" and said criminalising the act of arriving in the UK to seek asylum violates the 1951 Refugee Convention, which the government denies.

The Nationality and Borders Bill, which is currently being considered by parliament, follows a change to immigration rules meaning that asylum applications from people who have temporarily resided in safe third countries can be declared "inadmissible".

It means Ukranians forced to travel to countries such as Poland, in order to obtain UK visas, may later be refused asylum.

EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen on Thursday said EU members neighbouring Ukraine were working on contingency plans to "welcome and host" refugees.

"We hope there will be as little as possible refugees but we are fully prepared for them and they are welcome," she added.

Ireland's taoiseach Michel Martin said the country would waive visa requirements for all Ukrainian people who travel there.

It came as figures showed the number of asylum claims made in the UK at the highest level in nearly two decades, while the backlog of cases waiting to be determined continues to soar.

Almost three quarters of asylum claims were granted on an initial decision, and almost half of appeals were successful.

A Home Office document said the increase in applications was linked to the easing of Covid travel restrictions "and to a sharp increase in small boat arrivals to the UK", of which "almost all claim asylum".

In total, more than 28,5000 people crossed the Channel on small boats in 2021 - triple the number in 2020.

A government spokesperson said: "Our priority has been to support British nationals and their families in Ukraine. This has included temporarily waiving application fees for those eligible under the Family Migration route, allowing entry for 12 months for other who did not meet the requirements and fast-tracking visas.

"We continue to work with our international partners on a range of issues as the situation develops, including migration."

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Rip up bureaucracy' and provide sanctuary to people fleeing Ukraine, senior Tory and Labour MPs say*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W4-S8V1-DY4H-K4TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 26, 2022 Saturday 3:53 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 913 words

**Byline:** Ashley Cowburn

**Highlight:** Yvette Cooper says it is 'immoral' to apply usual visa restrictions to Ukrainians escaping war

**Body**

The UK needs to ditch bureaucracy and visa restrictions to provide sanctuary to Ukrainians fleeing their country under attack from Russia, senior Tory and Labour MPs have said.

As the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) [*wages war on their eastern European neighbour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-invasion-putin-aid-b2023860.html) , Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, said it was "immoral" to apply usual visa restrictions to Ukranians escaping war.

Priti Patel called her comments "appalling misinformation" and said "the facts" were in government guidance that she shared. The document showed a visa application fee is being waived for family members of Britons who live in Ukraine and Ukrainians in the UK are being given temporary concessions when their visa expires.

According to the latest estimates from the [*UN refugee agency, almost 116,000 have fled*](https://twitter.com/RefugeesMedia/status/1497516612575891458) their homes - predominately to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania - since Vladimir Putin declared war.

Earlier this week The Independent reported that [*there is currently no safe and legal route for Ukrainians to travel directly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-resettlement-b2023549.html) from their country to the UK in order to seek asylum, unless they have close British relatives.

A No 10 spokesperson said on Friday that troops had been deployed to help the humanitarian response in Poland and were "working incredibly closely with Ukraine's neighbours" to help support those fleeing.

But they would not be drawn on any further action when asked about safe and legal routes for those wanting to seek asylum in the UK.

Posting on social media on Saturday, Conservative MP [*Julian Smith*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/julian-lewis) said ministers must "welcome" those who have been displaced, and "make it as easy as possible to be here".

"It's really important that the United Kingdom makes an immediate open, welcoming & warm hearted commitment of sanctuary to those who wish to leave Ukraine.

"Rip up the usual bureaucracy & let's just say they are welcome & we will make it as easy as possible to be here."

Ms Cooper also tweeted on Saturday: "Ukraine is under fire. People are fleeing war. Yet Home Office still applies normal visa restrictions inc salaries, language, close relatives."

She said this "isn't solidarity" with Ukraine but "immoral" and urged the government to "urgently provide simple sanctuary route to UK for Ukrainians who need our help".

The government told [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-invasion-uk-brits-exit-b2017489.html) last week it had waived language requirements for dependents of British nationals.

Speaking during a visit to Birmingham, the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer said Britain should be prepared to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, saying the government has "got this one wrong" in continuing to apply existing visa rules.

"We must help Ukrainian people looking for safety. That is what we have always done as a country in a moment like this," he said.

"The government has got this one wrong. They are applying the same rules as they had before."

He called for a "humanitarian approach" with "sanctuary for those who are fleeing from Russian aggression, fleeing from this invasion, fleeing for their lives".

It comes after a poll by YouGov - following the Russian invasion - found almost two-thirds of [*British people would support the introduction of a resettlement scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-war-refugees-uk-resettlement-b2023549.html) for those fleeing Ukraine.

Ms Cooper said the war was "already having devastating consequences", adding: "The UK has a duty to work with our allies to provide humanitarian assistance and support to those fleeing this horrific situation."

"We must also work with the UN Refugee Agency to make sure contingency plans are ready for further support and sanctuary schemes that will be needed and be prepared to play our part in further international action to support refugees."

Images of Downing Street and other government buildings flying Ukrainian flags posted on social media were also met with calls to ease restrictions on movement.

"Don't wave flags; waive visas," Sabir Zazai, the chief executive of the Scottish Refugee Council, said. "Only then will you truly stand with #Ukraine or anyone else fleeing a dreadful conflict."

Don't wave flags; waive visas. Only then will you truly stand with [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) or anyone else fleeing a dreadful conflict. [*https://t.co/nBwyq4JIo4*](https://t.co/nBwyq4JIo4) - Sabir Zazai (@sabir\_zazai) [*February 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/sabir_zazai/status/1497508662994157569?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In an update posted on Twitter on Saturday, the Home Office said the UK government "has an extensive visa application centre network" in countries neighbouring Ukraine."Ukrainians in these countries can access these services & apply for visa under existing immigration routes," they said.Ukraine: UNHCR will soon be launching a portal with current displacement estimates.Latest update is that almost 116,000 have fled to neighbouring countries since 24 Feb -mainly Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and Romania. Numbers are rising.- UNHCR News (@RefugeesMedia) [*February 26, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RefugeesMedia/status/1497516612575891458?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The department added: "We have been planning for the impact that a Russian invasion would have on visa application centres, and swift action was taken to ensure contingency plans were put in place.

"More staff have been surged to visa application centres. Dependents of [UK] nationals residents in [Ukraine] needing a UK visa can apply through the new, temporary Lviv location or through a visa application centre in nearby countries including Poland, Moldova, Romania & Hungary."

The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0?CMP=ILC-refresh) campaign is calling for the UK government to set up a resettlement scheme to give Ukrainians fleeing the invasion sanctuary in Britain

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin's promise of Ukraine escape routes to Russia 'cynical', minister says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-GX41-JBNF-W4NN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 9:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 853 words

**Byline:** David Hughes

**Highlight:** Foreign Office minister James Cleverly said the most humanitarian thing Vladimir Putin could do would be to end the war.

**Body**

Moscow's announcement of limited ceasefires and the creation of humanitarian escape routes out of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) appears "cynical beyond words" because it would only allow refugees to head to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and Belarus.

Foreign Office minister [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) said the routes set up were "nonsense" because they would take fleeing Ukrainians "into the arms of the country that is currently destroying yours".

In London, Boris Johnson was beginning a week of intense diplomatic efforts with foreign leaders to build a united front against [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , hosting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Dutch Prime Minister [*Mark Rutte*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-rutte) at Downing Street.

Russian forces continued their bombardment of Ukraine's towns and cities despite the announcement of limited local ceasefires.

Previous attempts to create humanitarian corridors have ended with civilians being shelled as they tried to flee to safety.

A Russian task force said a ceasefire would start Monday morning, the 12th day of the war, for civilians from capital Kyiv, second city Kharkiv, the southern port of Mariupol and Sumy.

But evacuation routes published by Russia's RIA Novosti news agency showed that civilians will only be able to leave to Russia and Belarus.

Mr Cleverly told the BBC: "It appears cynical beyond belief. There is a view that Vladimir Putin believed there was a widespread desire of Ukrainians to be closer to Russia, to be more Russian. I think that has been proven to be a complete nonsense by the circumstances we are seeing.

"Providing evacuation routes into the arms of the country that is currently destroying yours is a nonsense."

He added that "ultimately the most humanitarian thing the Russians could do is end this completely illegal, completely unjustified invasion of Ukraine".

Meanwhile ministers were scrambling to go "faster and harder" with sanctions levelled against the Kremlin.

The Prime Minister is expected to put more pressure on international leaders to take further action to remove Russia from the Swift payment system, while pushing them to back his six-point plan to tackle Russian aggression.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -07 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/D3NG9b9zMX*](https://t.co/D3NG9b9zMX) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/lIjezjELsE*](https://t.co/lIjezjELsE) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 7, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1500727508014088192?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said amendments to the Economic Crime Bill - which is set to be fast-tracked through all stages in the Commons on Monday - would "give us the chance to bring even more crippling sanctions against Putin and his regime".

Labour said the legislation still gave Russian oligarchs a "get-out-of-London-free" card even though the grace period under the measures designed to tackle so-called "dirty money" has been cut from 18 months to six, with the opposition calling for this to be reduced further to just 28 days.

Mr Cleverly told Sky News the Government was working on a cross-party basis to get the legislation through.

"The ultimate goal is to make sure that the sanctions that we've already put in place, which are incredibly effective, and have had a real impact on Russian oligarchs, and indeed the Russian economy, are made even stronger still, and we welcome cross-party support in that."

In response to criticism over the numbers of individual oligarchs targeted by sanctions, Mr Cleverly said: "We've had a very wide-ranging number, over 200 individuals and entities, over £250 billion worth of Russian economic activity curtailed, over three million Russian companies no longer able to raise finance on the London market.

"So, the fact that Vladimir Putin singled us out for criticism is a badge of honour."

Shadow business secretary Jonathan Reynolds told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme: "I want to know where the treasure has been buried. This is not just about oligarchs, it's about the money launderers. It's about tax evaders, I want to know where that money is.

"I think the reasonableness of this period is what will give us the chance to do that."

The Government was also pressed to do more to allow Ukrainians fleeing the war to enter the UK.

The Home Office revealed on Sunday that only "around 50" visas had been granted under the Ukraine Family Scheme as of 10am on Sunday.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper tweeted: "This is too slow. Too many hoops for desperate families to have to jump through. Home Office completely failing to understand urgency of crisis."

But Home Secretary Priti Patel said the UK was "doing everything possible" to speed up efforts to grant visas to Ukrainians fleeing the conflict, and told The Sun she was examining a "humanitarian route" to allow all ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who want to come to the UK to do so.

Mr Cleverly said the number of Ukrainians being granted visas for the UK would increase "very, very quickly" but the scale of the crisis was unprecedented.

"This is the largest refugee flow that we have seen since the Second World War," he told LBC.

The Home Office "had to create a system pretty much from scratch", he said, and the process "will get quicker and slicker and faster".

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK fails to set up refugee route for fleeing Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VV-XKB1-JCS0-D537-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

February 25, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 859 words

**Byline:** LIZZIE DEARDEN HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

**Body**

Britain has not set up a route for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to reach UK shores, it emerged last night, as thousands headed to the border following the Russian invasion. The UK has stopped accepting visa applications from Ukrainians stuck in the country, meaning there is no safe and legal route for them to seek asylum in Britain unless they have British relatives.

Countries surrounding Ukraine are braced for an exodus and the UN Refugee Agency has warned of "devastating humanitarian consequences". The United States has predicted that up to 5 million people could be displaced by the conflict, and Poland alone is preparing to receive up to 1 million refugees.

Steady lines of people carrying backpacks and dragging suitcases formed at border crossings yesterday, hours after Russian tanks rolled across Ukraine's eastern borders. The International Rescue Committee urged states to commit their support publicly, with senior representative and former French minister Harlem Desir telling The Independent: "This should not be looked at as another migration crisis. This is a crisis of war. It should not be business as usual, we need real support for the Ukrainian people."

Boris Johnson told the House of Commons yesterday that 1,000 troops had been put on standby "to help the humanitarian exodus in neighbouring countries" and insisted the government was helping British nationals.

However, an announcement on the Home Office website said: "Ukrainian nationals in Ukraine (who aren't immediate family members of British nationals normally living in Ukraine, or where the British national is living in the UK), are currently unable to make visa applications to visit, work, study or join family in the UK."

It said the UK visa application centre in Kiev was closed and all related services in the Ukrainian capital have been suspended.

Dependents of British nationals can apply in the city of Lviv, in western Ukraine, but Ukrainians without close British relatives can only obtain UK visas if they reach centres in Poland, Romania, Hungary and Moldova.

Priti Patel has announced visa concessions for Ukrainians who are already in Britain for work, study and tourism, extending the time period before they must leave the country.

But there has been no announcement of a resettlement scheme or other measures in response to an expected exodus of refugees, despite offers of help from numerous other countries.

Mr Johnson's spokesperson said: "In terms of refugees, obviously it's relatively early time at the moment. But we have provided support already to help at the border should we start to see a humanitarian crisis emerge, and obviously we are ready to deploy that."

The Independent understands that the government expects many Ukrainians to stay in eastern Europe in the short term, or in Schengen countries where they can stay visa-free for 90 days, and is not immediately bracing for a rise in small boat crossings.

Ministers are pressing ahead with plans to make arriving in the UK "without permission" a criminal offence punishable up to four years in prison, which would apply equally to asylum seekers of all nationalities.

The UN Refugee Agency previously called the plans "deeply concerning" and said criminalising the act of arriving in the UK to seek asylum violates the 1951 Refugee Convention, which the government denies.

The Nationality and Borders Bill, which is currently being considered by parliament, follows a change to immigration rules meaning that asylum applications from people who have temporarily resided in safe third countries can be declared "inadmissible".

It means Ukrainians forced to travel to countries such as Poland, in order to obtain UK visas, may later be refused asylum. EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen yesterday said EU members neighbouring Ukraine were working on contingency plans to "welcome and host" refugees. "We hope there will be as little as possible refugees but we are fully prepared for them and they are welcome," she added.

Ireland's taoiseach Micheal Martin said the country would waive visa requirements for all Ukrainian people who travel there.

Figures showed the number of asylum claims made in the UK at the highest level in nearly two decades, while the backlog of cases waiting to be determined continues to soar. Almost three-quarters of asylum claims were granted on an initial decision, and almost half of appeals were successful.

A Home Office document said the increase in applications was linked to the easing of Covid travel restrictions "and to a sharp increase in small boat arrivals to the UK", of which "almost all claim asylum".

In total, more than 28,5000 people crossed the Channel on small boats in 2021 - triple the number in 2020.

A government spokesperson said: "Our priority has been to support British nationals and their families in Ukraine. This has included temporarily waiving application fees for those eligible under the Family Migration route, allowing entry for 12 months for others who did not meet the requirements and fast-tracking visas. We continue to work with our international partners on a range of issues as the situation develops, including migration."

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Home Office: Only 21 ‘inadmissible’ asylum seekers deported from UK in 18 months as Rwanda scheme stalls*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667G-H9V1-DY4H-K13B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 25, 2022 Thursday 9:56 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Government hopes to make Rwanda a ‘safe third country’ for asylum processing after losing EU deal in Brexit

**Body**

The UK forcibly returned only 21 [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) to “safe third countries” in the 18 months since [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) came into effect, new figures show as the [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) scheme stalls.

Almost 16,000 asylum seekers were considered for removal because the government declared their claims “inadmissible” between 1 January 2021 and the end of June.

Statistics released by the Home Office showed that of those, only 21 people were removed from the UK, to countries including Ireland, Germany, Italy and Spain, after a key EU transfer deal in Brexit.

The government claimed it would replace the scheme with bilateral agreements, but none have been struck with EU nations and several[*told The Independent they would not negotiate such an agreement.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-eu-deportation-home-office-b1836598.html%22%20title=%22EU%20countries%20rule%20out%20bilateral%20asylum%20deals%20in%20blow%20to%20Priti%20Patel’s%20immigration%20plans)

Ministers intend to make Rwanda a new “safe third country” to process asylum claims for the same cohort of people, but the scheme has been paused amid a series of legal challenges.

Afghans and Ukrainians have not been ruled out of the programme, which is based on the method of travel to the UK rather than whether someone is a refugee.

Under the UK’s internal immigration rules, it can declare asylum seekers “inadmissible” for consideration if they have travelled through and spent time in safe third countries, where they could have asked for protection.

Official Home Office guidance says an asylum seeker who “spent a couple of weeks in Brussels staying with friends whilst trying to find an agent to bring them illegally to the UK” could be declared inadmissible, and that officials should check for “material in their belongings such as receipts and tickets” from shops and transport.

The guidance says that removal to Rwanda should be considered if it “stands a greater chance” than removal to the country they are deemed to have a connection to.

Figures released on Thursday showed that 63,089 asylum applications, relating to 75,181 people, were made in the year ending June 2022 -the highest number in almost two decades.

The backlog of Home Office decisions is at a record high, with more than 166,000 cases marked as a “work in progress” in the asylum system. Almost 86,000 initial decisions have been pending for more than six months.

The Liberal Democrats' home affairs spokesperson, Alistair Carmichael, said: “People who’ve come to the UK having fled war or persecution should be welcomed with compassion, not kept in limbo for months while their claims are processed.

“As this backlog shows, the Home Office is not fit for purpose. The government needs to get a grip, but none of the Conservatives’ endless series of cruel proposals will actually solve the dysfunction at the heart of the Home Office.“

More than three quarters of applications were granted at the first stage in the year to June, and half of the refusals appealed were successfully overturned.

The largest group of asylum seekers were Iranian, followed by Albanians -who have rocketed rapidly amid a surge of arrivals from the country on small boats -Iraqis, Afghans, Eritreans and Syrians.

Just over half of Albanian asylum applications are currently granted, but Home Office officials believe the number could drop as Channel crossings rise.

Around 6,000 Albanians have arrived on small boats so far in 2022, and they make up between 50 to 60 per cent of daily crossings -[*including a large proportion of the record daily total seen on Monday.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-crossings-england-channel-record-b2150625.html%22%20title=%22Record%201,295%20migrants%20cross%20English%20Channel%20on%20small%20boats%20in%20a%20day)

On Wednesday, the government claimed that Albanians making “spurious asylum claims” would be sent back to the country under an agreement with its government.

Priti Patel, the home secretary, said: “Large numbers of Albanians are being sold lies by ruthless people smugglers and vicious organised crime gangs, leading them to take treacherous journeys in flimsy boats to the UK. This abuse of our immigration system and people risking their lives cannot go on.”

Since 2018, 94 per cent of migrants crossing the Channel in dinghies have claimed asylum. Half of the claims were granted, 43 per cent were declared “inadmissible” because of their time in safe third countries and only 8 per cent were refused.

Under British law, people have to be present in the UK to make an asylum application and there is no visa for that purpose. The government has set up bespoke schemes to resettle people directly from countries including Afghanistan, and offered ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** three-year visas, but parliamentary committees have said there must be more safe and legal routes to reduce demand for Channel crossings.

In the year to June, almost 13,000 people were granted refugee status after making their own way to the UK and applying for asylum, and only 1,600 were granted the same status through resettlement.

Dr Peter William Walsh, senior researcher at the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, said: “The data show the vastly different experiences that refugees from different countries have reaching the UK. Most Afghan refugees cannot access the UK resettlement schemes, and there is no way to apply to them.

“That explains why a substantial number of Afghans are coming through the asylum system despite the prospect of long waiting times and recent policies designed to deter asylum seekers. By contrast, where there have been legal routes to seek protection in the UK as in the Ukraine and Hong Kong cases, people have been keen to take them up.”

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Channel crossings up 60% on previous record high*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:676Y-WJ81-JCS0-D2DH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

January 1, 2023 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 990 words

**Byline:** LIZZIE DEARDEN HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

**Body**

Small-boat crossings hit a new record in 2022 and "more lives will be put at risk" if the government does not take effective action, it has been warned. Almost 46,000 people made the journey across the English Channel during the year, a 60 per cent increase on 2021 - which itself set a record high.

Home Office figures show that 90 per cent of small-boat migrants claim asylum after being intercepted by authorities, but ministers have so far failed to set up more alternative routes. High winds and rough seas mean there have been no arrivals since Christmas Day, but officials expect more dinghies to launch from northern France when the weather calms.

Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, told The Independent: "All the Conservatives have done [in 2022] is ramp up the rhetoric while making the problem worse. They've failed to tackle criminal gangs that are profiting from crossings, written a £140m cheque to Rwanda for an unworkable, unethical scheme, and there's still no safe way for many lone child refugees to rejoin relatives in the UK. This isn't working, and it means more and more lives are put at risk."

Ms Cooper said a deal needs to be struck with France to allow asylum seekers in the country to reunite with relatives in the UK, and to enable returns, adding: "Too many lives are being put at risk in these dangerous boats while criminals profit. We need action before things get worse."

The government has announced several policies it claimed would "deter" those making Channel crossings, including the Rwanda deal, Ministry of Defence patrols, new laws to criminalise migrants, and social media campaigns. But the number of arrivals has continued to rise, despite French authorities preventing more than 32,500 crossings.

The boats used have been getting larger and more overloaded, seeing the average number of passengers increase from eight in 2018 to 47 in the autumn, which in turn has made the journeys more dangerous. At least four people drowned when their dinghy started sinking as they attempted the treacherous journey on 14 December, and four other passengers remain missing.

Official figures show that 299 people were detected arriving on small boats in 2018, when the then home secretary Sajid Javid declared a "major incident". The figure rose to 1,843 in 2019, 8,466 in 2020, and 28,526 in 2021. The provisional total for 2022, calculated by the Press Association using Home Office and Ministry of Defence figures, is 45,756. While this represents a new record, the total is far below an internal Home Office estimate of 65,000, which was made early in 2022.

Claire Moseley, founder of the charity Care4Calais, said the figures "show that the government's anti-migrant rhetoric is no substitute for workable solutions".

"With no safe routes for the refugees we work with in Calais to claim asylum in the UK, brutal policies such as Rwanda will not work as a deterrent," she added. "We know it's possible to give people safe passage - we do it for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - so why not do it for other refugees? This is the only way that small-boat crossings will stop and lives will be saved."

The past year has seen a rise in Afghans and Albanians arriving in dinghies, while Iranian, Syrian and Iraqi nationals also make up significant numbers.

Announcing a new package of punitive laws in December, the prime minister said the government would only create more safe and legal routes after it "gets a grip of illegal migration". Under British law, people must be physically present in the country to claim asylum, but there is no visa available for those wishing to reach the UK for that purpose.

While bespoke schemes have been set up for migrants from Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine, wider resettlement schemes only saw 1,391 refugees brought to the UK in the year to September, compared with almost 86,000 people who claimed asylum after travelling independently in the same period.

The vast majority of applications are stuck in a record Home Office backlog, which has been worsened by a policy of declaring people who have travelled through safe countries "inadmissible" for consideration while having few countries to send them to. The Rwanda scheme has been declared lawful overall by the High Court, but charities may yet appeal against the ruling, and judges overturned every decision they considered in relation to eight individual asylum seekers.

Last year, a senior National Crime Agency official told journalists that while the agency was attempting to arrest smugglers in France and attack their supply chains, Channel crossings were being driven by "a degree of supply and demand". He said migrants on the French coast are "determined to cross the Channel" after making long journeys at great financial cost.

Home secretary Suella Braverman claimed that new laws aiming to allow the government to refuse asylum to people arriving on dinghies would act as a deterrent, but an internal Home Office research document from September 2020 advised ministers that many asylum seekers "have little to no understanding" of UK law. The report warned that refugees "can be displaced into irregular migration routes by limited or absent legal and safe migration routes".

The Royal Navy will hand responsibility for small-boat crossings in the English Channel back to the Home Office later in January, after eight months of "primacy". A new Small Boats Operational Command, led by the Border Force but supported by the National Crime Agency, Royal Navy and other bodies, will be taking charge of efforts to disrupt crossings and process arrivals.

A government spokesperson said: "The global migration crisis is causing an unprecedented strain on our asylum system. Nobody should put their lives at risk by taking dangerous and illegal journeys. We will go further to tackle the gangs driving this, using every tool at our disposal to deter illegal migration and disrupt the business model of people smugglers.''

**Load-Date:** December 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Small boat crossings surge 60 per cent to new record in 2022 and ‘could get worse’ this year*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:676V-3FW1-DY4H-K4VG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 31, 2022 Saturday 5:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 989 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** ‘All the Conservatives have done this year is ramp up the rhetoric while making the problem worse,’ Yvette Cooper says

**Body**

Small-boat crossings hit a new record in 2022 and “more lives will be put at risk” if the government does not take effective action, it has been warned.

Almost 46,000 people made the journey across the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) in the year, a 60 per cent increase on 2021 – which itself set a record high.

Home Office figures show that 90 per cent of small-boat migrants claim asylum after being intercepted by authorities, but ministers have so far failed to set up more alternative routes.

High winds and rough seas mean there have been no arrivals since Christmas Day, but officials expect more dinghies to launch from northern France when the weather calms.

Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, told The Independent: “All the Conservatives have done this year is ramp up the rhetoric while making the problem worse.

“They’ve failed to tackle criminal gangs that are profiting from crossings, written a £140m cheque to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) for an unworkable, unethical scheme, and there’s still no safe way for many lone child refugees to rejoin relatives in the UK. This isn’t working, and it means more and more lives are put at risk.”

Ms Cooper said a deal needs to be struck with France to allow [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) in the country to reunite with relatives in the UK, and to enable returns, adding: “Too many lives are being put at risk in these dangerous boats while criminals profit. We need action before things get worse.”

The government has announced several policies it claimed would “deter” those making Channel crossings, including the Rwanda deal, Ministry of Defence patrols, new laws to criminalise migrants, and social media campaigns.

But the number of arrivals has continued to rise, despite French authorities preventing more than 32,500 crossings.

The boats used have been getting larger and more overloaded, seeing the average number of passengers increase from eight in 2018 to 47 this autumn, which in turn has made the journeys more dangerous.

At least four people drowned when their dinghy started sinking as they attempted the treacherous journey on 14 December, and four other passengers remain missing.

Official figures show that 299 people were detected arriving on small boats in 2018, when the then home secretary Sajid Javid declared a “major incident”. The figure rose to 1,843 in 2019, 8,466 in 2020, and 28,526 in 2021.

The provisional total for 2022, calculated by the Press Association using Home Office and Ministry of Defence figures, is 45,756.

While this represents a new record, the total is far below an internal Home Office estimate of 65,000, which was made early in 2022.

Claire Moseley, founder of the charity Care4Calais, said the figures “show that the government’s anti-migrant rhetoric is no substitute for workable solutions”.

“With no safe routes for the refugees we work with in Calais to claim asylum in the UK, brutal policies such as Rwanda will not work as a deterrent,” she added. “We know it’s possible to give people safe passage – we do it for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** – so why not do it for other refugees? This is the only way that small-boat crossings will stop and lives will be saved.”

The past year has seen a rise in Afghans and Albanians arriving in dinghies, while Iranian, Syrian and Iraqi nationals also make up significant numbers.

Announcing a new package of punitive laws in December, the prime minister said the government [*would only create more safe and legal routes after it “gets a grip of illegal migration”.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-deaths-today-migrant-boat-safe-legal-routes-b2245331.html%22%20title=%22Braverman%20refuses%20safe%20alternatives%20to%20Channel%20crossings%20despite%20more%20drownings)

Under British law, people must be physically present in the country to claim asylum, but there is no visa available for those wishing to reach the UK for that purpose.

While bespoke schemes have been set up for migrants from Afghanistan, Hong Kong and Ukraine, wider resettlement schemes only saw 1,391 refugees brought to the UK in the year to September, compared with almost 86,000 people who claimed asylum after travelling independently in the same period.

The vast majority of applications are stuck in a record Home Office backlog, which has been worsened by a policy of declaring people who have travelled through safe countries “inadmissible” for consideration while having few countries to send them to.

The Rwanda scheme has been declared lawful overall by the High Court, but charities may yet appeal against the ruling, and judges [*overturned every decision they considered in relation to eight individual asylum seekers.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rwanda-policy-high-court-lawful-b2247872.html%22%20title=%22Government’s%20Rwanda%20policy%20to%20deport%20asylum%20seekers%20is%20lawful,%20High%20Court%20rules)

Earlier this year, a senior National Crime Agency official told journalists that while the agency was attempting to arrest smugglers in France and attack their supply chains, Channel crossings were being driven by “a degree of supply and demand”.

He said migrants on the French coast are “determined to cross the Channel” after making long journeys at great financial cost.

[*Home secretary Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) claimed that new laws aiming to allow the government to refuse asylum to people arriving on dinghies would act as a deterrent, but an internal Home Office research document from September 2020 advised ministers that many asylum seekers “have little to no understanding” of UK law.

The report warned that refugees “can be displaced into irregular migration routes by limited or absent legal and safe migration routes”.

The Royal Navy will hand responsibility for small-boat crossings in the English Channel back to the Home Office later in January, after eight months of “primacy”.

A new Small Boats Operational Command, led by the Border Force but supported by the National Crime Agency, Royal Navy and other bodies, will be taking charge of efforts to disrupt crossings and process arrivals.

A government spokesperson said: “The global migration crisis is causing an unprecedented strain on our asylum system. Nobody should put their lives at risk by taking dangerous and illegal journeys. We will go further to tackle the gangs driving this, using every tool at our disposal to deter illegal migration and disrupt the business model of people smugglers.’’

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[*‘We dream of peace’: Ukrainians in UK spend Christmas divided from loved ones after year of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6757-P211-JBNF-W0B0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 24, 2022 Saturday 1:47 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 915 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** Seven-year-old Ukrainian spending his first Christmas in the UK hopes his letters to Santa will be answered

**Body**

Ukrainians in the UK face their first Christmas separated from loved ones as they are kept apart by Russia’s war.

Refugees who have fled Vladimir Putin’s deadly invasion have shared their hopes for a more peaceful 2023 as the conflict heads toward its first anniversary in February.

Despite usually celebrating Christmas on January 7 – as determined by the [*Orthodox Church*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orthodox-church) – Kateryna Chebizhak, 34, who works as a telephone interpreter, and her seven-year-old son Kolya, are planning on spending December 25 with friends who live near them in [*Enfield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/enfield) , North London.

“We have friends here that live just next door and we will meet to celebrate”, Ms Chebizhak said.

“I have some presents for Kolya and we will have a nice walk, we might do some arts and crafts and play Uno.”

The pair came to the UK in April after fleeing [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , following short stays in Poland and Germany.

She added that when she told her son that in the UK children usually receive Christmas presents on December 25, he began making a list.

“Usually in Ukraine, we just get presents under the Christmas Tree in the New Year, but [in the UK] it works differently”, she said.

“Now’s he waiting for his two presents and he’s really excited. As it is the school holidays, he has been writing letters to Santa Claus.”

This time of the year is also tainted with sadness since Ms Chebizhak would usually spend Christmas with her family back in Ukraine, of which the exact location details cannot be mentioned for safety reasons.

“Usually we have traditions where my mum (Tetiana) will always make 12 dishes which symbolise the 12 months of the year and we would make a wish on Christmas Eve and go to bed and it should come true”, she said.

Ms Chebizhak added that her parents are okay, but that her mother did not put up a Christmas tree due to the ongoing war.

“My sister Anna also used to live not too far from them and she also left to go to Greece with her two children, so they are alone and she doesn’t have any grandchildren nearby”, she added.

“My mum and dad might sit down together and watch some movies or listen to the national anthem of Ukraine and we’ll have a call, but they are coping and doing great despite it not being a good situation.”

As the pair look forward to 2023, Ms Chebizhak said she “dreams of peace in our country”.

“We really hope the war’s over and we can return to see Kolya’s dad as he misses him very much and is still in the Vinnytska region in Ukraine.

Ms Chebizhak also has plans to do an interpretation and translation course to fulfill her dream of becoming a fully qualified interpreter, thanks to public donations made through a crowdfunder set up by platform [*Beam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beam) , which is supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** into jobs and homes.

“We are so thankful for all the kindness and support, which means I moved into my own place in November and can do my interpretation course next year”, she said.

“Kolya is also looking forward to continuing with school and his football classes. We’re just trying to live a normal life.”

Olha Komarnytska who lives in Birmingham with her children – Mia, 15, and Volodymyr, 13 – are also set to experience their first Christmas in the UK, alongside their host family.

They arrived in the UK from western Ukraine in May of this year.

“We usually celebrate Christmas in January but a think of lot of Ukrainians will celebrate Christmas in December this year because Russians celebrate Christmas in January and it’s not very good for us because we are fighting with Russia”, Ms Komarnytska, a 42-year-old cleaner said.

She said that on December 25, the group are to go to Church together, followed by a Christmas dinner, which will include traditional British and Ukrainian food staples.

“I plan to make cabbage with rice, meat carrot and onions and a Ukrainian salad with potato, carrot, meat, onions and cucumber,” she added.

We're so sad because we can't be with our family because my husband stayed in Ukraine and my mum, dad and brothers all stayed in Ukraine and we can't celebrate Christmas with them

Olha Komarnytska

The family has already gotten into the Christmas spirit by attending a party hosted by Centrala, an art space in Birmingham dedicated to promoting Central and Eastern European art and culture, on December 19 – Saint Nicholas Day.

“It was amazing and all the children there were very happy – they received a lot of presents and they saw Santa and heard Ukrainian music”, she said.

“My son was sadly not at the party as he was ill but my daughter was really happy when she went.”

Several people from the family will be absent from the dinner – Mrs Komarnytska’s husband Taras, her mother and father, Anna and Vasyl and brothers Dmytro and Vasyl.

“We’re so sad because we can’t be with our family because my husband stayed in Ukraine and my mum, dad and brothers all stayed in Ukraine and we can’t celebrate Christmas with them”, she said,

“It’s not good, we are not happy – but the situation is very bad because of the war happening in Ukraine and there is a bad situation with electricity where many don’t have any.”

As for her hopes for 2023, Mrs Komarnytska said she will be “happy if I am in Ukraine”.

“I want to come back to my family and spend time with my family,” she said. “It’s very important for me because my children miss their dad, grandma and grandpapa and their friends.

“I think next Christmas we will celebrate in Ukraine, but we will always remember how lovely and helpful those in the UK have been to Ukrainians.”

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians celebrating first Christmases in UK hope for peace in 2023 -OLD*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6752-VJ11-JBNF-W18Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 23, 2022 Friday 8:18 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:** Danielle Desouza

**Highlight:** A seven-year-old Ukrainian spending his first Christmas in the UK hopes his letters to Santa will be answered.

**Body**

Ukrainians celebrating their first Christmases in the UK have been busy writing letters to [*Santa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/santa) Claus and planning out traditional dishes they plan to make on the big day, amid hopes for peace and being reunited with their loved ones back home in 2023.

Despite usually celebrating Christmas on January 7 – as determined by the [*Orthodox Church*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orthodox-church) – Kateryna Chebizhak, 34, who works as a telephone interpreter, and her seven-year-old son Kolya, are planning on spending December 25 with friends who live near them in [*Enfield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/enfield) , North London.

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She added that when she told her son that in the UK children usually receive Christmas presents on December 25, he began making a list.

“Usually in Ukraine, we just get presents under the Christmas Tree in the New Year, but [in the UK] it works differently”, she said.

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**Load-Date:** December 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C6-1JT1-DY4H-K1MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 11:19 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2254 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (she/her) (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

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Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

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St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

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This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

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Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

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02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

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01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia's information war expands through Eastern Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XS-C9T1-DY4H-K4T4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 15, 2022 Friday 2:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 984 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As Russia's war in Ukraine rages on, the Kremlin is expanding its information war throughout Eastern Europe, spreading propaganda and disinformation blaming NATO and the West for its Ukraine invasion

**Body**

As bullets and bombs fall in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is waging an expanding information war throughout Eastern Europe, using fake accounts and propaganda to spread fears about refugees and rising fuel prices while calling the West an untrustworthy ally.

In Bulgaria, the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) paid journalists, political analysts and other influential citizens 2,000 euros a month to post pro-Russian content online, a senior Bulgarian official revealed this month. Researchers also have uncovered sophisticated networks of fake accounts, bots and trolls in an escalating spread of disinformation and propaganda in the country.

Similar efforts are playing out in other nations in the region as Russia looks to shift the blame for its invasion of Ukraine, the ensuing refugee crisis and rising prices for food and fuel.

For Russia's leaders, expansive propaganda and disinformation campaigns are a highly cost-effective alternative to traditional tools of war or diplomacy, according to Graham Brookie, senior director at the [*Atlantic Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/atlantic-council) 's Digital Forensic Research Lab, which has been tracking Russian disinformation for years.

“Stirring up these reactions is the low-hanging fruit for Russian information operations," Brookie said. "Their state media does audience analysis better than most of the media companies in the world. Where these narratives have succeeded are countries where there is more weaponization of domestic discourse or more polarized media markets.”

Bulgaria was long counted a stalwart Russian ally, though the country of 7 million residents has turned its attention westward in recent decades, joining NATO in 2004 and the European Union three years later.

When Bulgaria, Poland and other former Warsaw Pact nations sided with their NATO allies in support of Ukraine, Russia responded with a wave of disinformation and propaganda that sought to exploit public debates over globalization and westernization.

For Poland, that took the form of anti-Western propaganda and conspiracy theories. One, spread by a Russian-allied hacking group in an apparent effort to divide Ukraine and Poland, suggested that Polish gangs were harvesting the organs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Russia's onslaught comes as Eastern European governments, like others around the world, grapple with dissatisfaction and unrest caused by rising prices for fuel and food.

Bulgaria is in a particularly vulnerable position. Pro-Western Prime Minister Kiril Petkov lost a no confidence vote last month. Concerns about the economy and fuel prices only increased when Russia cut off Bulgaria's supply of natural gas last spring. The upheaval prompted President Rumen Radev to say his country was entering a "political, economic and social crisis.”

The government's relationship with Moscow is another complication. Bulgaria recently expelled 70 Russian diplomatic staffers over concerns about espionage, prompting the Kremlin to threaten to end diplomatic relations with it.

The same week, Russia's embassy in Sofia posted a fundraising appeal urging Bulgarian citizens to donate their private funds to support the Russian army and its invasion of Ukraine.

Bulgaria's government reacted angrily to Russia's attempt to solicit donations for its war from a NATO country.

“This is scandalous,” tweeted Bozhidar Bozhanov, who served as minister of e-government in Petkov's cabinet. “It is not right to use the platform to finance the aggressor.”

The embassy also has spread debunked conspiracy theories claiming the U.S. runs secret biolabs in Ukraine. Embassies have become key to Russia's disinformation campaigns, especially since many technology companies have begun restricting Russian state media since the invasion began.

Fake accounts remain a valued part of the arsenal. Researchers at the Disinformation Situation Center uncovered what they believe is a network of fake Facebook accounts pushing Kremlin talking points and disinformation to Bulgarian audiences. The DSC, based in Europe, is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization of disinformation researchers working around the world.

The network, which is still in operation, typically posts criticism of Bulgaria's decision to side with NATO over Russia. “If Bulgarians somewhere in the world have a brotherly people, it is the Russian,” read one characteristic post.

Some of the content appeared to gloat over Russia's decision to cut natural gas exports: “Prepare for a dark, cold and hungry winter,” the author wrote.

Researchers at the DSC reported the network to Meta, Facebook's parent company. Meta did not respond to messages seeking comment about its decision to leave the network up.

“This network is just a tiny drop in the ocean of pro-Kremlin disinformation in Bulgaria,” the DSC wrote, citing one study by a Bulgarian non-governmental organization that found pro-Russian propaganda on popular Bulgarian websites increased 10 times following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Other posts from the account attacked transgender people or featured content about QAnon, the U.S.-origin movement that argues Donald Trump is waging a covert war against satanic cannibals who secretly control world affairs. It's a conspiracy theory that has prompted violence in the U.S., and it's one Russian disinformation agents seem eager to encourage elsewhere.

The operation also sought to do damage control. After a senior Bulgarian official revealed Russia's scheme to pay certain journalists, politicians or other public figures 2,000 euros, or 4,000 Bulgarian leva, for posting pro-Russian content, the Facebook accounts identified by the DSC quickly posted a rebuttal casting Russia's actions as simply those of a benevolent patron looking to support everyday Bulgarians.

“Thank you Mr. Putin for the gesture, but I do not need 4000 leva to like Russia," the anonymous author wrote. “I like her for free.”

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Follow [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) 's coverage of misinformation at [*https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation*](https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation).

**Load-Date:** July 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659X-1CR1-JBNF-W1HD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 27, 2022 Wednesday 9:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2254 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (she/her) (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

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They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

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Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

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02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

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Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

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Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

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08438868235

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Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:659X-1CR1-JBNF-W1HB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 27, 2022 Wednesday 9:41 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2254 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (she/her) (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

Norfolk

The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

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The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) in that region.

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The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 9:56 AM GMT

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**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

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While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

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Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

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The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

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Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-clothes-food-where-b2067335.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugees going back to Ukraine and people pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, minister says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8S-1F71-JBNF-W1YH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 7, 2024 Wednesday 3:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 115 words

**Byline:** Holly Patrick

**Body**

Patients are pulling their teeth out and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are flying back to the war-torn country for appointments amid a lack of [*NHS*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nhs) dentistry services, Wes Streeting has said.

It comes after a seven-year-old Ukrainian girl and her mother[*flew to Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/ukraine-dentist-nhs-refugee-b2303403.html) and took a 15-hour bus across [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for dental treatment because the NHS waiting list was so long.

A British Dental Association survey of 500 UK dentists found that “DIY” dentistry is “rampant” -82 per cent of respondents said they have treated patients who have taken matters into their own hands since lockdown.

The BDA said “DIY dentistry” could be any form of DIY dental care, from a simple filling kit to an attempt at extraction.

**Load-Date:** February 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Biden willing to discuss end to Ukraine war with Putin but says Russian victory is ‘beyond comprehension’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670F-GCM1-DY4H-K453-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 1, 2022 Thursday 8:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 930 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** Mr Biden says the United States and France stand ‘as strong as ever against Russia’s brutal war against Ukraine’

**Body**

President Joe Biden on Thursday said he would be willing to meet with Russian president Vladimir Putin to learn whether he’s willing to end his nearly year-long invasion of Ukraine, but not unilaterally and only after discussions with America’s Nato allies first.

Speaking at a news conference alongside French president Emmanuel Macron after a three-hour bilateral meeting between the two leaders and their respective advisers, Mr Biden said he’d take a meeting with Mr Putin “if he’s willing to talk to find out what he’s willing to do”.

“But I’ll only do it in consultation with my Nato allies. I’m not going to do it on my own,” he added.

Mr Biden’s expression of willingness to meet with the man he has previously called a “war criminal” who “cannot remain in power” at different points since Russia’s war on Ukraine began in late February came as he and Mr Macron pledged to continue American and French support for Ukraine’s fight against Russian invasion forces until Kyiv’s defence forces have emerged victorious.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting, Mr Biden and Mr Macron said efforts to provide Ukraine with “provision of political, security, humanitarian, and economic assistance” will continue for “as long as it takes” and reaffirmed both nations’ “continued support for Ukraine’s defense of its sovereignty and territorial integrity”.

The leaders said the continued assistance would include “significant resources” for “Ukrainian civilian resilience” during the cold winter months, as well as “stepping up the delivery of air defense systems and equipment needed to repair Ukraine’s energy grid”.

Mr Biden and Mr Macron also said their respective nations intend to keep up provisioning “robust direct budget support” for Kyiv and encouraged international institutions to “scale up” the support already being provided.

The French leader’s visit is the first state visit of the Biden administration, and the second he has honoured with in just over four years.

The meeting between the two leaders was initially expected to last approximately an hour and 45 minutes, but as reporters waited for Mr Biden and Mr Macron to emerge for the previously-scheduled press conference, it stretched on for more than an hour past the time allowed in the president’s public schedule.

When they finally entered the East Room of the White House, Mr Biden opened his remarks with praise for both Mr Macron and the nation he leads, calling the French Republic “one of our strongest partners and our most capable allies” and referring to Mr Macron as “a friend”.

“We share the same values and ... a core common agenda that we address all challenges together,” he said. “And occasionally we have some slight differences but never in a fundamental way.”

Mr Biden added that the US and France “stand together with all our Nato allies,” as well as the European Union and Group of Seven, “as strong as ever against Russia’s brutal war against Ukraine”.

“We're continuing to strongly support the people of Ukraine as they defend their homes and their families and their sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression which has been incredibly brutal,” he said. “Today, we reaffirm that, as I said, we're going to stand together against this brutality and we'll continue the strong support for the Ukrainian peoples that defend their homes and their families and their nurseries, their hospitals ... against Russian aggression”.

The American leader also thanked his French counterpart for welcoming over 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to his shores, adding that such actions were “a mark of who you are as a people”.

“Putin thinks that he can crush the will of all those who oppose his imperial ambitions by attacking civilian infrastructures in Ukraine, choking off energy to Europe as a driver of crisis, [and] exacerbating [a] food crisis that's hurting very vulnerable people not just in Ukraine, but around the world. And he's not going to succeed,” he said.

When his American counterpart finally yielded the floor to him, Mr Macron said he would not elaborate on France’s work in Ukraine because Mr Biden had “perfectly” described the longtime allies’ joint efforts.

“We clearly condemn this war immediately. We lead all the diplomatic actions to condemn this war, the war crimes committed by Russia on the Ukrainian soil, and we support both the Ukrainian army that is resisting [and] the Ukrainian population resisting as well.” he said.

The French president said the united Franco-American front of support for Ukraine comes from both nations being made of “values and history”.

“What is at stake in Ukraine is not just very far from here, in a small country, somewhere in Europe, but it's about our values. And it’s about our principles, and it’s about what we agreed together in the UN Charter,” he said, adding later that the US and France would “never urge Ukrainians to make a compromise which will not be acceptable for them”.

Mr Biden added that the “one way” for the war to end in a “rational way” is for Russian President Vladimir Putin to “pull out of Ukraine” but he said he has no plans to engage with the Russian leader in the immediate future.

“He's paying a very heavy price for failing to do it, but he's inflicting incredible, incredible carnage on the civilian population of Ukraine. I mean, nurseries, hospitals, children's homes, it's sick, what he's doing, but the fact of the matter is, I have no immediate plans to contact Mr. Putin,” he said, adding later that the idea that Russian forces would ever be victorious in Ukraine is “beyond comprehension”.

**Load-Date:** December 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657C-1S41-JBNF-W089-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 2:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 2254 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (she/her) (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2058797.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2058797.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

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A vital regional resource.

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Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

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For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2058797.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

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Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

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Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-donate-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2058797.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

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**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian children made homeless in UK due to 'broken' refugee schemes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PR-GNT1-F072-44MX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

June 17, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 949 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Hundreds of Ukrainian children and their families have been made homeless after being granted sanctuary in the UK, new figures reveal.

Ministers have been accused of presiding over "broken" refugee schemes for Ukrainian nationals after it emerged that 660 households who have come to Britain via these routes have been forced to register as homeless.

The data, published by the Department for Levelling up, Communities and Housing yesterday, reveals that of the homeless households, 480 were families with at least one child, while 180 were single households.

In total, 51,800 people so far have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which enables refugees to "match" with people offering rooms, while 25,400 have come under the family scheme, which allows refugees to join relatives in the UK.

The figures show that seven in 10 households (480) that have been made homeless arrived under the family scheme, of which 62 per cent became homeless because the housing was "not available or suitable on arrival", while the remaining 175 left their housing because the arrangement "broke down".

Of the 145 households who registered as homeless after arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 55 left because the accommodation was not available or suitable, while 90 left because the arrangement broke down.

Only 140 households who have registered as homeless - one in five - have so far been provided with alternative housing, according to the data.

It comes after The Independent revealed that thousands of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK had been forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, with whole familiessharing single rooms.

In other cases, refugees coming under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been placed with unvetted hosts and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks.

Clive Betts, Labour MP and chair of the levelling up committee said the fact that Ukrainian families were falling homeless was "entirely avoidable" and demanded that ministers allow people who become homeless on the family scheme to rematch under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Currently, if a placement under the family scheme breaks down, the household is not permitted to move over to the Homes for Ukraine scheme - despite many individuals offering to host still not having been matched with refugees.

"There are still many who really want to offer a home to refugees and the government seems to have an absolute obsession that if you come on one [scheme], you can't switch to the other," Mr Betts said.

"We're bringing people thousands of miles to this country and then put them in unsuitable B&Bs. The government should allow people to switch. It should allow local authorities to look at lists of people who want to offer a home and put people in touch with each other.

"It would save money and human cost. It would save trauma to refugees. The schemes are broken. The government's approach is wrong and blinkered."

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said:"It is worrying to hear that desperate Ukrainian families who have fled war, endured trauma and heartbreak, arriving here, entrusting their safety in our hands, have been left to fall into homelessness."

He said the government should provide the same level of funding to local councils for the family scheme as for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

"Wewelcomed the thousands of British people that came forward to open their homes, however these hosting relationships were always going to come with risks, and responsibilities," he added.

"That is why it is vital the government ensures thathosts and refugees are provided with the right training and specialist support - including help to find alternative accommodation when necessary to avoid the risk of homelessness."

The Independent revealed last month that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK who become homeless could be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly pushed through by the government.

The changes also set out that councils can place these groups out of area - potentially hundreds of miles away - without taking into account factors such as the disruption to employment and education and access to medical facilities or other support.

David Renard, housing spokesperson for the Local Government Association, echoed Mr Betts' calls to enable people on the family scheme who present as homeless to be re-matched with a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

He added: "Urgent work is needed on how councils can work with government and the community, faith and voluntary sector so those offering their homes can be quickly matched with a family in need."

Mr Renard also called for better data-sharing with local councils, saying: "Currently councils receive no data on, or funding for, people who are coming under the family visa scheme.

"Councils also need information on arrivals through Homes for Ukraine and those supporting them as quickly as possible so they can ensure sponsor accommodation is suitable and safe before they arrive.

"Data does not always arrive in time to enable this and many councils are still reporting significant issues with this data."

A government spokesperson said all of those arriving in the UK under the two schemes had access to benefits and public services, as well as the right to work or study, from the day they arrive.

They added: "The overwhelming majority of people are settling in well but in the minority of cases, where family or sponsor relationships break down, councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their head. Councils also have access to a rematching service to find a new sponsor in cases under the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652W-09R1-DY4H-K4B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 9:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 2254 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (she/her) (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

Norfolk

The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-refugees-clothes-near-me-b2043836.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

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**Load-Date:** April 27, 2022

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Second Edition

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"We're bringing people thousands of miles to this country and then put them in unsuitable B&Bs. The government should allow people to switch. It should allow local authorities to look at lists of people who want to offer a home and put people in touch with each other.

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Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said:"It is worrying to hear that desperate Ukrainian families who have fled war, endured trauma and heartbreak, arriving here, entrusting their safety in our hands, have been left to fall into homelessness."

He said the government should provide the same level of funding to local councils for the family scheme as for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

"Wewelcomed the thousands of British people that came forward to open their homes, however these hosting relationships were always going to come with risks, and responsibilities," he added.

"That is why it is vital the government ensures thathosts and refugees are provided with the right training and specialist support - including help to find alternative accommodation when necessary to avoid the risk of homelessness."

The Independent revealed last month that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK who become homeless could be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly pushed through by the government.

The changes also set out that councils can place these groups out of area - potentially hundreds of miles away - without taking into account factors such as the disruption to employment and education and access to medical facilities or other support.

David Renard, housing spokesperson for the Local Government Association, echoed Mr Betts' calls to enable people on the family scheme who present as homeless to be re-matched with a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

He added: "Urgent work is needed on how councils can work with government and the community, faith and voluntary sector so those offering their homes can be quickly matched with a family in need."

Mr Renard also called for better data-sharing with local councils, saying: "Currently councils receive no data on, or funding for, people who are coming under the family visa scheme.

"Councils also need information on arrivals through Homes for Ukraine and those supporting them as quickly as possible so they can ensure sponsor accommodation is suitable and safe before they arrive.

"Data does not always arrive in time to enable this and many councils are still reporting significant issues with this data."

A government spokesperson said all of those arriving in the UK under the two schemes had access to benefits and public services, as well as the right to work or study, from the day they arrive.

They added: "The overwhelming majority of people are settling in well but in the minority of cases, where family or sponsor relationships break down, councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their head. Councils also have access to a rematching service to find a new sponsor in cases under the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fears for pet welfare as the cost of living crisis deepens*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66T8-T531-F072-44B9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

November 7, 2022 Monday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 20

**Length:** 939 words

**Byline:** JANE DALTON

**Body**

Millions of dogs and cats could be put down or abandoned, it is feared, as people struggle with their pets' bills in the cost of living crisis.

Campaigners are warning that without government intervention, swathes of Britain's 20 million companion animals are at risk of being euthanised or will suffer from a lack of veterinary care because of the cost.

Ministers are being urged to set up a "cost of living pet crisis fund" to limit the damage and to help owners, many of whom are heartbroken at having to give away their animals.

A new poll for Dogs Trust reveals that more than one in 10 owners - 13 per cent - have been forced into debt to care for their animal.

Are you worried about the cost of keeping your pet? Email [*jane.dalton@independent.co.uk*](mailto:jane.dalton@independent.co.uk)

RSPCA research this year found that soaring household bills are the biggest threat to animal welfare.

According to the charity's Animal Kindness Index Survey, 28 per cent of pet owners are worried about being able to care for their pets. The concern is especially high among cat owners, with a third (32 per cent) worried over being able to care properly for their pet.

Nearly one in five owners (19 per cent) are worried about feeding their pets, the charity said.

And rehoming charities report soaring numbers of cats and dogs being handed to them this year as inflation has gripped the nation, while fewer people are prepared to adopt because of the cost.

The Dogs Trust charity says enquiries from people wanting to give up their pooches shot up by 26.5 per cent this autumn, to 14,128, from 11,168 last autumn.

"For the whole of 2022 so far we have received42,318 handover enquiries," a spokesperson said.

"Since September we have asked people if the cost of living is a factor in their need to hand over their dog to us; 22 per cent of calls have been logged as cost of living-specific - that's over a fifth."

Dominic Dyer, a leading animal welfare campaigner who has launched a government petition calling for the fund, warned that more dogs and cats could be euthanised in the coming year than were lost in the pet cull at the start of the Second World War.

As many as 750,000 British pets were killed in just one week in the summer of 1939 after the government told owners it would be kinder to have their animals put down because of expected food shortages.

Mr Dyer, who this year played a key role in the government decision to let ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** bring their pets to Britain, said: "The nation faces a companion-animal-welfare crisis of unprecedented proportions as a direct result of the cost of living crisis.

"Without intervention, millions of dogs and cats are at risk of being abandoned, suffering due to delays receiving veterinary care or being euthanised on economic - rather than welfare - grounds.

"Losing a pet due to the cost of living crisis will not only have a significant and negative impact on the emotional and mental health of millions of families across Britain, but it will also negatively affect those working in the charity and veterinary sectors."

The RSPCA reported 22,908 abandonments in the first seven months of this year, compared with 18,375 in the same period last year.

And research by the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) found 9 per centof owners- 2 million pets -said they would have to consider rehoming their animal if they were not able to afford vet bills.

Owners searching for charity support with medical care bills have shot up by more than half - 51 per cent.

Vets say animal welfare is being compromised, with some owners delaying seeking care because of financial difficulties or even trying to treat animals themselves, which can prove fatal, according to the British Veterinary Association.

Iain McGill, a vet in Brighton, told The Independent: "I've had a lot of clients asking for help with keeping the bills low, going for fewer investigations and only essential treatment. I am sure some people aren't actually making appointments for reasons of financial hardship."

Under Mr Dyer's plan, animal charities would carry out pet care using taxpayer cash, supported by the veterinary industry and involving a national helpline and pop-up clinics.

It would also provide funding for a network of pet food banks in supermarkets, pet care stores and food banks.

He said local authorities should support the fund so that dogs and cats were not left on the streets to suffer or pose a danger to the public.

More than half of UK adults own a pet, 27 per cent owning dogs (10.2 million dogs) and 24 per cent owning cats (11.1 million cats), statistics show.

The PDSA estimates thatowners should expect to spend at least £5,000 over the lifetime of a small dog but, depending on the breed, size and lifespan, this could rise to at least £12,200.For cats, the minimum expected lifetime cost is £11,100. That is without the cost of veterinary care or extras such as dog-sitters.

Owen Sharp, chief executive of Dogs Trust, said: "We already have 1,000 dogs on the waiting list to come into our rehoming centres.

"However, we have real concerns that, despite our best efforts, we will get to a point where we'll be forced to start turning dogs away. If this happens, dog welfare will become a true emergency."

A spokesperson for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said: "The government is actively considering the impact of the rise in the cost of living on all aspects of people's lives.

"We meet regularly with animal welfare stakeholders and sector groups to monitor the situation and identify where more support may be needed. We welcome the support these groups are providing for their members during these difficult times."

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651C-H7R1-DY4H-K0Y2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 11:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2253 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

Norfolk

The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-charity-help-b2038810.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Non-white refugees fleeing Ukraine detained in EU immigration facilities*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652F-WB51-DY4H-K2HD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 2:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 2017 words

**Byline:** May Bulman and Nadine White

**Highlight:** Investigation: African students fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion disappearing into detention centres in EU

**Body**

Non-white students who have fled Ukraine have been detained by EU border authorities in what has been condemned as "clearly discriminatory" and "not acceptable".

An investigation by The Independent, in partnership with Lighthouse Reports and other media partners, reveals that Ukraine residents of African origin who have crossed the border to escape the war have been placed in closed facilities, with some having been there for a number of weeks.

At least four students who fled the war in Ukraine are being held in a long-term holding facility Lesznowola, a village 40km from the Polish capital Warsaw, with little means of communication with the outside world and no legal advice.

One of the students said they were stopped by officials as they crossed the border and were given "no choice" but to sign a document they did not understand before they were then taken to the camp. They do not know how long they will be held there.

A Nigerian man currently detained said he was "scared" about what will happen to him after being held in the facility for more than three weeks.

Polish border police have confirmed that 52 third-country nationals who have fled Ukraine are currently being held in detention facilities in Poland.

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said they were aware of three other facilities in Poland where people non-Ukrainians who have fled the war are being detained.

Separately, a Nigerian student who fled the Russian invasion is understood to have been detained in Estonia after travelling to the country to join relatives, and is now being threatened with deportation.

This is despite a EU protection directive dated 4 March which states that third country nationals studying or working in Ukraine should be admitted to the EU temporarily on humanitarian grounds.

Maria Arena, chair of the EU parliament's subcommittee on human rights, said: "International students in Ukraine, as well as Ukrainians, are at risk and risking their lives in the country. Detention, deportation or any other measure that does not grant them protection is not acceptable."

The findings of the investigation, which was carried out in collaboration with Lighhtouse Reports, Spiegal, Mediapart and Radio France, comes after it emerged that scores of Black and Asian refugees fleeing Ukraine were experiencing racial discrimination while trying to make border crossing last month.

'They took us here to the camp... I'm scared'

Gabriel\*, 29, had been studying trade and economics in Kharkov before war broke out. The Nigerian national left the city and arrived at the border on 27 February, where he says his phone was confiscated by Polish border guards and he was given "no option" but to sign a form he did not understand.

"It was written in Polish. I didn't know what I was signing. I said I wouldn't sign, but they insisted I signed it and that if not I would go to jail for five months," he said in a recorded conversation with a Nigerian activist.

The student said he was then taken to court, where there was no interpreter to translate what was being said so that he could understand, and then taken to a detention centre in the small village of Lesznowola.

"It is a closed camp inside a forest," said Gabriel, speaking from the facility. "There's no freedom. Some people have been here more than nine months. Some have gone mad. I'm scared.

"We escaped Ukraine very horrible experience, the biggest risk of my life [...] Everything was scary and I thought that was the end of it. And now we are in detention."

Gabriel said there are at least two other Nigerian students in the camp, along with students from Cameroon, Ghana, the Ivory Coast and French African nations.

Guards at the centre said inmates have their mobile phones confiscated, with only those who have a second sim card given a phone without a camera.

Many can only communicate with the outside world via email - and even this is said to be limited to certain times.

Another individual detained at the centre is Paul, 20, a Cameroonian who had been studying management and language at Agrarian University Bila Tserkva in Kyiv for six months when the war started.

His brother, Victor, who is in Cameroon, said Paul had told him that he had been apprehended while crossing the border and that on 2 March, a Polish judge ordered that he be transferred to Lesznowola detention centre.

"From his explanation, the camp doesn't seem like one that welcomes people fleeing from the war in Ukraine. It's a camp that has been existing and has people that came to seek for asylum. No one knows why he is being detained," he said.

Victor said that Paul was given seven days to appeal the decision to detain him, but that he has been unable to access the internet in order to file the appeal in time.

"Since that day he filed the appeal, police and guards try to restrict them. He used to get five minutes of internet but on that day they stopped letting them use the internet. The phone he used to communicate with me was blocked. Maybe it's because they realised that the issue was taking on a legal dimension," he said.

'He's not allowed to be in Estonia'

This investigation has also heard reports that a Nigerian student, Reuben, is facing deportation from Estonia after being detained having fled the war in Ukraine.

Prior to his arrival in the eastern European country, 32-year-old Reuben emailed the head of International House, a service centre that helps internationals in Estonia to communicate with the state, explaining that he wanted to join his cousin living in the country.

The head of the organisation Leonardo Ortega responded by letter that he may relocate to Estonia.

Reuben, who attended Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University in Ukraine and is married to a Ukrainian woman, arrived on 9 March through Poland with his cousin Peter.

After being delayed for three hours at the Estonia border, the pair were escorted to a police station, according to Peter, 30, who has an Estonian residency permit.

He said three police officers escorted his cousin away with his luggage and said he would be detained for two days themn deported back to Nigeria.

The officers reportedly advised that the 32-year-old would be banned from entering any Schengen country for the next five years; his phone was confiscated and he's been in detention since.

"A few officers said 'he's not allowed to be in Estonia'. Even after asking for international protection, we were told that my cousin needs to have a lawyer to fight his case, but most of the lawyers I initially contacted refused to take my cousin's case," said Peter.

"He received an email in advance saying it was okay to come -and after everything we went through, the next thing they want to deport and ban him for five years. I don't know why deportation came into the picture."

Criney, a London-based campaigner who has been supporting the affected students on a voluntary basis, said there was an "emerging pattern of arbitrary detention of students coming out of Ukraine fleeing the war".

"There are other cases in Austria and Germany with regards to students who have applied for asylum or asked for permits to remain," the campaigner said.

Detained 'for the purpose of identity verification'

The EU directive on 4 March aims to help refugees fleeing the invasion to stay for at least one year in one country and also have access to the labour market and education.

It states that it also applies to "nationals of third countries other than Ukraine residing legally in Ukraine who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin".

This can include third-country nationals who were studying or working in Ukraine, it states, adding that this cohort should "in any event be admitted into the union on humanitarian grounds", without requiring valid travel documents, to ensure "safe passage with a view to returning to their country or region of origin".

MichaÅ Dworczyk, a top aide to the Polish prime minister, said when war broke out that "everyone escaping the war will be received in Poland, including people without passports".

But the Polish government has admitted that it is sending some of this cohort to closed facilities once they cross the border.

In a tweet on 2 March, the Polish ministry of internal affairs and administration said: "Ukrainians are fleeing the war, people of other nationalities are also fleeing. All those who do not have documents and cannot prove Ukrainian citizenship are carefully checked. If there is a need, they go to closed detention centres."

In a letter to a member of the EU Parliament, Poland's border police admitted that 52 third country nationals who had fled from Ukraine had been taken to closed detention centres in the first three weeks of the war.

The letter stated that this was necessary "to carry out administrative proceedings for granting international protection or issuing a decision on obliging a foreigner to return".

Ryan Schroeder, press officer at the IOM, said the organisation was aware of three other facilities in Poland where "third-country nationals arriving from Ukraine, who lack proper travel documentation, are brought to for the purpose of identity verification".

The Polish government, the Polish police and the Estonian authorities declined to comment on the allegations.

A spokesperson for the Polish border force said it "couldn't give any detail about the procedures on foreigners because of the protection on personal data", adding that it is "the court which takes the decision each time to place people in guarded centres for foreigners".

'Clearly unsatisfactory and discriminatory'

Steve Peers, a professor of EU law in the UK, says that even if member states choose not to apply temporary protection to legal residents of Ukraine, they should give them "simplified entry, humanitarian support and safe passage to their country of origin".

"In my view this is obviously a case where students could not have applied for a visa and might not meet the other usual criteria to cross the external borders, yet there are overwhelming reasons to let them cross the border anyway on humanitarian grounds. There are no good grounds for immigration detention in the circumstances," he added.

Jeff Crisp, a former head of policy, development and evaluation at UNHCR, said it was "clearly unsatisfactory and discriminatory" for third country nationals who have fled from Ukraine to be held in detention centres in EU states, "not least because of the trauma they will have experienced in their efforts to leave Ukraine and find safety elsewhere".

He added: "They should be released immediately and treated on an equal basis with all others who have been forced to leave Ukraine."

It comes after the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi warned this week that, although he had been "humbled" by the outpouring of support seen by communities welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, many minorities - often foreigners who had been studying or working there - had described a very different experience.

"We also bore witness to the ugly reality, that some Black and Brown people fleeing Ukraine - and other wars and conflicts around the world - have not received the same treatment as ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," he said.

"They reported disturbing incidents of discrimination, violence, and racism. These acts of discrimination are unacceptable, and we are using our many channels and resources to make sure that all people are protected equally."

Mr Grandi appealed to countries, in particular those neighbouring Ukraine, to continue to allow entry to anyone fleeing the conflict "without discrimination on grounds of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin and regardless of their immigration status".

\*Names have been changed

Additional reporting by Maud Jullien, Halima Salat Barre, Jack Sapoch, Daniel Howden, Steffen Lüdke, Hélène Bienvenu, Sarah Bakaloglou

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6521-XVF1-DY4H-K29N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2253 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

St Francis Church, Chester

Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

Address: Grosvenor Street, Chester, Chl 2BN

07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

Address: 54 Laburnum Drive, SY11 2QR

07544061801

Continental Convenience Store, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

Other sites around the country include:

Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

Norfolk

The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-clothes-near-me-b2040490.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2022

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The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 12:18 PM GMT

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**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

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There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

These can be donated at the following locations (again, donors are advised to call ahead to check what's needed as the situation is constantly evolving):

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Collecting Monday-Friday 10am-2pm

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07858457164

Oswestry, Shropshire

Collecting Monday-Friday 5pm-9pm

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07544061801

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Collecting Monday-Friday 9apm-8pm

Address: 36 Green End, Whitchurch SY13 1AA

07528014924

Polish Merseyside, Liverpool

Collecting Monday-Friday 8pm-9pm

Address: 254 County Road, Liverpool, L4 5PE

07919203069

Polish Club, Bury

Collecting Monday and Thursday 8pm-9.30pm, Saturday 11am-1pm and Sunday 11am-1.30pm

Address: Back East Street, Bury, BL9 0RU

07432113290

Vilnius Polish Centre, Manchester

Collecting Monday 2pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 2pm-10pm and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2pm-7pm

Address: Worsley Road, Manchester, M30 0RU

07432113290

BeeHouse, Manchester

Collecting Monday-Friday 12pm-10pm

Address: Deansgate Locks, 2 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 5LH

07432113290

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Coventry

Coventry Comfort Carers Crisis Support are gathering sleeping mats and bags, duvets and pillows, blankets, towels, clothes, batteries, power banks and torches.

Drop off times and locations can be found [*on their Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FCoventrycomfortcarers&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html).

The same city's Feed The Hungry charity is getting together shipments of dry food, snacks and biscuits, travel mugs, water bottles, tea, coffee, sugar and dry milk.

You can drop off your contributions from 8.30am to 4.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Address: Halo Centre, Progress Way, Binley Industrial Estate, Coventry, CV3 2NT

Newcastle

Newcastle upon Tyne's [*Polish Community Centre*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fosrodekpolski%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) has just completed a major collection of its own but offers the following useful information on other donation points in the north east.

Oxford

The [*Donation Drive for Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) Facebook page shares information on efforts being undertaken locally to bring gifted items to refugees in Eastern Europe, from [*indiviual van trips*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F743532453261849%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) to local events like the collection currently being mounted from [*Oxford Business Park in Cowley*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F735194297428998%2Fpermalink%2F741793816769046%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) on Tuesdays and Thursday this week.

A vital regional resource.

Norfolk

The Ukraine Embassy in London has organised regional collection points for at Dereham Morrisons on Station Road NR19 1DF, the Peerless Plastics and Coatings store on 16-20 Howlett Way IP24 1HZ in Thetford and Cherry Tree Farm on Brandon Road PE37 8HN in Swaffham.

Warm clothes, scarfs and boots, military equipment, sleeping bags, wheelchairs, baby food and non-perishable food items are all appreciated.

Bridgwater, Somerset

St Mary's Church has been collecting donations of blankets and towels, clothes, toiletries, torches, medicines, first aid kits, modified milk and other essentials throughout the week.

It is currently taking a break due to overwhelming demand but says it will resume soon.

Polish Social Club, Southampton

This organisation is collecting supplies to be sent specifically to Medyka on the Polish-Ukrainian border to support refugees fleeing the fighting in their homeland.

They are asking for donations of: nappies and wet wipes, including nappies for elderly; dry sanitary products; thermal clothes and gloves; batteries, flashlights and candles; food for children - long term and dry; warm blankets and sleeping bags; painkillers; dressings; face masks and hand gels; dog/cat food.

For more information, check out [*the club's Facebook page*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FPolskiKlubSouthampton%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html).

Address: 507 Portswood Road, SO17 2TH

Malvern Bakehouse, Worcestershire

This local bakery has been collecting baby clothes, soft toys, first aid items, blankets and sleeping bags to be delivered to refugees in Poland.

However, it has been so overwhelmed by the generosity of the public that it cannot take any more supplies so is instead directing donors to support the Foundation of the Sisters of Saint Dominic (details below).

Country Living has [*more information*](https://www.countryliving.com/uk/news/a39274528/ukraine-donation-drop-off-points-uk/) on other local donation sites across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wales

Sklep u Pauli, Bridgend

This Polish supermarket is accepting donations for Ukraine during opening hours - 9am to 7pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 5pm on Sundays. All donations welcome except clothing, which is no longer needed.

Address: 8 Derwen Road, Bridgend, CF31 1LH

Park Vets, Cardiff

Accepting donations at its Cardiff site - but says it is in need of assistance transporting items to a larger collection point in Newport. If you can help, please contact the business.

Clothing is no longer required but volunteers are collecting food with a long expiry date, toiletries and medical products.

Address: Sanatorium Road, Cardiff, CF11 8DG

02920382211

Supermarket ABC, Newport

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 158-152 Chepstow Road, Newport NP19 8EG

01633961601

Rogue Fox Coffee House, Newport

Le Pub at 14 High Street in Newport is also accepting donations during opening hours as part of the Women of Newport campaign group, as is the Rogue Fox Coffee House (Monday-Friday 8am to 4pm).

Organised by local resident Kamila Jarczak, this latter operation is asking for toiletries, baby nappies (different sizes) and wipes, sanitary products, dog and cat food, batteries, flashlights and candles, thermal clothes, hats and gloves, duvets, blankets, sleeping bags and pillows.

Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

Supermarket ABC, Swansea

Organisers say they are especially keen to receive donations of baby products (including nappies, modified milk, bottles and wet wipes), feminine hygiene items, thermal blankets, sheets, pillows, rain coats, toiletries and hygiene products.

Again, instant food like soup, dried fruit and nuts, pasta, canned meat or fish, coffee, tea and sugar is also appreciated.

Address: 18 Woodfield Street, Morriston, Swansea SA6 8AQ

08438868235

Wales Online has [*more information*](https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/ukraine-collections-wales-donations-russia-23232480) on other donation sites open across the country.

Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-collection-points-near-me-b2036000.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Where can I donate items for Ukraine and which items are most needed?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6515-CH81-DY4H-K1SY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 10:46 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 2253 words

**Byline:** Joe Sommerlad

**Highlight:** Support for refugees fleeing Russian invasion floods in across Britain

**Body**

People across Britain and the wider world have been deeply moved by the courage and resilience shown by the citizens of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the last three weeks after their country came under attack from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , an invasion that brought international condemnation and has already seen the aggressor become a pariah state on the world stage.

While many have been caught up in the violent warfare playing out across Ukrainian cities, more than 2.5m others have been forced to flee for safety in neighbouring states like [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) and [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova).

Both the resistance and the refugees need the help and generosity of Ukraine's European neighbours to survive their ordeal and millions of Britons have already [*donated generously to fundraising drives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-help-emergency-appeal-how-donate-b2024293.html) and supported causes like The Independent's [*Refugees Welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-refugees-welcome-b2025033.html) campaign, which seeks to persuade the British government to do more to help asylum seekers escape the conflict.

At a local level, charitable endeavours have meanwhile sprung up across the country to take in and deliver supplies to the frontline.

Below is a list of some of the places across Britain currently accepting donations of goods like clothing, toys, medicine and food to help those under siege in their hour of need.

It is by no means a definitive record, however, so please check your local listings for other collections in your area.

Readers are also encouraged to share further information and links to other regional hubs in the comments section that follows.

Anyone planning to vist a drop-off centre is further advised to check up on the site's social media accounts or call ahead beforehand for more information on which resources are most in demand to avoid a surplus, given that the situation on the ground is changing all the time.

London

The Polish White Eagle Club in Balham, South London

The organisers are accepting clothing, bedding and other items to help refugees in Ukraine. They say they have already been overwhelmed with donations, however, so members of the public are advised to contact them before dropping off supplies.

Address: 211 Balham High Road, SW17 7BQ

02086721723

North London Collection Centre

The organisers here say items needed include nappies, sanitary items, towels, reusable cutlery, toothbrushes and underwear.

Address: 233 Willesden Lane, NW2 5RP

There is a local collection point at 233 Willesden Lane if you wish to make donations to help Ukraine. See below what is being collected. [*pic.twitter.com/z2x2N2nj7v*](https://t.co/z2x2N2nj7v) - Life In Kilburn (@LifeInKilburn) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/LifeInKilburn/status/1498638654536830977?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies Students at the university have been [*collecting for* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/ssees-ukraine/ways-help) , extending their original three day donation drive to 11 and shipping over 1,600 boxes of emergency supplies to Ukraine, an extraordinary effort.Address: 16 Taviton Street, WC1H 0BWWhat began as a 3 day drive has now wrapped up after 11 days! 1,600+ boxes, 4 lorries to Ukraine, 70+ student volunteers, and 4 Universities involved! What a testament to the strength of the student community at [*@UCLSSEES*](https://twitter.com/UCLSSEES?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , [*@ucl*](https://twitter.com/ucl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and across London! THANK YOU [*#*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D1%96?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/kFhcwMejS0*](https://t.co/kFhcwMejS0) - Freya Proudman (@freyaproudman) [*March 10, 2022*](https://twitter.com/freyaproudman/status/1501998289625010179?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Lewisham Donation HubTakes donations every Sunday from 1-4pm. Items particularly needed are posted [*on the organisation's website*](https://lewishamdonationhub.org/) on Saturdays so donors are advised to check there first.Address: 261 Lewisham High Street SE13 6AYRest of EnglandThe Polish Integration Support Centre's British and Polish Solidarity with Ukraine campaign has been collecting donations at sites across the country since 27 February (they're also behind the Balham site listed above and have two additional sites in Wrexham). [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Polish Integration Support Centre have been working tirelessly to help and support the Ukrainian people with essentials to be sent out to those who need it.Please contact your local centre to help, please see further details below. [*pic.twitter.com/HhSIoarUUB*](https://t.co/HhSIoarUUB) - SalfordMayor (@salford\_mayor) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/salford_mayor/status/1498729733642719237?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) It has been asking for foil survival blankets, toys, nappies, sanitary towels, crayons, towels, first aid kits, sleeping bags, metal cups, thermal clothing, hair brushes, shampoos, toothbrushes, children's clothes and bandages.This is the moment lorry loads of donations for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** set off for Poland and Ukraine from Chester.So far 30 lorries full of clothing, medical supplies and toiletries have been sent out by the Polish Integration Support Centre [*pic.twitter.com/4utKxabezn*](https://t.co/4utKxabezn) - BBC North West (@BBCNWT) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCNWT/status/1502951927092588549?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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02920382211

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Address: 3 Clytha Park Road, Newport NP20 4NZ

01633250647

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Scotland

Edinburgh

Donations are being taken at many of the city's Polish supermarkets, cafes and at St Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the details of which are as follows.

Address: 24 Dalmeny Street, Edinburgh Ehl 8SA

01315563447

Aberdeenshire

There are donation points in Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Banff and Ellon in Aberdeenshire while the [*Ukrainian Crisis Pet Appeal Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FUkranian-Crisis-Pet-Appeal-Aberdeen-and-Aberdeenshire-104249642206239%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-where-help-b2037888.html) is working to coordinate drop-offs and donations to support animals caught up in the conflict.

Mossgiel Organic Farm, Mauchline, Ayrshire

Clothes, blankets, duvets, sleeping bags, toys, nappies and canned food are being accepted here, with regular updates posted on the farm's [*Twitter account*](https://twitter.com/MossgielFarm).

Address: West Mossgiel Farm, Tarbolton Road, Mauchline KA5 5LL

Oban, Argyll and Bute

The [*Oban Helps Ukraine*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2F&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-where-help-b2037888.html) Facebook page is meanwhile a useful resource for updates on [*where you can donate*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fgroups%2F1129956034433174%2Fpermalink%2F1130027884425989&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ukraine-appeal-donate-where-help-b2037888.html) in that region.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*German population hits a record 84M due to Ukraine refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66GJ-6PX1-DY4H-K410-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 27, 2022 Tuesday 2:04 PM GMT

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**Length:** 193 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The influx of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to Germany has pushed the country’s population to a new all-time high of more than 84 million

**Body**

The influx of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to Germany has pushed the country's population to a new all-time high of more than 84 million, the German Federal Statistical Office said Tuesday.

By the end of June, the country's population increased by 843,000 people, or 1%, compared to the end of 2021.

In comparison, the population grew by 82,000 people, or 0.1%, in the entire year of 2021.

Around 750,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** came to Germany seeking safety from the Russian invasion in the first half of 2022.

Most of them were female, the statistical office reported, saying that by the end of June 501,000 more Ukrainian women and girls were living in Germany than at the end of 2021, while the number of Ukrainian men and boys increased by 248,000.

Germany experienced population increases of this magnitude before — both immigration-related — in 1992 and 2015.

In 1992, shortly after the fall of communism and Germany's reunification, about 700,000 people arrived, fleeing the war in [*Yugoslavia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yugoslavia) , and coming from [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) following the opening of the borders there.

In 2015, almost 1 million migrants came from war-torn countries like [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) , [*Iraq*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iraq) and Afghanistan.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Poles need EU funds as they help Ukrainians, ambassador says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65H1-GF51-JBNF-W330-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 21, 2022 Saturday 11:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 807 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukraine's ambassador to neighboring Poland says his country is grateful for the welcome that Poles have given to millions of Ukrainians, but hopes the European Union will soon release billions of euros to Poland so that helping those fleeing the war does not come "at the cost of the Polish people."

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's ambassador to neighboring Poland says his nation is grateful for the welcome that Poles have given to millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but he hopes the European Union will soon release billions of euros to Poland so that the assistance does not come "at the cost of the Polish people."

Ambassador Andrii Deshchytsia said that while there have been no real social tensions in the three months since Ukrainians began crossing into Poland seeking safety, he worries they could appear in the future given the large extent of Polish help.

The government has extended free medical care, education and other social services to the Ukrainians, while more than 80% of them are being housed in private Polish homes. Deshchytsia noted that Russian disinformation efforts online have included spreading the message that Ukrainians are getting better treatment than Poles themselves, and that while these efforts have not found fertile ground yet, he is concerned that problems could arise.

"I'm worried because I don't know where the limits of this hospitality, of the hospitality of Polish people, are," he said in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday. "It's a warm and healthy welcome. But how long they can keep them? And it's understandable for me, and it's also understandable for my compatriots. They understand that there are some limits."

The solution, as he sees it, is for the EU to release billions of euros of a pandemic recovery package. That would also have the benefit of preventing a large wave of Ukrainians getting frustrated in Poland and heading elsewhere in the EU, he argued.

While most of the 27 members of the bloc have gotten their funds aimed at helping countries recover from the economic effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, 36 billion euros earmarked for Poland have been blocked in a dispute over changes to the courts viewed as an erosion of democratic standards.

The main point of contention is a disciplinary chamber at the Supreme Court which has been a way for Poland's ruling conservative authorities to suspend judges whose rulings they don't like. The EU Commission wants the chamber abolished and suspended judges reinstated - something Poland has failed to do. The parliament next week is due to debate proposals to solve the crisis over the chamber.

Deshchytsia said that he wants both sides to seek a compromise, and that he is urging both the EU and Poland to make this happen.

"Poland has proven how effectively they can manage this wave of migrants, how effectively they can manage to use the money of their own budget, and how effectively they can provide assistance to the migrants," he said. "It will help both Ukrainians and Poles living in Poland. And we will get out of the possible tensions."

Deshchytsia estimates that there are now between 3 and 4 million Ukrainians in Poland, of whom some 1.5 million had already been working, studying and living in Poland before Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine, and the rest have arrived since then. In a country with a population of 38 million people, this means that Ukrainians now make up somewhere around 10% of the population.

How many will stay remains unclear, and will be determined by how long the war goes on.

Poland's Border Guard agency has registered some 3.5 million crossings from Ukraine to Poland since the war began, and more than 1.4 million the other way. Of those who arrive in Poland, some have headed to other countries, but a large percentage have chosen to remain in Poland, where many have friends or family and share cultural and linguistic links with Poles. Many also want to remain close to Ukraine, hoping to return.

The ambassador said he is often asked by Ukrainians if it's OK to return now that Russian forces have been pushed back from the area around Kyiv and some other parts of the country. He has no good answer.

"It's very difficult to say, should you go back to your home or not, because the situation is not stable yet. So I might encourage you to [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) , which is far from the front line. But in one day Lviv could be bombed as it was two or three days ago, and the rocket might come to your house or your car," he said.

Poland and Ukraine have seen their ties strained in the past due to remaining tensions over ethnic bloodletting in the 20th century. The ambassador says this has "changed dramatically" as the Russian threat has united Poles and Ukrainians.

In one sign of Polish support, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) will intensify their lobbying for the EU to grant Ukraine the status of EU candidate at a June 23-24 summit.

Since the war began, the ambassador says he is often stopped by people on the street who thank him for the Ukrainian resistance to Russia. He says they tell him: "You are fighting for your and our freedom ... we will be supporting you as long as needed."

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Asylum seekers could be sent to Rwanda for 'spending a couple of weeks in Brussels' on way to Britain*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DR-4N21-JBNF-W1YP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 10, 2022 Tuesday 6:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:1

**Length:** 919 words

**Byline:** Lizzie Dearden

**Highlight:** Foreign shop receipts and tickets can also be used to declare people 'inadmissible' for asylum in the UK

**Body**

[*Asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) could be sent to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) for "spending a couple of weeks in [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels) staying with friends" while journeying to the UK, or for being found with foreign receipts and train tickets in their pockets.

Home Office guidance -made public following threats of legal action by refugee charities -includes examples of reasons that people can be selected for removal under [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's new scheme.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have not been excluded, according to official documents which suggest that anyone who "travelled through safe third countries" like Poland or France can be considered.

They state that asylum seekers may be sent to Rwanda if their claim is deemed "inadmissible" under government policy, and they arrived by a small boat or another "dangerous" method after 1 January.

A document on what constitutes "inadmissibility" says it includes people deemed to have a connection to a safe country that is not the UK or their home nation.

That means that they have been recognised as a refugee in, travelled through, made an asylum application to or could have made an application to that country "on the balance of probabilities".

Guidance for Home Office staff gives examples, saying that an asylum seeker who "passed through [*Belgium*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgium) " before arriving in the UK could be declared inadmissible.

"An admission from the claimant that they had spent a couple of weeks in Brussels staying with friends whilst trying to find an agent to bring them illegally to the UK would likely constitute evidence that they had been in that particular country," it states.

"The decision would also need to consider whether the claimant has provided any exceptional circumstances as to what they could not have made an application for protection in that particular country."

The document states that even if asylum seekers deny having stayed in a safe country previously, "material in their belongings such as receipts and tickets from Belgian shops, services and transport showing time and freedom of movement in Belgium would likely meet the standard of proof required".

Staff must weigh up any evidence that the receipts did not belong to that person or that "exceptional circumstances" meant they could not stay in Belgium, the guidance adds.

It says that removal to Rwanda should be considered if it "stands a greater chance" than removal to the country they are deemed to have a connection to.

Before Brexit, the UK was part of an EU-wide regulation that [*allowed the transfer of asylum seekers to countries they had previously stayed in*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-immgration-eu-rejects-asylum-seeker-return-plea-dublin-regulations-michel-barnier-a9680581.html%22%20title=%22EU%20rejects%20UK%20plea%20to%20allow%20asylum%20seeker%20returns%20after%20Brexit).

It saw Britain to send thousands of people to France, Belgium and other countries deemed responsible for them, but the deal has not been replaced by the EU and individual nations have [*told The Independent they will not negotiate the bilateral "returns agreements"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-eu-deportation-home-office-b1836598.html%22%20title=%22EU%20countries%20rule%20out%20bilateral%20asylum%20deals%20in%20blow%20to%20Priti%20Patel's%20immigration%20plans) originally promised by the government.

The UN Refugee Agency has vocally opposed the Rwanda deal, saying it "evades international obligations and is contrary to the letter and spirit of the Refugee Convention".

Officials have said that there is no international legal obligation requiring refugees to seek asylum in the "first safe country they reach", which is a key assertion underpinning the government's policies.

"If all refugees were obliged to remain in the first safe country they encountered, the whole system would probably collapse," the UNHCR added.

"The countries closer to zones of conflict and displacement would be totally overwhelmed, while countries further removed would share little or none of the responsibility. This would hardly be fair, or workable, and runs against the spirit of the Convention."

Under British law, asylum can only be claimed inside the UK and there is no visa for people wanting to reach the country specifically for that purpose.

It means that people who are not eligible for limited resettlement schemes must travel independently to the country.

Refugee charities have repeatedly called for the government to set up alternative routes that remove the need for [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) crossings rather than pursuing increasingly punitive "deterrents".

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants said the government was "not interested in taking the practical steps needed".

"They could easily issue humanitarian visas and new pathways for people to re-join family here, but instead they continue to forge ahead with cruel and senseless asylum plans," said interim chief executive Paola Uccellari.

"It's time Priti Patel stopped dreaming up diabolical ways to treat people seeking safety here - whether that's deporting people to Rwanda, or opening up prison-like asylum camps in rural Yorkshire. What we need are fair and effective asylum rules, which give people the chance to come here safely and build their lives in our communities."

Clare Moseley, founder of Care4Calais, said: "If this government truly wished to shut down people smugglers, they would allow all refugees in Calais to apply for visas, as they have done for Ukrainians.

"The question is, why has this cheaper, easier and more humane option not been considered?"

The home secretary rebuffed a Conservative MP's call for asylum processing in France earlier this year, telling parliament's Home Affairs Committee that it would "make France a big magnet for more migrants to come".

Amid a series of potential legal challenges against the Rwanda policy and the removal of individuals notified that they have been selected for it, the Home Office insisted that the plans were lawful and that it would defend any case "robustly".

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Google to expand misinformation "prebunking" in Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67J4-VBC1-DY4H-K04F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 13, 2023 Monday 5:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1075 words

**Byline:** David Klepper

**Highlight:** Google is expanding an initiative that shows promise in fighting online misinformation

**Body**

After seeing promising results in [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) , [*Google*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/google) will initiate a new campaign in [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) that aims to make people more resilient to the corrosive effects of online misinformation.

The tech giant plans to release a series of short videos highlighting the techniques common to many misleading claims. The videos will appear as advertisements on platforms like Facebook, YouTube or TikTok in Germany. A similar campaign in India is also in the works.

It's an approach called pre-bunking, which involves teaching people how to spot false claims before they encounter them. The strategy is gaining support among researchers and tech companies.

“There's a real appetite for solutions,” said Beth Goldberg, head of research and development at Jigsaw, an incubator division of Google that studies emerging social challenges. “Using ads as a vehicle to counter a disinformation technique is pretty novel. And we're excited about the results.”

While belief in falsehoods and conspiracy theories isn't new, the speed and reach of the internet has given them a heightened power. When catalyzed by algorithms, misleading claims can discourage people from getting vaccines, spread authoritarian propaganda, foment distrust in democratic institutions and spur violence.

It's a challenge with few easy solutions. Journalistic fact checks are effective, but they're labor intensive, aren't read by everyone, and won't convince those already distrustful of traditional journalism. Content moderation by tech companies is another response, but it only drives misinformation elsewhere, while prompting cries of censorship and bias.

Pre-bunking videos, by contrast, are relatively cheap and easy to produce and can be seen by millions when placed on popular platforms. They also avoid the political challenge altogether by focusing not on the topics of false claims, which are often cultural lightning rods, but on the techniques that make viral misinformation so infectious.

Those techniques include fear-mongering, scapegoating, false comparisons, exaggeration and missing context. Whether the subject is COVID-19, mass shootings, immigration, climate change or elections, misleading claims often rely on one or more of these tricks to exploit emotions and short-circuit critical thinking.

Last fall, Google launched the largest test of the theory so far with a pre-bunking video campaign in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The videos dissected different techniques seen in false claims about ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Many of those claims relied on alarming and unfounded stories about refugees committing crimes or taking jobs away from residents.

The videos were seen 38 million times on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Twitter — a number that equates to a majority of the population in the three nations. Researchers found that compared to people who hadn't seen the videos, those who did watch were more likely to be able to identify misinformation techniques, and less likely to spread false claims to others.

The pilot project was the largest test of pre-bunking so far and adds to a growing consensus in support of the theory.

“This is a good news story in what has essentially been a bad news business when it comes to misinformation,” said Alex Mahadevan, director of MediaWise, a media literacy initiative of the Poynter Institute that has incorporated pre-bunking into its own programs in countries including Brazil, Spain, France and the U.S.

Mahadevan called the strategy a “pretty efficient way to address misinformation at scale, because you can reach a lot of people while at the same time address a wide range of misinformation.”

Google's new campaign in Germany will include a focus on photos and videos, and the ease with which they can be presented of evidence of something false. One example: Last week, following the earthquake in Turkey, some social media users shared video of the massive explosion in Beirut in 2020, claiming it was actually footage of a nuclear explosion triggered by the earthquake. It was not the first time the 2020 explosion had been the subject of misinformation.

Google will announce its new German campaign Monday ahead of next week's Munich Security Conference. The timing of the announcement, coming before that annual gathering of international security officials, reflects heightened concerns about the impact of misinformation among both tech companies and government officials.

Tech companies like pre-bunking because it avoids touchy topics that are easily politicized, said Sander van der Linden, a University of Cambridge professor considered a leading expert on the theory. Van der Linden worked with Google on its campaign and is now advising [*Meta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meta) , the owner of Facebook and Instagram, as well.

Meta has incorporated pre-bunking into many different media literacy and anti-misinformation campaigns in recent years, the company told The Associated Press in an emailed statement.

They include a 2021 program in the U.S. that offered media literacy training about COVID-19 to Black, Latino and Asian American communities. Participants who took the training were later tested and found to be far more resistant to misleading COVID-19 claims.

Pre-bunking comes with its own challenges. The effects of the videos eventually wears off, requiring the use of periodic “booster” videos. Also, the videos must be crafted well enough to hold the viewer's attention, and tailored for different languages, cultures and demographics. And like a vaccine, it's not 100% effective for everyone.

Google found that its campaign in Eastern Europe varied from country to country. While the effect of the videos was highest in Poland, in Slovakia they had “little to no discernible effect,” researchers found. One possible explanation: The videos were dubbed into the Slovak language, and not created specifically for the local audience.

But together with traditional journalism, content moderation and other methods of combating misinformation, pre-bunking could help communities reach a kind of herd immunity when it comes to misinformation, limiting its spread and impact.

“You can think of misinformation as a virus. It spreads. It lingers. It can make people act in certain ways," Van der Linden told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap). "Some people develop symptoms, some do not. So: if it spreads and acts like a virus, then maybe we can figure out how to inoculate people.”

\_\_\_

Follow the AP’s coverage of misinformation at [*https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation*](https://apnews.com/hub/misinformation).

**Load-Date:** February 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Quick Senate OK ahead for House-passed $40B aid for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DX-YC41-DY4H-K100-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 11, 2022 Wednesday 5:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 918 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Final congressional approval of a $40 billion Ukraine aid bill seems certain within days

**Body**

Final congressional approval of a $40 billion [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) aid bill seems certain within days as top [*Senate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senate) Republicans said Wednesday they expect strong GOP backing for the House-passed measure, signaling a bipartisan, heightened U.S. commitment to helping thwart the bloody Russian invasion.

"I think there'll be substantial support," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told The Associated Press about the legislation, which cleared the House late Tuesday by an emphatic 368-57 margin. "We're going to try to process it as soon as possible."

No. 2 Senate GOP leader [*John Thune*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-thune) of South Dakota predicted "a big vote over here" for the bill, which he and others suggested might come Thursday but could spill into next week. Thune said some Republicans would vote against it and procedural tactics by opponents to slow it were possible, but added, "I think because there's so much forward momentum behind doing this and doing it in a timely way that it I don't think we'll have anybody who will hold it up."

It's taken just two weeks for lawmakers to receive President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) 's smaller, $33 billion package, enlarge it and move it to the brink of passage - lightning speed for Congress. That reflects a bipartisan consensus that Ukraine's outnumbered forces need additional Western help as soon as possible, with added political pressure fueled by near-daily tales of atrocities against civilians inflicted by Russian President Vladimir Putin's armies.

"Act quickly we must," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "I will make sure this is a priority for the Senate. We have a moral obligation to stand with our friends in Ukraine."

The new legislation would bring American support for the effort to nearly $54 billion, including the $13.6 billion Congress enacted in March. That's about $6 billion more than the U.S. spent on all its foreign and military aid in 2019, according to a January report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, which studies issues for lawmakers.

Washington has become increasingly assertive about its goals and its willingness to help Ukraine with more sophisticated weapons. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said recently the U.S. wants a "weakened" Russia that can't quickly restore its capability to attack other countries, and reports have emerged about U.S. intelligence helping Ukrainians kill Russian generals and sink the Russian missile cruiser Moskva.

A senior Russian official said in Moscow Wednesday that the assistance package was part of Washington's proxy war against Russia. Dmitry Medvedev, deputy head of Russia's Security Council and former president, said on a messaging app that the aid was driven by a desire to "inflict a heavy defeat on our country, restrict its economic development and political influence in the world."

The measure sailed to House passage backed by every voting Democrat, while around 1-in-4 Republicans opposed it. It would provide $7 billion more than Biden's request from April, dividing the increase evenly between defense and humanitarian programs.

The bill would give Ukraine military and economic assistance, help regional allies, replenish weapons the Pentagon has shipped overseas and provide $5 billion to address global food shortages caused by the war's crippling of Ukraine's normally robust production of many crops.

"As Putin desperately accelerates his campaign of horror and brutality in Ukraine, time is of the essence," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Some Republicans used the election-season debate to accuse Biden of being unclear about his goals.

"Honestly, do we not deserve a plan?" said Rep. Michael Burgess, R-Texas. He said he agrees that Western countries must help Ukraine stand up to Russia but added, "Does the administration not need to come to us with where we are going with this?"

Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., attended Tuesday's separate Democratic and Republican Senate lunches and expressed gratitude for the support they've received. Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said Markarova told them her country has depleted its stockpiles of Soviet-era weapons and said continued NATO support is vital.

Coons said the Ukrainian's message was: "Thank you, do more. We have a hard fight ahead. With your support, we can win."

The new measure includes $6 billion to arm and train Ukrainian forces, $8.7 billion to restore American stores of weapons shipped to Ukraine and $3.9 billion for U.S. forces deployed to the area.

There's also $8.8 billion in economic support for Ukraine, $4 billion to help Ukraine and allies finance arms and equipment purchases and $900 million for housing, education and other help for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the U.S.

To enhance the measure's chances in Congress, the House bill dropped Biden's proposal to ease the pathway to legal permanent residency for qualifying Afghans who fled to the U.S. after last summer's American withdrawal from that country. Some Republicans have expressed concerns about the adequacy of security screenings for applicants.

In their biggest concession, Biden and Democrats abandoned plans Monday to include additional billions of dollars to build up U.S. supplies of medicines, vaccines and tests for COVID-19. Republican support for more pandemic spending is waning and including that money would have slowed the Ukraine measure in the 50-50 Senate, where at least 10 GOP votes will be needed for passage.

Democrats hope to produce a separate COVID-19 package soon, though its fate is unclear.

**Load-Date:** May 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK's visa schemes 'creating and heightening' trafficking and exploitation risks*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B8-C4P1-JBNF-W3TC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 29, 2022 Friday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 966 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** More than 100 experts have highlighted the "troubling implications" of the UK's visa-based response.

**Body**

The UK's visa schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are "lacking in clarity, resourcing and accountability" and are heightening the risk of trafficking and exploitation, according to a report.

More than 100 experts have highlighted the "troubling implications" of the UK's visa-based response, saying they are struggling to make sense of the "chaotic, fragmented and confusing" system.

In a report produced by experts at [*UCL*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ucl) for the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Dame Sara Thornton, the visa requirement is widely regarded as creating and heightening risks of human trafficking and exploitation.

There was clear consensus among experts from across different backgrounds that new risks specific to this war are interacting with existing systemic issues in the UK, putting many refugees from Ukraine at heightened risk of human trafficking and exploitation

Dr Ella Cockbain, UCL

This compares to EU countries' more open responses which were seen as a "major source of resilience" against such threats.

The UK's "hostile environment" is also creating a "difficult climate" in which to respond to the crisis, they added.

The report details issues raised during a round table of experts from governmental bodies, healthcare, legal groups, law enforcement and academics.

Numerous concerns were raised about the [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for Ukraine scheme, with experts worried both about the "deliberately predatory hosts" and about conditions becoming increasingly exploitative over time.

They identified the potential for domestic servitude, with unclear Government guidance heightening the risk of exploitative placements.

And they warned that councils are likely to struggle to house refugees who need accommodation because their relatives cannot house them or their placement with a sponsor breaks down.

One respondent, from an [*NGO*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ngo) , said: "Six months is a long time to sign up to host somebody and as far as we can work out there's no back-up for what happens if it goes wrong, although on paper there is.

"But in reality there is a housing shortage, as we probably all know, and there's already thousands and thousands of [*Afghans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghans) waiting for housing in hotels, so what happens if a hosting placement goes wrong, where are the Ukrainian people going to go?"

They also said there is a shortage of official information for refugees, their hosts and councils, warning that a high volume of "decentralised and fragmented material and initiatives" could cause confusion and hinder refugees' access to support.

In addition to women and children, groups particularly at risk of exploitation include separated and unaccompanied minors, older people, [*Roma*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roma) and other minority groups, and international students.

One participant, a barrister, said: "I'm hearing from the police who are going into the brothels that they are very concerned that there's an increase in the number of Ukrainian females ... I suspect that those females are compelled into sex work rather than being more consensual sex workers, and I'm concerned about the lack of our ability from a policing and disruption and safeguarding perspective to intervene and protect."

Lead author Dr Ella Cockbain, from UCL's Department of Security & Crime Science, said: "There was clear consensus among experts from across different backgrounds that new risks specific to this war are interacting with existing systemic issues in the UK, putting many refugees from Ukraine at heightened risk of human trafficking and exploitation - both on the way to the UK and once here."

She added: "Simply warning people about human trafficking and modern slavery is not enough, they need to be given safer, better options and access to vital support if things go wrong."

What we must do now is put in place systematic prevention and protection measures to ensure the risks of trafficking and exploitation do not become a reality

Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Dame Sarah Thornton

Dame Sara said the responses to the Homes for Ukraine scheme have shown how willing the public is to support refugees.

She said: "Thousands of individuals, organisations and businesses have offered shelter, support and job opportunities.

"What we must do now is put in place systematic prevention and protection measures to ensure the risks of trafficking and exploitation do not become a reality."

Among the report's 25 recommendations is a call for the Home Office to waive the visa requirement, improve access to support for non-Ukrainians fleeing the country, and publish regular data on how many separated and unaccompanied children are arriving in the UK.

It should also ensure councils get £10,500 per refugee arriving under the Family scheme, and these refugees should get a £200 payment when they arrive, as is the case for arrivals under the Sponsorship scheme.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which has responsibility for the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, should provide information clarifying expectations around domestic chores.

And it should work with councils to make clear plans for how refugees will be supported with housing if placements fall through or relatives cannot house them.

A Government spokesperson said: "In response to Putin's barbaric invasion we launched one of the fastest and biggest visa schemes in UK history. 86,000 visas have been granted with over 27,000 Ukrainians arriving safely in the UK.

"Thanks to changes we made to streamline the system, thousands of visas are being granted every day, but it is right that security checks are conducted on both applicants and sponsors to make sure Ukrainians fleeing the war and sponsors are safeguarded.

"Under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, councils must make at least one in-person visit to a sponsor's property and following guests arrival, they have a duty to ensure the guest is safe and well."

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Keir Starmer has forced me to do something unthinkable with my vote*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CC-TRR1-JBNF-W4T6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 4, 2022 Wednesday 10:04 AM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:5

**Length:** 851 words

**Byline:** Harriet Williamson

**Highlight:** For the first time in my life, I'm considering spoiling my ballot

**Body**

I'm not someone who would usually consider wasting their vote. I grew up understanding the importance of casting my ballot in elections, and was taken to polling stations in slightly smelly church halls by my parents when I only came up to their knees. I remember my dad lifting me up in the makeshift booth to look at the paper slip as he marked his cross.

But faced with this year's [*local elections*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-elections) , I feel lost. Will I spoil my ballot? Will I chuck the Greens a vote? Who knows.

With the ongoing [*Partygate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/partygate) scandal, allegations of harassment and bullying in Westminster, sleaze, dodgy PPE contracts awarded to mates and the government's lacklustre - to put it incredibly mildly - response to the cost of living crisis, this election is a referendum on Boris Johnson and the Tories.

Conservative MPs, the only people with the power to get rid of Johnson, will find out whether their leader, now [*widely considered*](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2022/04/21/eight-10-britons-say-boris-johnson-lied-about-lock) to be a liar, is more of an electoral liability than an asset.

The local elections are also a test for Labour under [*Keir Starmer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/keir-starmer) , and it is here that my voting pencil falters.

When I was able to vote for the first time in 2010, I eschewed Labour for the Lib Dems in the aftermath of the Iraq war. The Lib Dems formed a coalition government with the Tories and reneged on their election promise to abolish tuition fees, tripling them instead. Under the coalition, an austerity programme of brutal cuts trashed the lives and life chances of millions of people. It's possible that I might have had some political trust issues after that.

I voted for Ed Miliband in 2015, and then for Jeremy Corbyn in two leadership and two general elections. Under Corbyn, the Labour Party had a vision for Britain and I knew exactly what its values were. With Starmer as leader, I genuinely have no idea what the party stands for.

As we face a spiralling cost of living crisis, and the Tories attack our right to protest and [*criminalise refugees*](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/nationality-borders-bill-truth-behind-claims) seeking safety, political values are perhaps more important than ever.

Starmer was elected Labour leader by party members on a platform of party unity and continuing the policy agenda of his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn. His 10 pledges, building on the Corbyn project, were useful in garnering member votes, but he was quick to discard them. As[*Aaron Bastani writes*](https://novaramedia.com/2021/09/29/keir-starmer-is-just-as-dishonest-as-boris-johnson/) , Starmer's dishonesty is of a different breed to Boris Johnson's ridiculous, barefaced sort - but it is dishonesty nonetheless.

Over the past two years of Starmer's leadership, he has proved himself far better at attacking his own party and sacrificing the support of left-wingers and [*people of colour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-party-black-racism-keir-starmer-b1809223.html) [*(including members, staff and MPs)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-party-black-racism-keir-starmer-b1809223.html) than holding the increasingly shambolic and scandal-ridden Tories to account. Starmer hasn't had the media vitriol that showered his predecessor to contend with. Brexit's obviously a massive mess. Fixed penalty notices are flying all over the place. This should be a cakewalk (sorry!) for Labour.

Unfortunately, Labour feels like a party that has lost its way. The [*failure to back an open door policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-ukraine-refugees-welcome-starmer-b2026527.html) for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** was a particularly disappointing example of this. As was Starmer's professed [*disagreement*](https://www.thejc.com/news/politics/israel-is-not-an-apartheid-state-says-keir-starmer-as-he-apologises-for-the-corbyn-years-5tTeGqYxJE3DmQdQI2WIss) with Amnesty International's analysis that the state of Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people amounts to [*apartheid*](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/).

The hope and energy that surrounded Labour with Corbyn as leader has evaporated, members have left Labour in droves and the party has undeniably shifted to the right.

Starmer has gone to great lengths to distance himself from his predecessor, and Corbyn's common sense policies for tackling inequality and building a fairer Britain that doesn't operate in the interests of the privileged few have been kicked into the long grass.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

One of the reasons for [*voter apathy in the UK*](https://www.politics.co.uk/reference/election-turnout/) may well be the poor opinion many people have of politicians - they can't be trusted and "they're all the same". Keir Starmer isn't doing much to counteract that narrative. Maybe I'm expecting too much from our political class, but leaders who will say anything depending on which way the wind is blowing and rip up their pledges as soon as they get their hands on power don't get my vote.

With the Tories in such obvious disarray, one might expect Starmer's approval ratings to be higher than [*27 per cent*](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/trackers/keir-starmer-approval-rating) , as of early April. Perhaps this is a product of the[*disdain*](https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/politics/rachel-reeves-says-losing-labour-members-is-a-good-thing-as-party-shakes-corbynite-past-308797/) with which left-wing voters have been treated, or the lack of a coherent vision - aside from transparent [*flag-waving strategies*](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/02/labour-urged-to-focus-on-flag-and-patriotism-to-win-voters-trust-leak-reveals) to win back people in red-wall seats, as though northern voters are easily swayed by a few union jacks and MPs in nicer suits.

If people want the Tories, they'll vote for them. Labour as a Tory-lite B team with a different colour palette doesn't promise transformative governance with a commitment to economic, social and climate justice at its heart.

Do I want the Tories to do well tomorrow? Absolutely not. But I don't trust Starmer and I can't reward Labour under his leadership.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'We have to do our part': Biden calls for $33 billion in additional assistance for Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B4-TV41-JBNF-W2N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 3:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 930 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** The supplemental spending package Mr Biden is requesting would augment the $14 billion already allocated to assist Ukraine's defence

**Body**

President Joe Biden has asked Congress to approve a $33 billion aid package that will provide [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's government with "critical security, economic and humanitarian assistance" at what he called "a very pivotal moment," as Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces step up attacks in the southern and eastern regions of the country.

"We can't stand by as the Russians continue their atrocities and aggression in Ukraine. Every day the Ukrainians are paying with their lives for this fight, and we need to contribute arms, funding, ammunition and the economic support to make their courage and sacrifice have purpose so they can continue this fight and do what they're doing," Mr Biden said, adding that it is "critical" for Congress to approve the package "as quickly as possible".

The supplemental request will augment the $14 billion allocated in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget Mr Biden signed into law on 15 March, which an administration official said has allowed the United States to "respond to Russia's aggression in Ukraine at "a scope, scale and speed that has never been seen before" by helping Ukraine "win the battle of Kyiv and continue to deplete the Russian military".

But because Russia's war against [*Ukraine could last for what an official said could be "months or more,"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-weapons-nuclear-b2067308.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20news%20-%20live:%20Russia%20'blocking%20evacuation%20of%20wounded'%20from%20Mariupol%20plant) Mr Biden will tell Congress that more assistance is necessary.

A senior administration official said the $33 billion request represents "what we believe is needed to enable Ukraine's success over the next five months of this war".

Additionally, the $33 billion supplemental request will provide funds to enable the US to replenish weapons stockpiles that have been drawn down for shipment to Ukraine's armed forces, and will help US allies "shift away from their dependence on Russian weapons".

Specifically, the bill would provide $20.4 billion in direct security and military assistance, as well as funds for US efforts "to strengthen European security" in cooperation with Nato allies, including "$5 billion in additional drawdown authority, $6 billion for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, and $4 billion for the State Department's Foreign Military Financing program.

The appropriations package will also provide $8.5 billion in financial assistance to Ukraine's government to allow it to "continue performing basic functions, address food insecurity exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression, and support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the countries that are providing them sanctuary".

Mr Biden said previous rounds of US assistance has allowed the US and Nato allies to facilitate "a significant flow of weapons and systems Ukraine ... including tanks, artillery and other weapons," and stressed that support to Kyiv is being delivered "with unprecedented speed".

"Much of the new equipment we've announced in the past two months ... has already gotten to Ukraine where it can be put to their direct use on the battlefield," he said, but the funds already authorised for assistance to Kyiv has been exhausted, which requires Congress to take action once more.

"Basically, we're out of money, and so that's why today - in order to sustain Ukraine as as it continues to fight - I'm sending Congress a supplemental budget request. It's going to keep weapons and ammunition flowing without interruption to the brave Ukrainian fighters, and continue delivering economic and humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian people," he said.

"This assistance would provide even more artillery, armored vehicles anti-armour systems, [and] anti-air capabilities that have been used effectively thus far in the battlefield by the Ukrainian warriors," he continued, adding that the package would also "deliver much needed humanitarian assistance as well as food water, medicine, shelter, and other aid to Ukraine is displaced by Russia's war and provide aid for those seeking refuge in other countries from Ukraine".

"It's also going to help schools and hospitals open which can allow pensions and social support to be paid to the Ukrainian people so they have something something in their pocket. It's also going to provide critical resources to address food shortages around the globe," Mr Biden said.

Mr Biden said he is also asking Congress for a "comprehensive legislative package" that will make it easier for US officials to seize assets belonging to Russian oligarchs and transfer seized assets to Ukraine.

"We're going to seize their yachts, their luxury homes and their other ill-begotten gains of Putin's kleptocracy," he explained. "This legislative package transfers all law enforcement capabilities to seize property linked to Russia's kleptocracy -it's going to create new expedited procedures for forfeiture and seizure of these these properties. That's going to ensure that when they oligarchies assets are sold off, funds can be used directly to remedy the harm Russia caused in our help and help rebuild Ukraine".

Mr Biden added that all the actions his administration is taking are about "the truth" that "investing in Ukraine's freedom and security is a small price to pay to punish Russian aggression, to lessen the risk of future conflicts".

"Throughout our history, we learned when dictators do not pay the price for their aggression, they cause more chaos and more aggression, and they keep moving, and the costs of threats to America and the world keep rising. We can't let this happen," he said. "Our unity at home, and our unity with our allies and partners, and our unity with the Ukrainian people is sending an unmistakable message to Putin: You will never succeed in dominating Ukraine".

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*France's top presidential contenders: Who's proposing what*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6568-VCK1-JBNF-W37H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2022 Sunday 8:49 AM GMT

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**Length:** 933 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The 12 candidates in France's presidential race are proposing drastically different ideas

**Body**

France's presidential race involves one frontrunner, centrist incumbent [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) , and eleven challengers from the far left to the far right. The two top candidates in Sunday's first round qualify for the April 24 runoff.

Here's a look at the main contenders' key proposals.

EMMANUEL MACRON, 44, centrist incumbent, head of the Republic on the Move party

Ukraine: Macron has been at the forefront of international talks on supporting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) amid war and imposing sanctions on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). Macron vows to keep investing in the French military and "significantly" reinforce European armed forces' capacities and cooperation.

Economy: Macron promises "full employment," after the jobless rate decreased during his 2017-2022 term to its lowest level in a generation. He wants to progressively raise the retirement age from 62 to 65 and boost the minimum monthly pension.

Energy: He pledges to build six new-generation nuclear reactors, develop solar energy and wind farms at sea.

Immigration: Macron pushes for strengthening external borders of the European passport-free area and creating a new force to better control national borders. He vows to speed up processing of asylum and residence permit applications and to deport those who aren't eligible.

MARINE LE PEN, 53, far-right head of the National Rally party

Ukraine: Marine Le Pen has cultivated ties with Moscow, receiving a loan of 9 million euros from a Russian bank in 2014 and meeting with Putin in 2017. She acknowledged Russia's invasion of Ukraine "partially" changed her views about Putin, saying he was "wrong." She says she supports the Ukrainian people and refugees must be welcomed.

Immigration: Le Pen's plans include ending family reunification policies, restricting social benefits to the French only, and deporting foreigners who stay unemployed for over a year and other migrants who entered illegally.

Economy and energy: She promises to cut taxes on energy and essential goods. She wants to maintain the minimum retirement age at 62 and raise the minimum pension. She vowed to dismantle windfarms and invest in nuclear and hydro energy.

Muslim-related policies: Le Pen promised a law banning Muslim headscarves in all public places, and outlawing events and financing considered to be spreading "Islamism."

JEAN-LUC MELENCHON, 70, far left

Ukraine: Mélenchon used to call Russia a "partner," even as European governments were scrambling to find ways to avert a Russian invasion of Ukraine. He now supports the Ukrainian "resistance" and Russians who fight what he calls "dictatorship" in their own country.

Economy: Mélenchon promises to raise France's minimum wage and minimum pension, and lower the retirement age to 60. He wants to re-establish a wealth tax.

Climate and energy: He vows to inscribe a "green rule" in the Constitution which calls for not using more resources than nature can replenish, and putting an end to intensive farming. He seeks to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 65% in 2030 - instead of the current goal of 40%. He wants the state to lock in energy and food prices, and promises to phase out nuclear energy and aim for 100% renewable energy instead.

ERIC ZEMMOUR, 63, far-right former TV pundit who has been repeatedly convicted of hate speech

Ukraine: Zemmour initially was a supporter of an "alliance" with Russia, and once wished aloud for a "French Putin." That was before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which he condemned. He initially said he would prefer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in Poland, but later supported granting them visas if they have ties with [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france). Zemmour wants France to pull out of NATO's military command.

Immigration: He wants asylum status to be restricted to no more than 100 people per year - down from about 54,000 last year. He would end welfare benefits for non-European foreigners, outlaw immigration for family reunification, create a coast guard military force to stop arrivals by sea, and deport any migrants who enter without permission.

Muslim-related policies: Zemmour wants a ban on wearing Muslim headscarves in all public spaces, a ban on building big mosques and on foreign financing of the Muslim faith. He proposes restricting the names that parents can give their newborns, de facto banning many names used by French Muslims.

Economy and energy: He promised to cut taxes on businesses, low-income workers, retired people with small pensions and to give families a bonus for children born in rural areas. He wants to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 by 2030. He said he would put an end to all windfarms and vowed to develop nuclear energy.

VALERIE PECRESSE, 54, candidate of conservative The Republicans party

Ukraine: Pécresse denounced Putin's invasion and pushed for firm sanctions on Russia.

Muslim-related policies: She wants a ban on Muslim headscarves for young girls and in sports clubs. She also wants to ban the burkini, a swimsuit worn by conservative Muslims to cover the entire body, from swimming pools.

Immigration: Pécresse plans to establish immigration quotas. Housing and family benefits would be granted to foreigners only five years after they arrive legally in the country. No residency permit would be provided to those who entered without prior permission.

Economy and energy: She promises to raise low and middle-income workers' salaries by 10% and to cut taxes on businesses and workers. She wants to raise the retirement age from 62 to 65 by 2030. She vows to develop nuclear energy and renewable energy, but with restrictions on wind farms.

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Follow AP's France election coverage at [*https://apnews.com/hub/french-election-2022*](https://apnews.com/hub/french-election-2022)

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Two Ukrainian stabbed to death by Russian man in Germany, police report*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX1-N5N1-DY4H-K2G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2024 Sunday 3:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 176 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** German police say two Ukrainian men have been stabbed to death and a Russian man has been arrested by authorities as a possible suspect in the killings

**Body**

Two Ukrainian men were stabbed to death in southern Germany, police said Sunday, and a Russian man was arrested by authorities as a possible suspect in the killings.

The two Ukrainians, who were 23 and 36 years old and lived in the southern German county of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, were killed on the premises of a shopping center in the village of Murnau in Upper Bavaria.

Shortly after the slayings on Saturday evening, the police arrested a 57-year-old Russian on suspicion of murder, German news agency dpa reported.

The names of the victims and the suspect weren't released in line with German privacy rules. The possible motive for the killings wasn't yet known, authorities said. It also wasn't clear if the three men knew each other.

More than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** came to Germany since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Germany is also home to a significant Russian immigrant community and 2.5 million Russians of German ancestry who mostly moved to the country after the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) in the early 1990s.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Lily Cole: Government's Rwanda asylum plan 'like something in a dystopian film'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:658D-S6Y1-DY4H-K107-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 20, 2022 Wednesday 1:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 840 words

**Byline:** Summer Goodkind

**Highlight:** Celebrities, refugees and campaigners gathered on a boat outside the Houses of Parliament to send a message to MPs.

**Body**

Model and actress [*Lily Cole*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lily-cole) has likened the Government's plan to send asylum seekers to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) to "something you'd see in a dystopian film" as she joined a protest on the Thames.

Cole was among celebrities, refugees and campaigners who gathered on a boat which sailed past the Houses of Parliament on Wednesday to send a message to [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) to "vote to protect not punish refugees" as the Nationality and Borders Bill was set to be voted on in the Commons.

Speaking to the PA news agency, Cole said she was "so shocked" to hear of the plan.

The idea that we'd be punishing refugees and criminalising them feels like it belongs in a book, not reality

Lily Cole

She said: "It felt to me surreal and something you'd see in a dystopian film, not actual policy today, and so not representative of the sentiment of goodwill that I know exists in this country, where there are so many people in the British public that believe the UK should be offering sanctuary to those seeking refuge.

"The idea that we'd be punishing refugees and criminalising them feels like it belongs in a book, not reality.

"We need to make sure they don't pass the most draconian aspects of this Bill."

Actress [*Juliet Stevenson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/juliet-stevenson) joined the convoy with the Ukrainian refugee family she is hosting at her home in London.

She said people who have bombs falling on their homes and are desperate to escape would not have time to find a government programme to get out.

"It's brutal and unrealistic," she told PA.

We wanted to send a message to our MPs. So we've gone somewhere they can't ignore The Borders Bill is cruel. Today MPs must vote to [*#ProtectNotPunish*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ProtectNotPunish?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Tag your MP & retweet if you agree. [*pic.twitter.com/7gGxWiVnTq*](https://t.co/7gGxWiVnTq) - Together With Refugees (@RefugeeTogether) [*April 20, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RefugeeTogether/status/1516698460149403648?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Stevenson, 65, is backing changes to the Bill called for by Together With Refugees, a coalition of almost 500 national and local charities across the UK which spearheaded the event.The group wants the UK to commit to resettle at least 10,000 refugees from around the world every year and to scrap a clause which would "punish" refugees who have not arrived in the country through official routes.It also wants to see immediate measures to enable ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to get to the country safely without having to apply for visas first.Cole said: "You're dealing with people fleeing from war and persecution and they often don't even want to be here. They're not choosing to leave their homes and the idea of criminalising them feels completely awful."That's why I wanted to come here and hold a moral line that says 'no, there's some lines that can't be crossed and this is one of them'."Stevenson added that she often simplifies it for others by saying: "What if it were you? What if it were one of us?" She said democracy is not a spectator sport and called for people to protest against the proposals that she said were not representative of the British public.Stevenson and her husband have offered one of their adult children's bedrooms to a Ukrainian mother and her six-year-old daughter, who moved in last month.Dartsia, the Ukrainian mother, said: "The people in the world who experience it know it's hell. You can only run and you don't have time to seek formal help."I am so happy and I consider myself the luckiest person in the world to have met Juliet and have her support."Dartsia and her daughter Orysia "desperately" want to return home to Kyiv, where the husband and father has remained to fight, Stevenson said.She added: "I check my phone as we all do to see what's come in on Instagram and Dartsia is checking to see if her mum and dad are still alive. It's a big reality check.Dartsa found safety in the UK after fleeing Ukraine British people have opened their hearts & homes to refugees like Dartsa. But this govt plans to deny other refugees the chance to find safety & punish those who try. That's wrong.Today MPs must vote to [*#ProtectNotPunish*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/ProtectNotPunish?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/KtiYUReg3U*](https://t.co/KtiYUReg3U) - Together With Refugees (@RefugeeTogether) [*April 20, 2022*](https://twitter.com/RefugeeTogether/status/1516745297912901633?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

"Hundreds of thousands of people have offered their homes and I don't think this law or the Rwanda scheme is representative of people in this country that want to help. They just need refuge for now - even Dartsia is desperate to get home."

Also at the protest was Sabir Zazai, chief executive of the Scottish Refugee Council.

Mr Zazai, who arrived from Afghanistan 17 years ago, said that if he arrived under these circumstances, he would not have his family or be a part of society.

He said: "People arrive here in the UK to seek protection, not Rwanda, where they are sent as a group of people to be forgotten about.

"It's not for the UK to use vulnerable human beings who are fleeing war to be put on a plane, re-traumatised and dumped in another country.

"We can't shut the door on people when they need help most.

"People come from all backgrounds and they bring their unique gifts, talents, courage and resilience which contributes to the UK. We shouldn't be missing out on that, we should be harvesting and investing in it."

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*France's top presidential contenders: Who's proposing what?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655D-FWY1-DY4H-K1B7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 6, 2022 Wednesday 8:52 AM GMT

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**Length:** 915 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Sunday's first round of the French presidential election involves one frontrunner, centrist incumbent Emmanuel Macron, seeking a second term, and eleven challengers from the far left to the far right

**Body**

France's presidential race involves one frontrunner, centrist incumbent [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) , and eleven challengers from the far left to the far right. The two top candidates in Sunday's first round qualify for the April 24 runoff.

Here's a look at the main contenders' key proposals.

EMMANUEL MACRON, 44, centrist incumbent, head of the Republic on the Move party

Ukraine: Macron has been at the forefront of international talks on supporting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and imposing sanctions on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). Macron vows to keep investing in the French military and "significantly" reinforce European armies' capacities and cooperation.

Economy: Macron promises "full employment," after the jobless rate decreased during his 2017-2022 term to its lowest level in a generation. He wants to progressively raise the retirement age from 62 to 65 and boost the minimum monthly pension.

Energy: He pledges to build six new-generation nuclear reactors, develop solar energy and windfarms at sea.

Immigration: Macron pushes for strengthening external borders of the European passport-free area and creating a new force to better control national borders. He vows to speed up processing of asylum and residence permit applications and to deport those who aren't eligible.

MARINE LE PEN, 53, far-right head of the National Rally party

Ukraine: Marine Le Pen has cultivated ties with Moscow, receiving a loan of 9 million euros from a Russian bank in 2014 and meeting with Putin in 2017. She acknowledged Russia's invasion of Ukraine "partially" changed her views about Putin, saying he was "wrong." She says she supports the Ukrainian people and refugees must be welcomed.

Immigration: Le Pen's plans include ending family reunification policies, restricting social benefits to the French only, and deporting foreigners who stay unemployed for over a year and other migrants who entered illegally.

Economy and energy: She promised to cut taxes on energy and essential goods. She wants to maintain the minimum retirement age at 62 and raise the minimum pension. She vowed to dismantle windfarms and invest in nuclear and hydro energy.

Muslim-related policies: Le Pen promised a law banning Muslim headscarves in all public places, and outlawing events and financing considered to be spreading "Islamism."

JEAN-LUC MELENCHON, 70, far left

Ukraine: Mélenchon used to call Russia a "partner," even as European governments were scrambling to find ways to avert a Russian invasion of Ukraine. He now supports the Ukrainian "resistance" and Russians who fight what he calls "dictatorship" in their own country.

Economy: Mélenchon promises to raise France's minimum wage and minimum pension, and lower the retirement age to 60. He wants to re-establish a wealth tax.

Climate and energy: He vows to inscribe a "green rule" in the Constitution which calls for not using more resources than nature can replenish, and putting an end to intensive farming. He seeks to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 65% in 2030 - instead of the current coal of 40%. He wants the state to lock in energy and food prices, and promises to phase out nuclear energy and aim for 100% renewable energy instead.

ERIC ZEMMOUR, 63, far-right former TV pundit who has been repeatedly convicted of hate speech

Ukraine: Zemmour initially was a supporter of an "alliance" with Russia, and once wished aloud for a "French Putin." That was before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which he condemned. He initially said he would prefer ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay in Poland, but later supported granting them visas if they have ties with [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france). Zemmour wants France to pull out of NATO's military command.

Immigration: He wants asylum status to be restricted to no more than 100 people per year - down from about 54,000 last year. He would end welfare benefits for non-European foreigners, outlaw immigration for family reunification, create a coast-guard military force to stop arrivals by sea, and deport any migrants who enter without permission.

Muslim-related policies: Zemmour wants a ban on wearing Muslim headscarves in all public spaces, a ban on building big mosques and on foreign financing of the Muslim faith. He proposes restricting the names that parents can give their newborns, de facto banning many names used by French Muslims.

Economy and energy: He promised to cut taxes on businesses, low-income workers, retired people with small pensions and to give families a bonus for children born in rural areas. He wants to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 by 2030. He said he would put an end to all windfarms and vowed to develop nuclear energy.

VALERIE PECRESSE, 54, candidate of conservative The Republicans party

Ukraine: Pécresse denounced Putin's invasion and pushed for firm sanctions on Russia.

Muslim-related policies: She wants a ban on Muslim headscarves for young girls and in sports clubs. She also wants to ban the burkini, a swimsuit worn by conservative Muslims to cover the entire body, from swimming pools.

Immigration: Pécresse plans to establish immigration quotas. Housing and family benefits would be granted to foreigners only five years after they arrive legally in the country. No residency permit would be provided to those who entered without prior permission.

Economy and energy: She promises to raise low and middle-income workers' salaries by 10% and to cut taxes on businesses and workers. She wants to raise the retirement age from 62 to 65 by 2030. She vows to develop nuclear energy and renewable energy, but with restrictions on windfarms.

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Diabolical' UK visa scheme nearly forced family back to Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656X-KTW1-DY4H-K3M9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2022 Wednesday 11:14 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 845 words

**Byline:** Lily Ford

**Highlight:** The Home Office issued an apology to Steve Dury and the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** he is sponsoring, but Mr Dury said the process left them in tears.

**Body**

A UK sponsor from the Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme has described the "diabolical" application process that nearly forced the refugees he is housing to return to a warzone.

Steve Dury from Langport, Somerset, was only able to accommodate two mothers and three children from [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , Ukraine, when his "desperate plea" led the Home Secretary's office to intervene and see to the approval of the group's final visa application for three-year-old Egor Svichkar.

Having applied for the scheme when it first opened on March 18, Egor's four relatives had been staying in [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) and acquired their visas by the beginning of April, but a further delay left them waiting on Egor's document until Monday.

Mr Dury said the group were met with an "impregnable wall of bureaucracy" during the process and they considered returning to Kharkiv - a city still enduring shelling from Russian forces.

"It's been a diabolical process," the local government officer, 59, told the PA news agency.

"They were actively discussing (going back to Ukraine) and were so dejected by the whole thing - which is heartbreaking to think that they were going to return to a warzone because they had given up hope of ever coming to the UK.

"They're already traumatised, they spent days in the basement listening to the bombing around them, not knowing if their apartment was going to collapse on top of them... this (added) to their trauma."

The group, who arrived at Bristol airport on Tuesday, includes Liudmyla Tarasenko and her 15-year-old daughter, Daria, and Liudmyla's 27-year-old niece and Egor's mother, Yulia Svichkar - as well as 13-year-old Denys Chemodanov, whose mother is related to the family and authorised the women to take him with them.

They were hoping to have the approval of Egor's visa through on Friday April 1, but "lost all hope" when the centre in Warsaw made an administrative error - setting the application back by a week and a half.

Mr Dury paid more than £1,000 to keep the five of them housed in the Polish capital but was growing increasingly concerned for their wellbeing when Egor fell ill.

He said he felt "sheer relief" and "joy" when the toddler's visa came through, but that they "would have gotten nowhere" without his emailing Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel).

Mr Dury wrote to Ms Patel's office on Sunday: "This dreadful 'Homes for Ukrainians' visa system is taking its toll.

"My family (is) in floods of tears today, just messaged me: 'What kind of hell is this?'

"(They) are about to give up hope of coming to UK, and return to Ukraine, where they have no accommodation (and) no money."

Mr Dury received a reply on Monday after a message from Ms Patel's email address asked that the case be "followed up".

A [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) staff member wrote back: "Please pass on our apologies to the family for the delays in processing Egor's visa application."

"Egor's visa was processed by caseworkers in Sheffield over the weekend and an instruction has now been sent to Warsaw to print the visa."

Mr Dury said it should not take "high-level intervention" to ensure refugees are allowed to come to the UK.

"I think without my desperate plea to Priti Patel's email, we'd still be waiting... We seemed to be banging our heads against a brick wall," he said.

"And whilst I'm glad that (the Home Office) did step in... I'm more annoyed at the very long waits and the anxiety that it's caused, particularly the Ukrainian family.

"Whether they'd ever get a visa, how long it was taking, the length of time they were staying in Warsaw. The little boy went down with a sickness because he got cold and wet.

"So I think their anxiety levels were sky-high as a result of this interminably long process... It should never have reached that stage."

It seems that this is designed to deter people from coming here.

Steve Dury

Mr Dury described the "mental torment" the group has been put through.

"We've been through the wringer for the last four weeks," he said.

"Deeply frustrating, full of anxiety and concerned - those are the main emotions.

"I almost feel partly responsible for leading them to believe the Government line that this would be a quick process."

Mr Dury also added the system feels "designed to deter" Ukrainians from coming to the UK.

"I know there are many, many, many others still waiting for their visas," he said.

"And I don't think Priti Patel is going to respond to every single person who's waiting and anxious at the moment.

"It seems that this is designed to deter people from coming here."

A Government spokesperson said: "We continue to process visas for the Homes for Ukraine scheme as quickly as possible, but accept progress has not been quick enough.

"The Home Office has made changes to visa processing - the application form has been streamlined, Ukrainian passport holders can now apply online and do their biometrics checks once in the UK, and greater resource has gone into the system.

"A UK Visas and Immigration helpline can provide information on eligibility and applications, and in cases of concern can escalate to teams who can look at the full case history and establish any issues."

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Irish premier backs EU ban on coal and oil imports from Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6557-GHS1-DY4H-K3TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2022 Tuesday 3:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 860 words

**Byline:** Cate McCurry

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin said the European Union must keep adding pressure on Moscow.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) premier said he would back an EU ban on coal and oil imports from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) over its war in Ukraine.

Micheal Martin said the European Union must keep adding pressure on Moscow to stop its "appalling and immoral war" on the people of Ukraine.

It comes as the EU's executive branch proposed a ban on coal imports from Russia in what would be the first sanctions targeting the country's lucrative energy industry over its war in Ukraine.

European Commission president [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) said the EU needed to increase the pressure on Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) after what she described as the "heinous crimes" carried out around Kyiv.

She said the ban on coal imports is worth four billion euros (£3.3 billion) per year.

She added that the EU has already started working on additional sanctions, including on oil imports.

Ms von der Leyen did not mention natural gas.

A consensus among the 27 EU member countries on targeting gas would be more difficult to secure.

Speaking before the proposed ban, Mr Martin said that Ireland is pressing its EU counterparts for the strongest possible sanctions.

"We would favour the inclusion of oil and coal in this latest round of sanctions given the indiscriminate murder of civilians in Ukraine," Mr Martin said.

"We have to do everything we possibly can to keep the pressure as a deterrent in this appalling, immoral war on the people of Ukraine."

[*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) , Ireland's foreign affairs minister, said the European Commission had "responded strongly" with new sanctions against Russia.

Shocking scenes of atrocities in [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) by Russian forces must be fully documented & pursued by an International Court. There can be no impunity for crimes like these. International Community has a duty to demand accountability. [*@CIJ\_ICJ*](https://twitter.com/CIJ_ICJ?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@IntlCrimCourt*](https://twitter.com/IntlCrimCourt?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@UN\_HRC*](https://twitter.com/UN_HRC?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@DmytroKuleba*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/hmvyDUyKkT*](https://t.co/hmvyDUyKkT) - Simon Coveney (@simoncoveney) [*April 3, 2022*](https://twitter.com/simoncoveney/status/1510574613058797568?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Coveney said: "The sanctions package needs to continue to get tougher so that we continue to provide a very strong deterrent to Russia continuing this war and that means moving into the space of energy, oil, gas and coal as well as access to ports, as well as road access in terms of Russian hauliers.

"The European Commission has announced a fifth round of sanctions which has to be confirmed by member states. That does include a ban on coal which is worth about four billion euro between now and the end of the year.

"They have also said they are working on oil but aren't in a position to make a decision on that today. It is a pretty strong fifth round of sanctions that involves a recommendation to ban access into EU ports, with some exemptions in terms of humanitarian aid and food.

"And it is targeting Russian banks well beyond where we have been to date. I think the commission has responded strongly. We would like to go even further, particularly in relation to oil.

"In terms of sanctions, Ireland continues to be at the sharp end of wanting to ensure that the deterrent is as strong as we can possibly make it."

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the Russian Embassy in Ireland is running out of fuel for heating and hot water following claims that Irish oil companies have refused to deliver supplies.

The Irish Daily Mirror reported that the embassy has written a letter to Mr Coveney's department about the issue.

Mr Varadkar said that while he does not have sympathy for the Russian Embassy, there are rules in which Ireland must follow when hosting international diplomats.

"There are particular rules under the Vienna Conventions as to how we're supposed to treat diplomats and diplomatic commissions in our country so I think they have to be followed.

"I actually didn't have the chance to read that article so I don't know the details."

More than 18,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived in Ireland since the beginning of the war in February.

The Government has, in recent days, sought additional accommodation in hotels and is seeking other ways to increase supply.

"We've asked the Secretary General of the department to chair the task-force to deal with the pledges that are arrived in, to progress that as speedily as we can, so that we can take the pressure off," Mr Martin added.

"I want to thank all the public servants in all departments including children, justice, housing, local authorities, and across the board for really rising up to this challenge, it has been an enormous challenge which has come very rapidly on the public and has been hot on the heels of the pandemic."

Meanwhile, Ireland's ambassador to the United Nations Geraldine Byrne Nason dismissed Russia's attempt to deny responsibility for the atrocities in Ukraine.

She told the UN Security Council: "Just minutes ago, here in this chamber, we have seen the utterly shocking images of civilians lying dead in the streets of Bucha and elsewhere in Ukraine.

"Some, we know, are piled into improvised mass graves. Simply harrowing.

"So many innocent lives lost on our watch, as our pleas for peace go unheeded.

"The attempts here today to deny Russian culpability are frankly appalling in their cynicism and I see them as an insult to the memory of those slaughtered civilians."

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UN: Nearly two-thirds of Ukraine's children have fled homes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656J-N141-DY4H-K07G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 11, 2022 Monday 11:20 PM GMT

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**Length:** 922 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The U.N. children's agency says nearly two-thirds of all Ukrainian children have fled their homes in the six weeks since Russia's invasion

**Body**

Nearly two-thirds of all Ukrainian children have fled their homes in the six weeks since Russia's invasion, and the United Nations has verified the deaths of 142 youngsters, though the number is almost certainly much higher, the U.N. children's agency said Monday.

Manuel Fontaine, UNICEF's emergency programs director who just returned from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , said having 4.8 million of Ukraine's 7.5 million children displaced in such a short time is "quite incredible." He said it is something he hadn't before seen happen so quickly in 31 years of humanitarian work.

"They have been forced to leave everything behind - their homes, their schools and, often, their family members," he told the U.N. Security Council. "I have heard stories of the desperate steps parents are taking to get their children to safety, and children saddened that they are unable to get back to school."

Ukraine's U.N. ambassador, Sergiy Kyslytsya, claimed [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has taken more than 121,000 children out of Ukraine and reportedly drafted a bill to simplify and accelerate adoption procedures for orphans and even those who have parents and other relatives. He said most of the children were removed from the besieged southern port city of Mariupol and taken to eastern Donetsk and then to the Russian city of Taganrog, he said.

Fontaine said [*UNICEF*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unicef) has heard the same reports, but added that "we don't have yet the access that we need to have to be able to look and verify and see if we can assist."

He said that of Ukraine's refugee children, 2.8 million are displaced within Ukraine and 2 million more are in other countries. At the same time, he said, nearly half the estimated 3.2 million children still in their homes in Ukraine "may be at risk of not having enough food," with those in besieged cities like Mariupol facing the most dire situation.

Fontaine said school closings are affecting the education of 5.7 million younger children and 1.5 million students in higher education.

"Hundreds of schools and educational facilities have been attacked or used for military purposes," he said. "Others are serving as shelters for civilians."

The council also heard from Sima Bahous, the executive director of the UN Women agency, who recently returned from [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , which is hosting an estimated 95,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Bahous said her agency is increasingly hearing allegations of rape and sexual violence. She said Moldova's government and border police are also very concerned at the risk of human trafficking, especially of young women and unaccompanied teenagers.

"The combination of mass displacement with the large presence of conscripts and mercenaries, and the brutality displayed against Ukrainian civilians, has raised all red flags," she said.

Ukraine's ambassador said his country's prosecutor's office is now investigating a case in the Kyiv region in which a Russia soldier is alleged to have killed a local resident and then repeatedly raped his wife in their home. He said the alleged perpetrator has been identified.

Kyslytsya said the Prosecutor General's Office, in cooperation with investigation agencies and health facilities, is also installing "a special mechanism" to document cases of sexual violence by Russian soldiers.

The Security Council meeting on the impact of the war on women and children was convened by the U.S. and Albania during Britain's presidency of the body.

The three countries, Ukraine and other council members attacked Russia for creating the dire situation for women and children, which Russian deputy ambassador Dmitry Polyansky vehemently denied.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said that when men like Russian President Vladimir Putin "start wars, women and children get displaced," hurt, raped and abused, and they die.

"Since the start of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine, Russia has bombed orphanages and maternity hospitals," she said. "We've seen mass graves with dead children stacked on top of each other."

Albanian Ambassador Ferit Hoxha accused Russia of committing "unspeakable crimes" every day, including burning civilians, throwing bodies in mass graves, shooting into playgrounds, attacking schools on purpose, and leaving all Ukrainians suffering, especially women and children.

"In their normal life, children draw parents, houses and trees. Russia's war has made Ukraine kids draw bombs, tanks and weapons," Hoxha said.

Both the U.S. and Albanian ambassadors, and many others, pointed to the discovery of bodies, some with hands tied behind their backs, in the town of Bucha on the outskirts of Kyiv following the withdrawal of Russian troops, and the missile that killed at least 52 mainly women and children at the train station in eastern Kramatorsk. Hoxha noted that the missile had "a vicious signature, `for our children.'"

Polyansky blamed "Ukrainian Nazis" for civilian killings in Bucha and the bombing at the Kramatorsk station, which he called "a classic false flag operation."

He accused Ukraine and its public relations experts, along with the West, of promoting "fakes and propaganda" as part of "the information war unleashed against Russia."

"That war is as intense as the military operations on the ground," he said.

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Britain, who presided over the meeting, countered that Russia again was trying to deflect from the reality on the ground "by what can only be described as quite extraordinary statements, and even lies."

"Yet, what is true, what is fact, is that Russian attacks on civilians and residential areas have been truly barbaric," he said.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine visa scheme flaws could lead to 'homelessness crisis', warns Labour*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6545-MN11-JBNF-W0TM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 3:02 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 897 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** MPs call on minister to issue urgent guidance to councils after figures show 150 Ukrainian families homeless

**Body**

Labour has warned that shortcomings in the government's [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) visa schemes could lead to a "homelessness crisis" in the UK.

MPs have called on ministers to urgently issue guidance to local authorities after it [*emerged on Wednesday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-homeless-homes-councils-uk-b2047207.html) that nearly 150 newly arrived Ukrainian households have presented as homeless to [*councils*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/councils).

Figures published by the [*Local Government Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/local-government-association) (LGA) [*revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-homeless-homes-councils-uk-b2047207.html) that at least 144 households have registered as homeless since the Russian invasion started, of whom 44 arrived under the family scheme, 36 under the Homes for Ukraine scheme and 64 whose status was unknown.

In the House of Commons on Thursday, Mike Amesbury, shadow minister for the department for levelling up, housing and communities (DLUHC), cited the figures, and warned that there were "real fears of a homelessness crisis if sponsorships break down".

Addressing the minister for homelessness Eddie Hughes, he added: "What urgent guidance and support is his department giving councils on these cases?"

In response, Mr Hughes said that given his role he had a "very keen interest" in the matter, adding: "We will be investigating to ensure that we completely understand what has led to that situation."

The Independent is raising money for the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Local authorities are given £10,500 in central government funding for each Ukrainian refugee under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a route that allows Ukrainians without family members in the UK to be hosted by members of the British public.

But councils receive no money for those arriving under the family scheme, which allows ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to join UK-based relatives.

Clive Betts, Labour MP and vice-president of the LGA, questioned why councils were not being given funding for those arriving under the family scheme.

"It can't be justified that councils are getting £10,500 on the sponsorship scheme, but when refugees come under the family scheme, apart from the housing checks, they have to do everything else as a council to support those refugees," he said.

Mr Betts called on the government to grant councils access to the database of sponsors so they can match up those presenting as homeless with those who want to house them.

"The whole reason we've got the sponsorship scheme is that councils don't have enough readily available homes to house people," he said.

"The choice is putting these people up in temporary accommodation or hotels, or matching them up with the generous offers sponsors want to make in those communities [...] Can the government just get on with it?"

It comes as mounting anger among MPs from all parties about visa delays facing Ukrainians applying to both the family scheme and the Homes for Ukraine route grows.

Tory MP and former housing secretary Robert Jenrick told ITV's Peston show on Wednesday night that he had applied to sponsor a Ukrainian family 10 days ago but was yet to receive any response.

"We filled in ours within a couple of hours of them going live on Friday before last, 10 days later we haven't heard anything. And so I've got a very anxious family," he said.

"We've heard absolutely nothing and that is frustrating. It was frustrating for us, but more importantly, we now have a family who are in Kyiv, extremely worried, about to leave their home [...] try to make a new life if only temporarily in the UK, and they're on tenterhooks waiting for the Home Office to let them know if we can make it happen.

"So I do think it's been a bumpy start, that is often the case with these schemes and it sounds like it's ramping up now quickly, but I certainly hope that's the case. We just don't want to let these families down."

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper said in the House of Commons on Thursday: "The visa system is simply not working. It is leaving thousands of families in limbo because of Home Office bureaucracy.

"This is Kafkaesque. What on earth is going on? And why is the home secretary so totally incapable of getting any grip on this despite repeated questions we have asked?"

Official figures show 31,200 visa applications have so far been received under the family scheme, of which 22,800 have been issued, and 28,300 have applied to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, of which 2,700 have been granted.

The government has continued to refuse to reveal how many Ukrainians have so far arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, promoting Ms Cooper to ask: "Why on earth is it too early to tell us? They should be able to give the basic facts."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Is British history racist - or to be proud of? How we frame that defines our future*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-CKV1-DY4H-K1J6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 4:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 897 words

**Byline:** Sunny Hundal

**Highlight:** Appealing to someone's better nature is always more successful than criticising them

**Body**

Since when did the Daily Mail start to welcome [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) ? If you were taken aback by its [*front page this week*](https://twitter.com/TmorrowsPapers/status/1503505129877684229) - applauding Britons who wanted to take in Ukrainians - you were not alone. Wasn't this the same paper that had scaremongered about refugees for decades?

It's easy to point out the [*hypocrisy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hypocrisy). It's tempting to put that front page alongside the literally hundreds that have poured scorn on refugees displaced by war. I would have done it myself. In fact, I have done stuff like this on social media dozens of times. The problem is, now I'm not so sure it helps the people affected.

Britain has a very chequered history towards refugees. During the Second World War, this country refused to take in Jewish adults - even as they clearly faced genocide - and instead devised a scheme to take in just children (the "[*Kindertransport*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/46877532) "). As journalist Jonathan Freedland [*pointed out*](https://twitter.com/Freedland/status/1503096656740429826) , this wasn't exactly "proof of a 'noble tradition' of welcoming refugees."

But Britain also took in a [*quarter of a million refugees*](https://www.britishfuture.org/100-years-ago-britain-welcomed-belgian-refugees/) from Belgium during the First World War. The same country also took in 20,000 Vietnamese refugees in the 70s. We took in refugees kicked out by Idi Amin in Uganda, and those displaced by the Bosnian genocide. According to the [*Refugee Council,*](https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/refugee-resettlement-facts/?doing_wp_cron=1647441768.9532949924468994140625) we have also taken in refugees from Libya, Somalia, Myanmar, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and over 20,000 refugees from [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria). We could have done more - a lot more - but this isn't nothing.

The truth is that Britain has a mixed history towards refugees and immigrants. As a child of Indian immigrants - a product of this country's imperialism in South Asia - I'm very aware of this history. My mum frequently told me chilling stories about the abuse they faced as newly-arrived children. But how we frame our history paints our future.

If Britain has always been racist, closed and unwelcome, it is easier to justify we stay that way. On the other hand, if Britain has a long, proud history of ethnic diversity and waves of immigration, it is easier to say we should carry on that tradition - and there is some research to back this up. Sunder Katwala from the think tank [*British Future*](https://www.britishfuture.org/) found that support for helping refugees rose substantially after showing them a video lauding Britain's "proud 70 year tradition" of doing just this.

Watching 60 seconds of this film shifted "Britain should protect refugees fleeing war and persecution" to 67% agree, 9% disagree (+58) from baseline of 57% agree, 16% disagree (+41). News images & voices of Ukranians are having similar impact on attitudes[*https://t.co/1ZL8q87hT2*](https://t.co/1ZL8q87hT2) - Sunder Katwala (@sundersays) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/sundersays/status/1498600485250637831?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Plus, British attitudes towards immigration aren't as hostile as some think. The proportion of Britons who want a cut in the number of immigrants coming over has consistently fallen over the last decade.

In 2015, 77 per cent of Brits wanted to see numbers reduced. By 2022, [*that had declined*](https://twitter.com/sundersays/status/1503124873614401538) to 42 per cent, even as the Brexit debate raged across the country. Britons have been generous towards non-European refugees too. In 2016, at the height of the Syrian refugee crisis, seven out of 10 Britons approved of accepting Syrian refugees. More recently, there was[*overwhelming support*](https://twitter.com/sundersays/status/1428963863685382144) for taking in Afghan refugees and Hongkonger refugees. We aren't as racist as some on Twitter think.

If we say that Britain has always been racist and closed to outsiders, we risk turning refugees into political footballs. We can crow: "Look at these hypocritical right-wingers!" but we need to forge a political consensus around the idea that helping refugees is important, not use them to score points.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

This applies to issues beyond immigration and racism. The Conservative Party has hardly been a champion on climate change in recent decades. And yet, in the last two years, it has grappled with the issue far better than most expected. Rather than criticising them for this U-turn, it makes more sense to encourage them to go further.

[*Research shows*](https://e-voice.org.uk/kef/about/view/useful-information/conversing-climate-change.pdf) that to convince sceptical right-wingers on climate change, it is far better to emphasise how right-wing values (conservation, localism, energy security) align with the issue, than shaming them for not doing enough or changing their minds.

Appealing to people's better nature is infinitely more helpful than condemning them. No one likes being called a hypocrite either. In psychology, it's called cognitive dissonance. When that happens, we either justify it (this is different) or deny it (I've always been this way). We rarely admit our mistakes and change our ways - something that's even less likely if our opponent is sneering at us to boot.

Don't get me wrong, I've fallen into this trap a million times. The adversarial nature of Twitter encourages us to fire off a tweet pointing out the hypocrisy of our political opponents. Admittedly, I was just hungry for retweets. But did it help anyone? It certainly didn't refugees.

Appealing to someone's better nature is always more successful than criticising them. If settlement of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** is seen as a success, we can build on this narrative and encourage the continuation of this proud tradition. Wouldn't that be a more positive result for everyone?

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Putin has turned to 'war of attrition' in Ukraine, warns UK intelligence chief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-P4M1-JBNF-W4WM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 6:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:** Gavin Cordon

**Highlight:** The head of Britain's defence intelligence said civilian casualties will rise as the Kremlin switches tactics in the face of fierce resistance.

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has embarked on a deadly war of attrition as Russia's advance in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) continues to stall in the face of fierce resistance, Britain's chief of defence intelligence has warned.

Lieutenant General Sir Jim Hockenhull said the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) has been forced to switch tactics, turning to the "reckless and indiscriminate" use of firepower which will inevitably lead to more civilian casualties.

The Russians have "enormous" stocks of artillery ammunition and could maintain their bombardment for weeks in an attempt to force Ukraine into submission, Western officials say.

The warning came as Mr Putin, Russia's President, made a rare public appearance to address a mass flag-waving rally at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium to mark the eighth anniversary of his country's annexation of Crimea.

President Putin continues to wage war on the people of Ukraine by striking dense urban areas, killing and displacing innocent civilians with non-precision weapons. [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/uqO6MOUUhv*](https://t.co/uqO6MOUUhv) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1504850147116732430?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He praised the efforts of Russia's forces, declaring: "Shoulder to shoulder, they help and support each other."However, Gen Hockenhull said that, more than three weeks into the campaign, it is clear the Kremlin has still not achieved any of its initial objectives."It has been surprised by the scale and ferocity of Ukrainian resistance and has been bedevilled by problems of its own making," he told journalists."Russian operations have changed. Russia is now pursuing strategy of attrition. This will involve the reckless and indiscriminate use of firepower."This will result in increased civilian casualties, disruption of Ukrainian infrastructure and intensify the humanitarian crisis."Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said on Friday that she fears peace talks between Russia and Ukraine are being used as a "smokescreen" by the Kremlin to allow forces to regroup.In an interview with The Times, Ms Truss said: "If a country is serious about negotiations, it doesn't indiscriminately bomb civilians that day."The minister said she was "very sceptical" about the negotiations, and added: "What we've seen is an attempt to create space for the Russians to regroup."I fear the negotiation is yet another attempt to create a diversion and create a smokescreenForeign Secretary Liz TrussShe said: "We don't see any serious withdrawal of Russian troops or any serious proposals on the table."Ms Truss told The Times that "the Russians have lied and lied and lied. I fear the negotiation is yet another attempt to create a diversion and create a smokescreen".At the same time, Mr Putin is tightening his control over Russian media in a bid to disguise the heavy losses his forces have suffered in battle, Gen Hockenhull said."The Kremlin is attempting to control the narrative, hide operational problems and obscure high Russian casualty numbers from the Russian people," he said.As many as 7,000 Russian troops have died so far in the fighting, including four major generals and a number of other senior officers, American sources estimate.In other developments:- President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping spoke for nearly two hours by a video call as the US seeks to deter Beijing from providing military support for Russia.- Ofcom revoked Kremlin-backed broadcaster RT's UK licence with immediate effect after the regulator said it was not "fit and proper".- More than 150,000 people have registered interest in the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme to house ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Russian forces have been continuing to pound the outskirts of the capital Kyiv, while the cities of [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , Sumy and Mariupol, where more than 2,500 civilians are reported to have died, remain under siege.Earlier another missile strike was reported on an aircraft maintenance plant on the outskirts of the western Ukrainian city of Lviv, which has largely so far escaped the fighting.Western officials are concerned that as Russia uses up its stock of precision weapons, it will turn increasingly to "dumb" bombs resulting in even more casualties among the civilian population."There is an enormous amount of artillery ammunition which the Russian forces hold. It may be a logistical challenge for them to get all of it in place," one official said."But if they are able to get those supplies forward then they could mount that artillery bombardment for a very, very considerable period of time. Those bombardments could be very intense."UK armed forces minister James Heappey said the indiscriminate shelling of cities was "very probably" a war crime and that the Russian president bore ultimate "culpability" for atrocities.The illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is continuing. The map below is the latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -18 March 2022Find out more about the UK government's response: [*https://t.co/UYOhiuE5PY*](https://t.co/UYOhiuE5PY) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/lvvGZkfNOJ*](https://t.co/lvvGZkfNOJ) - Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 18, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1504804554243727362?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

He warned, however, that everyone in the military chain of command could be held responsible for war crimes they were involved in.

"The evidence being gathered points very much towards war crimes being committed in Ukraine," he told Sky News.

"The culpability for war crimes sits absolutely with the leader of the Russian government, the man who decided to do all of this in the first place," he said.

"It is not just Putin who ends up being responsible for war crimes as and when the evidence is gathered and people are held to account.

"They too are involved in the prosecution of war crimes in Ukraine. This is a stain on the Russian nation."

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK has been 'too slow' and 'too weak' on Russia sanctions, Lib Dems claim*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6507-PT51-DY4H-K0J3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 11:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 853 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** Sir Ed Davey is expected to accuse the Home Secretary of 'turning away the innocent victims of a tyrant's bombs'.

**Body**

The UK Government has been "way too slow" and "much too weak" on sanctions against the Kremlin, the leader of the Liberal Democrats will argue.

Sir [*Ed Davey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ed-davey) is also expected to accuse the [*Home Secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-secretary) of "turning away the innocent victims of a tyrant's bombs", and call for a coordinated humanitarian response to all refugees fleeing war and terror.

Meanwhile, he will claim the Tories have been "soft on a criminal in No 10", referring to accusations that [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) broke coronavirus laws.

It comes after the Lib Dem leader told the PA news agency Mr Johnson has a poor reputation on the international stage and should resign over lockdown party claims despite dealing with the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) crisis.

Sir Ed said he did not share the same view as Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer, who in the wake of the Russian invasion has tempered his demand for the Prime Minister to step down over the so-called partygate saga.

In a speech at the Lib Dem spring conference in York on Sunday, he will urge stronger international cooperation to counter the threat posed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.

"If we are to stop Putin, we must remember the simple truth demonstrated so clearly these past few weeks. We are stronger when we act together," he will say.

"We must fight now for that safer, more Liberal world. To reverse this Government's cuts to our armed forces and work with our allies, so Putin understands that free nations will stand united against him.

"For far tougher sanctions, where Boris Johnson's Government has been way too slow, and much too weak.

"For a coordinated humanitarian response to all refugees fleeing war and terror, whether from Ukraine, Syria or Afghanistan. Where we never again have a Home Secretary turning away the innocent victims of a tyrant's bombs."

Boris Johnson's Government has been way too slow, and much too weak

Sir Ed Davey, Lib Dem leader, on Russia sanctions

The current visa route for people fleeing the war in Ukraine is restricted to family members of people settled in the UK.

Another promised route, allowing individuals and companies to sponsor Ukrainians with no ties to the UK to come to the country, is expected to be launched on Monday.

Home Office minister Baroness Williams of Trafford told peers 1,305 visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been issued as of Thursday morning, adding: "Those figures are going up rapidly and that is a good thing."

Downing Street said the Prime Minister had "galvanised the international response to Ukraine", and had been "personally thanked for his leadership by Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky".

It pointed to existing punitive measures on those linked to Mr Putin's regime, and added that the Economic Crime Bill - which is soon expected to receive royal assent - will allow the Government "to accelerate further sanctions in the coming days".

Sir Ed will also claim Tory [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) "ducked their responsibility to kick Boris Johnson out of Downing Street" over partygate, accusing them of "cowardice and complicity".

"The Conservatives love to claim others are soft on crime, the truth is they're soft on a criminal in No 10.

"The Tory party of the past is turning in its grave. Decent lifelong Conservatives are repulsed by this Government," he will claim.

"And what angers everyone, whatever their views, is that these Tory MPs think they can get away with it. The Conservatives think they can take you for fools, just as they take your votes for granted.

"But they won't get away with it."

Mr Johnson has submitted a police questionnaire in relation to his possible attendance at alleged coronavirus lockdown-busting parties held in Downing Street, with a handful of Tory MPs calling for a no confidence vote in his leadership.

Separately, Sir Ed will call on Chancellor Rishi Sunak to drop the planned national insurance hike and unfreeze income tax thresholds in his spring statement.

The Lib Dem leader will then urge the Chancellor to "go further still to help hard-pressed families and businesses" by cutting VAT to 17.5% "right now".

He said the move would be worth £600 per household, adding: "That's the help people across our country need. Not Sunak's damaging tax hikes."

The Government has decided to push ahead with the health and social care levy in April, which will add pressure on people's bank balances as the cost of living spirals.

The 1.25 percentage point rise in national insurance is predicted by the Treasury to raise £12 billion per year to help tackle the Covid-induced NHS backlog and reform social care in the long term.

A Treasury spokesperson said those calling to cancel the levy are "are also calling for NHS not to receive the funding it needs this year".

"The NHS and social care levy is being implemented to secure £12.5 billion for the NHS this year to deal with the backlogs from the pandemic and fix our broken social care system - something which the Lib Dem leader himself called a crisis less than a year ago," they said.

Downing Street said the Government is providing more than £20 billion this financial year and next to help families with the cost of living, adding that it keeps "all taxes under review".

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians who have fled to UK placed in asylum hotels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652V-NDB1-F072-40TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 25, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 10

**Length:** 937 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainians who have arrived in the UK after fleeing from war have been placed in hotels for asylum seekers, The Independent has learnt. Ministers are facing calls to provide "urgent clarity" on the rights of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering Britain without visas after it emerged a number have arrived via ferry from Ireland in recent weeks.

In some cases they have ended up in hotel accommodation, prompting concern that this leaves them in a system that is "not fit for purpose" and where they will face long delays on their asylum decision, creating a discriminatory approach towards those arriving without visas.

The UK government has introduced two schemes to help Ukrainians: one enabling them to join relatives in Britain and the other allowing them to come to the country if they know a member of the British public who is able and willing to house them. However, the application processes for both schemes have been fraught with delays and complications, which has reportedly led some Ukrainians to make their own way to the UK without visas.

Bromsgrove and District Asylum Seeker Support, which supports asylum seekers in hotels, has been supporting a Ukrainian family and a single Ukrainian woman who have entered the country in the past two weeks and been placed in hotels in Bromsgrove and Birmingham. Johannah Dyer, who volunteers for the group, said: "They are coming in via Ireland. They will fly in from say Hungary to Ireland and then cross on a normal passenger ferry. That's not illegal. It's only when they get here and need support that they get thrown into the asylum system.

"They're very traumatised. When they first arrived two weeks ago, they were completely shell-shocked ??? They find themselves suddenly in an asylum seeker hotel with people from all around the world and they don't know what's happening at home. We know there will be others in this situation."

Katie Reilly, another volunteer for the group, added: "They've fled the current situation, but without visas, so they have been plunged into the asylum process. We are supporting families from Afghanistan who have fled, arrived here and are declared asylum seekers. This will happen with Ukrainians in coming months - we must ensure safe routes for all."

Ukrainians who have family in the UK and arrive without a visa are eligible for a six months of leave to remain, which then allows them to switch to a visa under the family scheme, the Home Office has said. It is unclear whether those arriving without visas who do not have family in Britain are also eligible for this temporary status, and if not whether they have any other option but to enter the asylum system.

Leyla Williams, deputy director of West London Welcome, a refugee charity that has been supporting newly arriving Ukrainians, said she was "particularly concerned" about vulnerable homeless families who have arrived without visas and have no family to join here. "It is unclear whether they should be applying for visas or claiming asylum. Grassroots charities like ours are ensuring they are safely housed and have legal advice, but it is vital the government provide urgent clarity to those without visas," she said.

"There should be no discrimination towards Ukrainians who are arriving here in whichever ways they can, who are all fleeing the same war and all require protection."

Louise Calvey, of Refugee Action, said the charity was aware of a number of Ukrainians who had recently entered the UK without visas, and that it was concerned that people wouldbe forced to enter an asylum system that is "not fit for purpose", because of lengthy delays and poor housing.

About 25,000 asylum seekers in the UK are being held in hotels, with some having been there for more than a year. Tens of thousands have been awaiting a decision on their claim for more than 12 months, with hundreds waiting for more than five years.

Ms Calvey said they should be able to apply for leave to remain without having to request asylum, adding: "Doubtless some will end up [in the asylum system] due to chronic gaps in immigration advice." She added that requiring people to do security checks before entering the UK was "absolute nonsense" and that the government should be doing this once people have arrived in the country.

"By sticking to their visa requirements they've forced people through irregular routesrather than letting people in normally and checking on arrival. As per usual their policy has actually been totally counterproductive," she added.

A government spokesperson said: "The Ukraine Family Scheme provides an immediate pathway for Ukrainians with family already settled in the UK to come to our countryand we encourage all those who are eligible to apply.Last week we also opened a new sponsorship route, which allows Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here. Ukrainians in Ireland wishing to come to the UK should apply to either of these schemes before seeking to travel. We continue to work closely with Ireland on the operation of the Common Travel Area, including data sharing and operational co-operation."

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, click here. To sign the petition click here. If you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Rishi Sunak is the 'tax-cutting chancellor' who hasn't actually cut any taxes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-P4M1-JBNF-W4YK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 6:55 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 843 words

**Byline:** Tom Peck

**Highlight:** There is, quite possibly, part of Sunak that really does believe he actually is cutting taxes, even as he raises them to the highest level since the end of the Second World War

**Body**

For those of us not quite understanding why it is that Putin bombing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) gets a British prime minister off the hook for almost certainly breaking the law and then lying about it in the House of Commons, there are some sudden signs of cautious optimism.

With far more egregious events occurring elsewhere, the question of Johnson's own personal egregiousness had kind of gone away, but owing to frankly poor diary management from whoever's in charge, the Conservatives have foolishly allowed for their own spring conference in Blackpool to go ahead. Which is now precisely one day in, and the tagline across the lectern really might as well be: "No We Really Are Like This. Had you Forgotten?"

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) kicked things off. "My priority is cutting taxes," he said, just as he said at the budget in November, during which he announced the largest peacetime tax rises in decades, and which prompted The Daily Telegraph to describe the speech as "The Death of Conservatism".

It's never entirely easy to know what exactly is going on with Sunak, mainly because he is very significantly less bright than he thinks he is. There is, quite possibly, part of him that really does believe he actually is cutting taxes, even as he raises them to the highest level since the end of the Second World War.

And even as he ploughs on with a rise in national insurance contributions, which will cost normal families hundreds of pounds a year, in the face of an unprecedented energy crisis and the first major war in Europe in 80 years, he really does do so at the same time as talking about his mission: his grand belief in lowering taxes.

It is not easy to see quite how he'll get away with it (other than, inevitably, cutting them again before the election.) You can usually get away, in politics, with saying one thing and doing precisely the other, but people do tend to notice when their monthly take home pay goes down, and it's clearly because the chancellor who loves cutting taxes keeps raising them by mistake.

Oliver Dowden, the party chairman and chief culture warrior, has been welcoming literally dozens of delegates of Blackpool, telling them that what the British people want to see "is a bit more Conservative pragmatism and a bit less net zero dogma".

And this, no doubt, is itself a bit of Conservative pragmatism from the chairman, in the sense that it was barely months ago that he was personally swanking about at Cop26, issuing grand public pronouncements about the number of tech companies he had convinced to sign up to net zero, which apparently no one cares about anymore so, don't worry, neither does Oliver Dowden.

[*Matt Hancock*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/matt-hancock) , meanwhile, is still trying to make Matt Hancock happen, this time [*by positioning himself as the frontman for the Ukrainian refugee effort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/matt-hancock-ukraine-refugees-welcome-gove-b2035660.html) , making his ever more desperate bid to throw open his new home to as many refugees as possible as public as he possibly can.

Around 200,000 British people have signed up to welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. And what Matt Hancock has in common with absolutely all of them is that he isn't in the government in any way. All that sets him apart from the other 200,000 selfless individuals is that he is the only one that has been busily pitching opinion pieces and doing TV interviews about his own selflessness, as Richard Madeley wasted absolutely no time at all in telling him.

If the war in Ukraine has got Johnson off the hook, you would think your average cabinet minister would have the sense to at least not publicly admit it. People are dying in their thousands, after all. But enter Jacob Rees-Mogg, for whom breaking the public safety rules you've made yourself and then lying about them, has now been exposed as the "fluff" that it always was.

Does it need to be pointed out that 150,000 people died, and that absolutely everybody led very miserable lives for a very long time, to try and keep that horrific figure down, and that that kind of thing isn't really fluff?

Probably not. Nor is it worth dwelling yet again to one of the enduring storylines of the past six years, which is that all Rees-Mogg seems capable of doing in public is embarrassing himself.

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Meanwhile, Peter Cruddas - the former Tory party treasurer whose peerage last year was in no way linked to the vast amounts of his own private treasure the party continues to receive - has been on the radio. Boris Johnson, he says, "is the best thing to happen to this country in a generation".

Look, it's never easy to know precisely what's meant by a generation, not least as Johnson has prematurely killed one off and personally sired another, and each of us are entitled to our opinions.

If he thinks that Johnson is better than the worst financial crisis since the great depression, better than Covid and better than the first major European land war since the 1940s then, well, maybe we'll concede that it could at least go to a photo finish.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian children find a welcoming classroom in Berlin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6526-X3B1-DY4H-K3N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 8:21 AM GMT

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**Length:** 862 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A group of 40 Ukrainian children have started their first day of school in Berlin only weeks after fleeing the war at home

**Body**

Ukrainian refugee Mariia Kerashchenko tightly clasped the hands of her two children as she walked them through the courtyard of a seedy Berlin building, up a graffiti-covered stairway, and into a modern, sunlit classroom.

Her 7-year-old son, Myroslav, is one of 40 children who started their first day of school Monday, only weeks after joining the millions flooding into [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) to flee the war in Ukraine.

Daughter Zoriana, who is 3, is still too young for the class, which is being taught by two Ukrainians who also fled to the German capital. The lessons, part of a volunteer initiative, will prepare the children for entering Berlin's regular school system.

"It gets me emotional when I see all the help and solidarity here," the 30-year-old Kerashchenko, from Vinnytsia in central Ukraine, told The Associated Press, her eyes welling with tears.

"Every day, I hope that we can go back to Ukraine, but it is too dangerous for now, so in the meantime it is wonderful that my son can go to school in Germany," she added.

The classes for the refugees were put together by Burcak Sevilgen and Faina Karlitski, who in only two weeks raised the funds, organized the rent-free classrooms and advertised their program on the messaging service [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram).

The children nervously clutched their new exercise books, sharpened pencils and erasers as their new teachers welcomed them in Ukrainian on the third floor of the former factory. They will follow their curriculum from back home and also take German language classes. The three hours of school each weekday will be followed by activities such as playacting, painting or handicrafts.

Natalia Khalil, 33, from Rivne in western Ukraine, is teaching the third and fourth graders, while Tatjana Gubskaya, 56, will be in charge of the first and second graders. Gubskaya fled Ukraine with her daughter and a 7-year-old grandson, who is in her classroom.

"The kids are grateful to have some kind of routine again and meet other children from Ukraine - they and their mothers have all been very stressed lately," said Gubskaya, who also taught second grade classes before the Feb. 24 Russian invasion.

The teachers will be paid 500 euros per month in donations until they have work permits and can be officially hired.

Sevilgen, 36, one of the two people behind the refugee classes, is a Berlin teacher herself. She and her 31-year-old friend Karlitski, a management consultant, decided to do what they could to get at least some of the refugee children back into school quickly.

"We both have always had an eye for social issues and wanted to help here as well," Sevilgen said, explaining why they have spent every free minute to organize the classes.

They started raising funds and arranged with the Berlin youth support program Arche - "ark" in English - to take over the sponsorship for the classes. They got an offer from online search engine [*Ecosia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ecosia) to use the rent-free rooms in Berlin's immigrant neighborhood of Wedding and quickly connected via Telegram with Ukrainian mothers who had recently arrived in Berlin.

More than 3 million Ukrainians have fled abroad, most of them to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland). The majority are mothers and their children, with men of military age not allowed to leave Ukraine. Inside the country, over 6 million have been displaced, according to the United Nations.

Germany has registered 225,357 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as of Monday, although the real numbers are expected to be much higher, since they don't need a visa to enter the country, and federal police only keep records of refugees arriving by train or bus. Those Ukrainians entering Germany from Poland by car usually are not registered.

Up to 10,000 refugees have been arriving by train daily in Berlin since the start of the war, and thousands more have come by car. Many are staying at shelters in the city's convention center and at a former airport, while others are with relatives who immigrated years ago and belong to a 300,000-member Ukrainian diaspora.

The government estimates that about half of the refugees are children and teenagers who will need to attend schools and kindergartens. It has established a task force to coordinate their school attendance in Germany's 16 states.

Several Berlin schools, including some private institutions, already have taken in a few refugees, and city officials are in the process of establishing up to 50 special welcome classes to bring them up to speed in language skills. The authorities can draw from their experience from 2015-16, when about 1 million people fled conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Those children eventually entered the school system.

Until the welcome classes are up and running, the two classes organized by Sevilgen and Karlitski will help ease the children's transition to their new lives, teach them German and enable them to make new friends.

"A new routine and other children - those are the most important things for them right now," Sevilgen said. "And if we get more donations, we hope that we will be able to keep this project running as long as it takes to get the kids into the regular Berlin schools."

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*War in Ukraine is center stage at Hungary's election rallies*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-Y7P1-JBNF-W1G3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 7:38 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 868 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Two mass rallies in Hungary's capital were dominated by anxiety over Russia's ongoing war in neighboring Ukraine and the future of Hungary's position in a changing geopolitical landscape

**Body**

Two mass rallies held by opposing political forces filled the streets of Hungary's capital on Tuesday in mutual displays of strength before the country's April 3 election, a contest that will determine whether populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban wins a fourth consecutive term.

The campaign rallies, organized by supporters of Orban's ruling Fidesz party and a coalition of six opposition parties aiming to unseat the autocratic leader, were dominated by anxiety over [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war on neighboring [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and the future of Hungary's position in a changing geopolitical landscape.

Several hundred thousand Orban supporters gathered Tuesday on the west bank of the Danube River before surging across the city's Margaret Bridge toward the Hungarian Parliament, where Orban spoke at length about the need for Hungary to keep out of the war in Ukraine.

"It is in our interests to not be a sacrificial pawn in someone else's war. We can't win anything in this war, but we have everything to lose," said Orban, who has led Hungary since 2010. "Not a single Hungarian can be left between the Ukrainian anvil and the Russian hammer."

Orban's election campaign - previously focused on socially divisive issues like his opposition to immigration and hostility toward the LGBTQ community - was upended by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Orban since has carefully sought to balance Hungary's fraught relationship with its allies in the European Union and the NATO military alliance with its close ties to Russia under President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin).

Widely considered Putin's closest ally in the EU, Orban has in recent weeks agreed to back the sanctions imposed on Russia by the 27-nation bloc and condemned Moscow's violent assault on Ukraine, though without ever mentioning Putin by name.

Yet as Russian forces batter Ukrainian cities and more than 250,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have fled the violence into Hungary, Orban insisted that his country stay out of the war. He has refused to supply Ukraine with military aid or allow shipments of lethal weapons to cross into Ukraine from Hungary.

Orban has sought to portray himself and his government as the guarantors of Hungary's security, and leveled dubious claims that the opposition parties would send arms and troops to Ukraine.

"The left wants to send Hungarian weapons and soldiers to the front lines," Orban told his supporters. "We won't allow the left to draw Hungary into this war. "

Fidesz supporter Erzsebet Labady, a 79-year-old retiree from Budapest, said she believed the prime minister and his government were working to restore peace in Ukraine, and that Orban's close relations with Moscow had economically benefited Hungary.

"If Orban was ever on good terms with Putin, he only did it for the good of Hungary so that we get raw materials," she said.

That's not the view of United for Hungary, a coalition of six opposition parties that have joined forces to counter the ruling Fidesz party. It has framed the April election as a historic choice between Western democracy and Eastern autocracy symbolized by Putin's Russia, and sought to exact accountability on Orban's government for its close Russian ties.

At a separate rally of thousands on the Danube River, the leader of the opposition coalition, independent conservative Peter Marki-Zay, said the election choice for voters this year has "never been so easy... Instead of the East, we choose Europe."

"Because of the selfishness and lust for power of our own leader ... we have chosen the backward East over the developing West," Marki-Zay said. "We have voluntarily gone back to the wrong side of history, but in 20 days there will be elections in Hungary."

The opposition parties, which polls show narrowly trail Fidesz less than three weeks before the election, have criticized Orban for increasing Hungary's energy dependence on Russia and for pushing for close diplomatic ties with Moscow that they say have betrayed Hungary's commitments to its Western allies.

Opposition supporter Gyorgy Hortobagyi, 54, said while he considered himself a conservative, he feared that "we are again drifting into the Soviet sphere of interest."

"The Russian empire has never brought us any good for hundreds of years, and now, unfortunately, Orban has taken that line," Hortobagyi said. "I'm terribly sad because I see that my children might live in such a Russian sphere of influence again if we don't act."

Also speaking at the opposition rally was former Polish prime minister and EU official Donald Tusk, who said that an "authoritarian, censorious, corrupt state" had developed in Budapest under Orban, one that has taken an ambiguous position on the war in Ukraine.

"No decent, honest man should have any doubt whatsoever which side he is on in this struggle," Tusk said, adding that the results of Hungary's election were important not only for Hungary, but for all of Europe, including Ukraine.

Yet Orban's balancing act between the West and Russia resonates with his supporters. After his speech, Istvan Voros, 74, said Orban's policies were ensuring peace for Hungary.

"This is a double game and Orban is good at it," he said. "I'm not a politician, just a voter who wants to stay on good terms with the Russians."

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jake Sullivan warns Russia the US will respond with 'appropriate consequences' to killing of Brent Renaud*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-T951-DY4H-K38T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** Award-winning journalist Brent Renaud was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin on Sunday

**Body**

National Security Adviser [*Jake Sullivan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jake-sullivan) has warned [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) that the US will respond with "appropriate consequences" to the "shocking and horrifying" killing of American [*journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/journalist) Brent Renaud.

Mr Sullivan told CBS' [*Face the Nation*](https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/american-journalist-brent-renaud-who-won-2014-peabody-for-chicago-documentary-last-chance-high-is-killed-in-ukraine/) on Sunday morning that he is consulting with US and Ukrainian officials to learn more about the 50-year-old's death before taking action.

"This is obviously shocking and horrifying, and I've just learned about it as I came onto air here," he said.

"So I will be consulting with my colleagues, we'll be consulting with the Ukrainians to determine how this happened and then to measure and execute appropriate consequences as a result of it."

He continued: "This is part and parcel of what has been the brazen aggression on the part of the Russians where they have targeted civilians, they have targeted hospitals, they have targeted places of worship and they have targeted journalists."

[*Follow live updates of Russia's invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-refugees-latest-nato-china-putin-b2035188.html)

The US State Department condemned the attack on the journalist and said that consular assistance was being offered to Mr Renaud's family.

"We are horrified that journalists and filmmakers-noncombatants-have been killed and injured in Ukraine by Kremlin forces," the department said in a statement on Twitter.

"This is yet another gruesome example of the Kremlin's indiscriminate actions."

The White House is yet to release a statement about the killing of Mr Renaud -believed to be the first death of a foreign journalist since Russia declared war on Ukraine back on 24 March.

The award-winning journalist was on an assignment in Ukraine with TIME magazine when Ukrainian officials said he was shot and killed by Russian forces on Sunday.

Kyiv's chief of police Andriy Nebitov said in a social media post that Russian troops opened fire on a car Mr Renaud was inside close to a checkpoint in the city of Irpin.

Mr Nebitov shared photos of the 50-year-old's body, his American passport and a New York Times press badge.

The New York Times released a statement saying that the press badge was from an old assignment and that Mr Renuad was not working for the paper at the time.

TIME confirmed later that the filmmaker had been "in the region working on a TIME Studios project focused on the global refugee crisis".

Kyiv police condemned Russian forces that "cynically kill even journalists of international media, who've been trying to tell the truth about atrocities of Russian military in Ukraine.

"Of course, journalism carries risks, but the US citizen Brent Renaud paid with his life for an attempt to shed light on how underhand, cruel, and merciless the aggressor is."

Mr Nebitov also shared photos of the bullet-ridden car on Monday.

A second American journalist Juan Arredondo was also shot in the attack that killed Mr Renaud.

In a video filmed as he was being treated in a nearby hospital, he recalled how a group of foreign journalists were traveling through a checkpoint in Irpin on their way to film ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the city.

He said they made their way across one of the first bridges in Irpin and got into a car headed to a second bridge, when they came under fire.

"Somebody offered to take us to the other bridge and we crossed a checkpoint, and they started shooting at us," he said [*in the video*](https://twitter.com/annalisacamilli/status/1502978846500573185) shared online.

"So the driver turned around, and they kept shooting."

He said that Mr Renaud was shot and "left behind" in the ambush.

"There was two of us, my friend Brent Renaud, and he's been shot and left behind... I saw he was shot in the neck," he said.

A third journalist also traveling in the same car was also wounded, according to Ukrainian officials.

Hours after the attack on the journalists, Irpin Mayor Oleksandr Markushyn said journalists would be denied entry to the city in order "to save the lives of both them and our defenders".

Mr Renaud was a widely-acclaimed documentary filmmaker, producer and journalist who, alongside his brother Craig Renaud, won the 2014 Peabody Award for the documentary Last Chance High.

Throughout his career, he worked as a contributor to several outlets including Vice, the New York Times and TIME and had traveled the world, covering the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the 2011 earthquake in Haiti.

President Vladimir Putin's forces have repeatedly targeted journalists covering the war in Ukraine while also censoring coverage and threatening the media with prison time back in Russia.

Back on 1 March, Ukrainian journalist and cameraman Yevhenii Sakun was one of five people killed when Russian forces shelled a TV tower in Kyiv.

Just days later, two journalists for Sky News were shot by Russian forces but survived.

Anthony Bellanger, general secretary for the International Federation of Journalists, said the deaths of journalists reporting on the war "cannot go unpunished."

"The authorities must do everything possible to identify the perpetrators of these war crimes," he said in a statement.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Why we've shared our home with refugees for 5 years and are ready to take in a Ukrainian family'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K28B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 5:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 850 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** 'People shouldn't feel like they need all the answers,' Rachel Poulton says

**Body**

More than 100,000 British people have registered their interest in allowing ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) to stay in their homes. But what is it like sharing your home with someone who has fled war?

Rachel and Nigel Poulton have been welcoming refugees into their [*North Yorkshire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-yorkshire) home for five and a half years, and are hoping to house a Ukrainian family soon.

Rachel's advice to anyone considering taking a refugee into their home is simple: "A warm welcome goes a long way."

She continues: "We just try and give them a warm, calm welcome. We don't ask questions and I always tell them that I'm glad that they are here."

The Poultons are already housing a number of unaccompanied child refugees at the moment, but have a spare room that they are hoping to offer to a Ukrainian family.

Ms Poulton said: "We have a large family room that we built onto the side of our house, originally to look after ageing parents. It's got an en suite, and space for children and a cot, and we're hoping to use it soon."

They have signed up to welcome a Ukrainian family through the charity Sanctuary Foundation, and through the government scheme.

"I feel like I'm learning the whole time," said Ms Poulton, "and I'm sure we do make mistakes. But people shouldn't feel like they need all the answers. If there is compassion that comes from the heart, people can sense that. If you are genuine it shows."

Rachel Poulton and her husband, who works as CEO of a children's charity, have taken in unaccompanied child refugees from Eritrea, Syria, Afghanistan and a number of other countries over the past few years.

They work with the local council and social workers to make sure that their new lodgers get settled into the community before they move on.

"I always tell them that I want them to feel safe," Ms Poulton said. "If it was one of our kids in their situation - in a foreign country, with no money, who couldn't speak the language, and who had gone through desperately hard circumstances - I would want someone to open their doors and be kind to them."

She often writes a welcome card for her guests when they arrive. "Those little things can mean more than we realise," Ms Poulton said.

"There was one time when a young man was moving on, having been with us for a couple of years. He was quite a tough, cool guy, and I was helping him pack, and he put the little card in.

"I was so surprised he still had it. He said that it had been really important to him when he first came, so he had kept it."

The best bit about sheltering refugees is being there when good things happen in their lives, she said.

"Last night we went out to celebrate the birthday of one of the refugees who used to live here, and it was such a joyful evening," Rachel added. "It's also a joy to see people learn to drive, achieve at school, and learn new skills like the piano and swimming."

Her two young children, who are still at home, have also learnt to get along well with their new housemates.

But as well as the positives, the people Rachel and Nigel take in have experienced a lot of trauma before they stay with them.

"They have dealt with so much on their journeys to the UK, in the countries that they come from, and also in the ongoing news they see through their mobiles.

"This will be true of Ukrainians too. They will experience ongoing trauma when they look at the footage and keep up with the bad news."

She is worried that many Ukrainians fleeing the war will see Britain as too difficult to get to, too slow at processing documentation, and too far away.

She also has concerns about how they will be transported from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) or the Polish border to the homes in Britain that are keen to accept them.

Levelling up secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) told MPs that Ukrainians with no family links would be allowed to come to the UK under the new scheme, and that there would be "no limit" to the number who can benefit.

They will have to have a "sponsor" in the UK who is willing to provide them with a home for a minimum of 6 months.

"If you don't know anyone who you wish to sponsor, you may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups, or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals," the government guidance said.

Some 1.4 million children have now fled Ukraine since the Russian invasion began on 24 February, meaning nearly one child a second has become a refugee, the UN said on Tuesday.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: I helped get refugees out of Kabul - this is how we can do the same in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-31C1-JBNF-W35V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 1:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 925 words

**Byline:** Amed Khan

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: One of the handful of leaders who saw the importance of offering support in Afghanistan was Volodymyr Zelensky, long before he was a household name

**Body**

"If we stay, they will kill all of us," read the WhatsApp message. It was from a young woman desperately asking for help to get her family out of Afghanistan.

It was the summer of 2021 and my phone had been buzzing non-stop with similar pleas from hundreds of people who had heard we might be able to help.

A number of us who previously worked in government and NGOs had clubbed together to see if we could rescue people at risk of being hunted down by the Taliban, following the collapse of the Afghan government.

We knew who to help and how to fly them out. But in a world where all the decisions are taken by governments, finding someone willing to take people seemed an impossible challenge. After working the phones for weeks, one of the handful of leaders who saw the importance of offering support was the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, long before he was a household name.

The invasion of Ukraine follows wars in Syria, and Afghanistan. Too often, the dark pattern inside the country is followed by the same intransigence beyond its borders.

First, war breaks out. The aggressors meet stiff resistance. They then respond, unleashing the full force of their military. Bombing and shelling devastate built-up areas. A population is not only torn apart, but even weaponised by some countries; as they flow into others. A humanitarian crisis emerges. Good noises are heard from the international community. Promises are made to do what is right. But then the doors are closed - and countries on the front line are left to deal with the fallout alone, exacerbating an already desperate situation.

In 2021, another nation that stepped up to the plate was Greece. Despite over a million people having come through Greece, equal to a tenth of its population, prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis provided safe haven for hundreds of children, women and men fleeing the Taliban, when other western governments turned their backs.

When war broke out in Ukraine 10 days ago, Athens was still waiting for the European Union to get its act together and create a viable working mechanism to deal with the ever-increasing challenge posed by migration.

We can't keep making the same mistakes. It is vital that the stresses placed on communities hosting refugees - and in this crisis that means Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania - are recognised and met as part of our overall humanitarian response.

These communities have already been hit hard by the health and economic impacts of the Covid pandemic, and by the knock-on economic impact of Brexit. Failing to support frontline countries could well result in a furthering fraying of the European Union - a consequence likely intended - if not at least welcomed - by Putin.

To help pay for the costs associated with meeting the needs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the demands placed on host communities, a relief and reconstruction fund should be created - using the recently-frozen funds and seized assets of Putin and his oligarchs. The importance of the Robin Hood-esque semblance of repurposing ill-gotten gains to save lives cannot be underestimated.

It is also essential that western governments ensure that the funding for the United Nations refugee agency and other humanitarian organisations is commensurate to the rapidly growing crisis. More broadly, visa processes need to be streamlined and urgently sped up for those applying for entry into countries away from the front line. It's because of this that I support The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign. Ukrainians do need open, unconditional and generous help right now.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

At a time when fascism and misinformation threaten to undo our hard-fought democracies, Ukraine has reminded us what it means to stand up against terrible odds and fight for our values and our freedom.

Our answer to this can't be silence. We must match Ukraine's strength. As the international community now considers how it will show up for the people of Ukraine, we must urge world leaders to remember that success or failure here has far-reaching consequences for us all.

I would also say, " ÐŸÐµÑÐµÐ¼ÐÐ³Ð° Ð´Ð»Ñ ÐÑiÑ Ð½Ð°Ñ," or "Victory for all of us," which has become the defacto greeting at Ukrainian checkpoints. I've now heard it dozens of times, and each time there is an unspoken understanding - we know we are outnumbered and outgunned, but we're in this together, to the very end.

Amed Khan is a direct action philanthropist, most recently saving and relocating thousands of at-risk Afghan allies and partners, founder of the Elpida Home Project to shelter refugees in Greece during the European refugee crisis, and a former US government official

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**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Many Ukrainians unable to join loved ones in the UK under Home Office scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-RK81-F072-43PH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 3, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 846 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainian and British nationals living in the UK have said they are "frustrated" after it emerged that their loved ones who have fled Ukraine are likely to be excluded from the UK's bespoke humanitarian route. The Home Office announced on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK. They also said a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

Home secretary Priti Patel said the offer was in the "best interests" of Ukrainian people and would see thousands of refugees welcomed to the UK, with normal requirements for salary and language tests waived. However, campaigners warn that it still excludes swathes of refugees who would benefit from coming to the UK, such as partners or cousins of British nationals, or close relatives of people in Britain on work or study visas.

Lawyers and charities are also concerned about delays in the sponsorship route, as the UK's general sponsorship scheme has helped only around 500 people to resettle over a period of five years. Ms Patel has so far resisted calls to temporarily waive visas for all Ukrainians entering the UK and carry out security checks on British soil, insisting it would undermine "the strongest security advice".

Tetiana Bykova, a Ukrainian national living in Glasgow, said she was hoping to bring her cousin's wife Julia and three-year-old daughter Miroslava - who recently managed to escape from Ukraine to the Czech Republic - to live with her in the UK, but that the current family route did not allow for that.

Ms Bykova said she and her British husband wished to accommodate and support them while her cousin, Roman, stayed in Ukraine to fight Russian forces, but that due to the visa rules they were having to try to support them from afar. "My cousin was like a brother to me. We want to help his wife and child. We have a warm house for them. We love them. Why should they be somewhere else? Along with financial support, we can give them moral support, because they're so scared," she said.

"I've recently had a baby so my husband is taking time out of job as a doctor to fly to the Czech Republic on Thursday. We're going to have to help them sort accommodation. We'll be going through all these complications when they could just be here with us."

Ms Bykova added: "I've been through the UK immigration system myself and had a lot of difficulties, but come on, this is war. The UK is a wealthy country. Other European countries responded so much better to this. It's disappointing. The UK hasn't even done the minimum."

In another case, Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian-born lecturer at the University of Portsmouth who has been in the UK for six years and is on a work visa, is trying to arrange for his younger sister Anna-Maria, 19, to join him after she fled Ukraine on Monday.

But the 30-year-old told The Independent his sister cannot benefit from the extension of the family scheme due to the fact that, although he is a taxpaying British resident, he is not considered "settled" in the UK because he is on a work visa. He said he hoped she might be able to come on the sponsor route, but that this would require finding a British national to sponsor her.

"It's not ideal. I'll need to ask friends who are prepared to do this. I haven't been able to find any information on what the requirements are. The government website hasn't changed, so it's still all a bit unclear," he said.

Responding to Ms Patel's claim that allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter without visas would undermine security advice, Mr Zharikov added: "It's frustrating to hear statements like this because I'm sure the UK authorities know that the only people able to leave Ukraine are the elderly, women and children."

In a further case, Peter Baron, 65, said he felt "powerless" because he is unable to bring his Ukrainian partner of four years to join him in the UK, as unmarried partners who haven't been living together do not fall under the scheme.

The Chichester resident, whose partner Nina, 41, is currently sleeping on the floor of a friend's apartment in Istanbul, said: "I'm shocked by the whole process. It's like they haven't thought anything through. I've had sleepless nights trying to work out what the hell to do. We're powerless because we have a government that has no understanding whatsoever of the situation people are in, no idea of the suffering that is happening."

Mr Baron added: "To say they aren't waiving visas for 'security reasons' is the most appalling non-excuse I've heard in my life. These are women and children. Why don't we do what Ireland does - let them get on a plane, arrive and then do the security check."

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition click here. The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*1 million children leave behind lives, friends in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-SWC1-JBNF-W2NG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 11:35 AM GMT

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**Length:** 869 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Annamaria Maslovska left her friends, her toys and her life in Ukraine and set off on a days-long journey with her mother toward safety in the West

**Body**

After bombs started falling in her hometown of [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , Annamaria Maslovska left her friends, her toys and her life in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and set off on a days-long journey with her mother toward safety in the West.

After finally crossing the Hungarian border by train along with hundreds of other ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the 10-year-old Maslovska said she had begun to worry about her friends in Kharkiv after the messages she sent to them on Viber went unanswered.

"I really miss them because I can't contact them, they just read my messages and that's all. I really worry, because I don't know where they are," she said in clear [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english) from inside the train station at the border town of Zahony.

Annamaria, who was raised alone by her mother, is one of more than 1 million children who have fled Ukraine in the less than two weeks since Russia first invaded the country, something UNICEF spokesperson James Elder called "a dark historical first."

That means that children represent around half of the more than 2 million people that have fled the war, an exodus that the U.N. refugee agency has called the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. There have even been cases of children having to make the journey alone.

Most of those fleeing the war have entered countries on Ukraine's western border, like Hungary, [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , Slovakia, Romania and Moldova. The majority have gone into Poland, where 1.33 million refugees have crossed according to the Polish Border Guard agency.

Moldova Prime Minister Natalia GavriliÈa told CNN on Sunday that one in every eight children in her country is a refugee.

While very young children may not grasp that their lives have been upended, older ones are aware of their hardship and risk suffering the psychological trauma of war and seeking refuge, experts say.

For Margot, a 1-year-old girl who traveled from Kyiv to the Siret border crossing in Romania, the journey was like a "little adventure," said her mother, Viktoria Filonchuk, 37.

But for other older children, she suspects they understand the "tragedy" of what they are going through.

"Such little kids maybe don't understand this, but kids of about 3 or 4 years understand all the tragedy. I think it is very hard for them," Filonchuk said.

Daniel Gradinaru, a coordinator of Fight for Freedom, a Christian NGO at the Romanian border, said that older children could be "marked for the rest of their lives" by the experience of unexpectedly leaving their homes and traveling for days in the cold.

"I hope that where they are going the people receiving them give them counseling," Gradinaru said.

Valeria Varenko, 9, traveled day and night to Hungary with her mother Julia and her little brother after bombings had forced them to shelter in the basement of their apartment building in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

The family reached a temporary refugee reception center in Barabas, Hungary on Wednesday where Valeria said she wanted to tell children left behind in Ukraine to be careful, and not to touch any objects in the street because "they could be bombs which can hurt them very much."

Her father stayed behind to help defend Kyiv from Russian troops edging closer to the city. She said she was very proud of him, and that she misses him "very much."

"I would really like him to come, but unfortunately he isn't allowed," she said.

In addition to children, most other refugees are women - the mothers and grandmothers of the children that are bringing them to safety - since Ukrainian men from age 18 to 60 aren't permitted to leave the country.

That policy is aimed at keeping men available to fight against Russian forces that are making deeper incursions into Ukrainian territory.

Annamaria's hometown of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city with 1.5 million inhabitants, has undergone heavy bombardment by Russian forces. Residential areas in the city near the Russian border were shelled for several days before a missile strike hit a government building in the city's central Freedom Square last week, killing at least six.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the attack "frank, undisguised terror."

Even though she's only 10, the precocious Annamaria, now a refugee, already knows she wants to be an actress in the United States, and is proud of speaking English at a high level.

"I want to be an actress in USA and English is a very popular language," she said. "A big percent of people in the world know it and it's very easy to speak it in other countries."

She and her mother, Viktoria, planned to travel on to Hungary's capital, Budapest, but didn't know where they would go after that. Annamaria said she hoped to visit Disneyland in Paris.

Once the war ends, she said, she wants to go back to Kharkiv and reconnect with her friends who have been scattered by Russia's violent invasion.

"If war stops, I really want to go home because there are my friends, there are beautiful parks, supermarkets, centers, and playgrounds behind my house," she said. "Kharkiv, it's like a piece of your heart."

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Renata Brito reported from Siret, Romania. Bela Szandelszky in Barabas contributed to this report.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the Ukraine crisis at [*https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war news in brief*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-4076-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 916 words

**Body**

Court fines journalist £215 for anti-war protest on live TV

A Russian court fined a journalist 30,000 roubles (£215) after she interrupted a state TV live news bulletin to protest against Russia's continuing onslaught on Ukraine. Marina Ovsyannikova ran into the studio and held a sign behind newsreader Yekaterina Andreyeva while she was on-air on Monday night.

Ms Ovsyannikova, editor of Kremlin-run Channel 1, held the poster so that it was visible in the broadcast. It read: "Stop the war. Don't believe the propaganda. Here they are lying to you." Ms Ovsyannikova also shouted slogans - such as "stop the war" - in condemnation of Vladimir Putin's decision last month to invade Ukraine.

Briton who joined Ukraine troops leaves 'suicide mission'

A British man who travelled to Ukraine to fight Russian troops in the war says he left the country amid fears he could get caught up in a "suicide mission". Ben Spann, 36, from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, took up arms in Ukraine despite having no military experience or links with the country. He said he didn't tell his wife or 16-year-old son he was leaving and spent five days in a safe house in western Ukraine with four ex-British soldiers when he arrived.

While in Ukraine, Mr Spann, who runs an anti-knife crime charity, said he had a gun pointed at his head by a "Ukrainian SWAT team" that searched the safe house where he was staying. He said he also saw the bodies of two dead Russian soldiers propped up at a checkpoint in a warning to Vladimir Putin's troops.

Speaking of his decision to return home, Mr Spann said he had been getting "some real grief" from his wife and son after they learned he had gone to fight in the conflict and that he feared getting killed by going into more dangerous areas. "As these guys made the decision to venture further into the country, I made the decision to go back to the border," he told Sky News.

Three EU leaders travel to Kyiv to show solidarity with Ukraine

Three European leaders travelled to Kyiv yesterday to express the bloc's support for Ukraine, becoming the first foreign dignitaries to visit the capital since Vladimir Putin's war began. The prime ministers of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia will reach the city by train, before meeting Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. They crossed the border at 7am GMT, according to the Polish government. The surprise trip was agreed at an EU leaders meeting in France last week, Poland said.

"The purpose of the visit is to confirm the unequivocal support of the entire European Union for the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine," Czech prime minister Petr Fiala said. "The aim of this visit is also to present a broad package of support for Ukraine and Ukrainians," he added. Mateusz Morawiecki, the prime minister of Poland, whose country has accepted 1.7 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the conflict broke out almost three weeks ago, also stressed the importance of the trip. Reuters

More than 3 million have fled since invasion

More than 3 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia launched its invasion, according to new estimates. A United Nations (UN) agency said the milestone had been reached nearly three weeks into the war, which has killed hundreds of civilians, separated families and devastated cities.

It comes after 1 million refugees were estimated to have fled the country in the first seven days. The figure surpassed 3 million yesterday, according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), who warned millions more could be affected if the war being waged in eastern Europe continues.

UN officials have called it the largest refugee crisis in the continent since the Second World War. Out of the 3 million refugees to have fled into neighbouring countries, more than 157,000 of these are not Ukrainian citizens, according to IOM estimates.

Fox cameraman killed in attack that injured Benjamin Hall

A cameraman who was injured alongside Fox News correspondent Benjamin Hall when their vehicle was attacked in Ukraine has died. The network announced the death of Pierre Zakrzewski in a statement yesterday morning, before reports emerged Ukrainian journalist Oleksandra Kurshynova also died in the same attack.

"It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that we share the news this morning regarding our beloved cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski. Pierre was killed in Horenka, outside of Kyiv, Ukraine. Pierre was with Benjamin Hall newsgathering when their vehicle was struck by incoming fire," the statement from Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott read.

Blair says west has two weeks to push for negotiated peace

The west must push for a negotiated settlement to end the Ukraine war and may have only a two-week window to achieve it, Tony Blair says. The former prime minister argued the key disputes - over Nato membership, the stationing of western weapons and the futures of Crimea and Ukraine's eastern regions - could be settled in talks. Mr Blair said he understood the view that "Putin deserves nothing but total defeat", but warned: "The burden of this struggle is being borne by Ukrainians, not by us."

He pointed out that the Ukrainian president has pursued "ad hoc" talks - but called for the US and Europe to throw their full weight behind that effort. And he warned: "The next two weeks may be the last chance to achieve a negotiated settlement before the assault on Kyiv becomes worse, the Ukrainian people become hostile to any negotiation, or Putin faces a binary choice between "double down or retreat."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-J441-DY4H-K4N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 5:18 PM GMT

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**Length:** 999 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Rescuers are searching for survivors in the wreckage of a theater ripped apart by [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) airstrikes in the besieged city of Mariupol, while ferocious Russian bombardment killed dozens in a northern city over the past day.

Here's a look at the coverage from our journalists in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Washington and beyond. All times Eastern. You can find all our text, photos and video by going to our Russia-Ukraine war hub on [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Newsroom.

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR - Rescuers searched for survivors in the ruins of a theater blown apart by a Russian airstrike in the besieged city of Mariupol, while a ferocious bombardment left dozens dead in a northern city over the past day, authorities said. Hundreds of civilians had been taking shelter in the grand, columned theater in central Mariupol after their homes were destroyed in three weeks of fighting in the southern port city. By Andrea Rosa. SENT: 920 words, photos. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE-LATEST; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-DRONES - Despite three weeks of Russian bombardment, Ukraine has kept up a stiff defense of its cities by using Turkish-made drones to carry out attacks on the invaders with a lethal effectiveness that has surprised Western military experts. The Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles, which carry lightweight, laser-guided bombs, normally excel in low-tech conflicts, and Turkey has sold them to more than a dozen countries, including Azerbaijan, Libya, Morocco and Ethiopia. By Derek Gatopoulos and Suzan Fraser. SENT: 915 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-BIDEN-CHINA - [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) set out to be the U.S. president who finally completed the "Asia pivot," Washington lingo for a long-sought adjustment of a U.S. foreign policy that better reflects the rise of America's most significant competitor: China. But the recalibration toward Beijing has been jarred by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. By Aamer Madhani and Chris Megerian. SENT: 1,110 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-REFUGEES - As Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its fourth week, aid agencies continue to ramp up their efforts to bring much-needed relief supplies to civilians affected by the fighting, but also to over 3 million refugees who have fled the country since the conflict began. SENT: 455 words, photos.

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MORE RUSSIA-UKRAINE STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-GAZA - Dozens of Palestinian-Ukrainian families in Gaza who have experienced war firsthand and are now coping with another one from afar. SENT: 660 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-CONGRESS-ANALYSIS - Biden and Zelenskyy are men of different generations, different styles, and different missions. One is fighting to save his country, the other to restore a shattered world order - without igniting World War III. SENT: 900 words, photos, video.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-MARS-MISSION - Because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Europe will no longer be attempting this year to send its first rover to Mars, which was to have probed whether the planet ever hosted life. SENT: 245 words.

BKL-RUSSIA-GRINER-ARRESTED - Russian state news agency Tass says a Moscow court announced it has extended the arrest of WNBA star Brittney Griner until May 19. Griner was detained at a Moscow airport in February after Russian authorities said a search of her luggage revealed vape cartridges. SENT: 390 words, photos.

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-ECONOMY

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR-BUSINESS BACKLASH - They're pouring out vodka, boycotting Russian restaurants and some are even leaving threatening voicemail messages at Russian businesses. Americans, angered by the deadly violence and the humanitarian crisis from Russia's war with Ukraine, are dumping their frustrations on Russian businesses and brands. Business owners and experts are calling the behavior irrational and misplaced as most denounced Putin's invasion, and many owners are not even Russian. SENT: 1,070 words, photos, video.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-WORLD-ECONOMY --The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is warning that Russia's war in Ukraine will disrupt commerce and clog up supply chains, slashing economic growth and pushing prices sharply higher around the globe. In a grim assessment, the 38-country OECD said that over the next year the conflict would reduce the broadest measure of economic output by 1.08% worldwide. SENT: 375 words, photos.

FINANCIAL-MARKETS - Wall Street's big two-day rally was stalling as oil prices jump back above $100 per barrel. SENT: 700 words, photos.

BRITAIN-ECONOMY - The Bank of England has raised its key interest rate for the third time since December as it pushes ahead faster than other central banks in combating a global wave of inflation that is set to accelerate following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The bank boosted its key rate to 0.75% after the war in Ukraine pushed oil prices to a 13-year high earlier this month. SENT: 365 words, photos.

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PHOTOS

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XEL101 - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy shakes hands with a wounded Kateryna Vlasenko, 16, in a hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine.

MDA108 - A 3-year-old boy walks holding his mother's hand after fleeing from Ukraine.

XTS115 - A picture of Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) hangs at a target practice range in Lviv, western Ukraine.

MDA102 - Refugees leaving to Romania after fleeing from Ukraine, walk at the border crossing in Palanca, Moldova.

XFD104 - Hospital staff sit in a basement, used as a bomb shelter, during an air raid alarm near Kyiv, Ukraine.

WATW202 - Olga Sagan owner of Russian bakery Piroshky Piroshky, poses for a photo in front of her business in Seattle.

XTS111 - A veterinarian examines a cat of a Ukrainian refugee, in Poland.

DMSC105 - An Asian black bear leaves a transport box after arriving safely in Germany.

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top VIDEOS.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** take train from Romania.

Ukraine war toll seen in drawing, tears.

- The AP

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Our government is not above calling from Putin's playbook when it suits*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-68G1-DY4H-K0HP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 6:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 879 words

**Byline:** James Moore

**Highlight:** Britons' rights are being eroded, as Boris Johnson's government takes us down a dark road

**Body**

As Ukraine burns and its children are murdered by the Russian despot, the reaction of the British government to those fleeing the conflict has been predictably depressing.

It could have done what Europe is doing. It could have opened Britain's doors and offered to let people under the heel of the jackboot come in, and work, even take the bus for free. Even Ireland has [*waived any entry requirements*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ireland-ukraine-micheal-martin-ursula-von-der-leyen-vladimir-b2024488.html) for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Visa requirements have been waived across the continent.

But no. The British government has played true to type. The prime minister, a former [*foreign secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-secretary) , seemingly ignored the plaque commemorating British diplomats' efforts to save Nazi victims when he walked through the doors of the FCO.

Meanwhile, the home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) 's claim that Britain is "doing everything we can" is laughable. It has emerged that a Ukrainian grandmother whose case was raised in the House of Commons remained stuck in Paris, unable to reach her settled family in Britain because of the sort of bureaucratic tangle the Home Office specialises in. The modest improvement announced yesterday - a promise to take in an extra 100,000 - didn't go nearly far enough.

Look past ministers' bluster and misinformation and you will quickly find that it is this government we need keeping safe from. [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) bears all the hallmarks of a plastic Putin. Not the real thing but a child's action figure version capable of making the same sort of noises as the big bad guy in a film franchise, without having the actual lightsaber to chop someone's arm off.

Am I going too far? Before I start receiving fierce letters from m'learned legal friends, or more likely, before my editor gets a call from a special advisor fresh from a fancy public school, let's look at the evidence. Here's Jolyon Maugham QC, director of the Good Law Project, [*in a tweet*](https://twitter.com/JolyonMaugham/status/1498570019978067969) : "Awful to watch those brave people getting arrested in Russia for protesting against their government. Here, our government has just pushed through laws which allow them to arrest us for protesting against ours."

Maugham was referring to the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill, now back in the House of Commons for its committee stage having proceeded with scant opposition from the supposedly libertarian Tories who got all bent out of shape about temporary coronavirus restrictions designed to preserve public health.

The Good Law Project [*states that*](https://goodlawproject.org/news/return-of-the-policing-bill/) the government's Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Bill, one of Priti Patel's, marks a "significant departure" from the historic approach to the policing of protests under the Public Order Act 1986", which provides the police with all the powers they ought to need.

Remember the way the plod's tough guys jumped on and [*manhandled Patsy Stevenson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/sarah-everard-vigil-patsy-stevenson-b1821244.html) during the peaceful - and socially distanced - Sarah Everard vigil in London? When the Met is given enhanced powers to stifle protest it will use them. Badly. Repressively. The right to protest is crucial. Just ask the Muscovites and other Russians bundled into black vans for daring to oppose the murderous behaviour of their government.

Shall we go on? Yes, let's. To another one of Patel's: the Nationality and Borders Bill. It would penalise and criminalise refugees from conflict, such as the one happening in Ukraine, based upon their method of arrival into the UK, regardless of how strong their claim is.

Hey, civilians under fire, if you want refuge in Boris Johnson's Britain you'd better be able to afford a flight and have your biometric passport handy otherwise you'll be given over to the tender mercies of the private security companies that run immigration detention centres.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

Shall we go on? I know it's getting exhausting but I'm afraid that we're going to have to. Fundamental to any democracy is the right to vote. The government is planning to restrict that via voter ID laws imported from Republican-controlled US states. There is no widespread problem with voter fraud in the UK, as there is in Putin's Russia (because of Putin). The sole purpose of this is because the government feels groups likely to vote against it, such as young people, poor people, and minorities, are less likely to have the picture ID it is planning to require of them. This is, in other words, a brazen attempt to steal people's votes.

We should also make note of the persistent attacks the government has made upon the European Convention on Human Rights, usually when it is behaving badly. Or to limit people's access to judicial review of ministerial decisions. And I could go on.

All of these examples are about eroding Britons' rights and chipping away at our democracy. They are steps down the dark road the despot in the Kremlin has been on for many years now. Boris Johnson is not Putin. He isn't going to try sending tanks into Paris or Dublin or even Edinburgh. He won't lob shells and missiles into apartment buildings or places where children play. But he, his appalling home secretary, and their shills and apologists, are not above calling upon pages from the playbook of the thug when it suits them. Too often they look like plastic Putins.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Government seeks refugee sponsors to secure homes for fleeing Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-6P01-DY4H-K0GM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 2:04 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 867 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** There has been widespread condemnation for the speed and scale of Britain's efforts to help those made homeless by the conflict.

**Body**

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) has revealed details of a new scheme to help people fleeing the Russian invasion as the UK's ambassador to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) said she "totally gets the criticism" of the refugee system to date.

The Homes for Ukraine programme, to be rolled out this week, will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

[*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) offering accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** through the new route will receive a "thank you" payment of £350 per month.

It comes as the Government has been condemned for the speed and scale of its efforts to bring fleeing Ukrainians to the UK.

The UK's ambassador to Ukraine, Melinda Simmons, told The Sunday Times she "totally gets the criticism" levelled at the Government over its approach to the issue so far.

Until now, the visa route for people fleeing the war in Ukraine has been limited to those with family members settled in the UK.

Ms Simmons told The Sunday Times: "I'm approached directly by British nationals who tell me where they are, and that... the visa appointment is in three weeks and they're ready with their biometrics but they're stuck in a hostel with two young kids.

"I get these messages every day. We maintain personal contact with these people and our rapid deployment teams at the border are absolutely brilliant.

"It just needs to be matched now, with enough resource to be able to process people with the speed that we need. I know that the visa centres are now responding to it with a better queuing system and more people.

"But if this is going to rise then obviously it's going to have to continue and the capacity is going to have to grow in a corresponding way."

She added: "I know that the Home Office understands that and has now and is moving as quick as they can to deliver that."

The Government said it was "standing shoulder to shoulder" with the people of Ukraine, and had made it easier for those with valid Ukrainian passports to come to the UK.

People sponsoring refugees through the new uncapped route will be required to commit to the scheme for a minimum of six months, but are encouraged to keep up the offer for as long as they can.

Those offering accommodation will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks. A website gathering expressions of interest is set to launch on Monday.

Ukrainians who are sponsored through the new humanitarian route will be granted three years' leave to remain in the UK, with entitlement to work and access public services.

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) , the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Secretary, said the UK "stands behind Ukraine in their darkest hour", and urged people to "join the national effort" to help refugees.

But Labour cautioned that "too many questions remain unanswered" about the new scheme.

Shadow levelling-up secretary [*Lisa Nandy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lisa-nandy) said it was unclear what support would be offered to vulnerable children and older people, whether provision would made for unaccompanied children, and what help would go to local government, sponsoring organisations and housing providers.

She said if Britons were required to have a prior connection to a Ukrainian family to sponsor them, that would be "a severe limitation".

Meanwhile, the leader of the Lib Dems is set to argue the UK has been "way too slow" and "much too weak" on sanctions against the Kremlin in a speech at the party's spring conference in York on Sunday.

On Saturday afternoon, Boris Johnson and Irish premier Micheal Martin discussed their "deep concern" about the "intensification of hostilities" near the Ukrainian capital Kyiv in a bilateral meeting in London.

The Prime Minister said this was a "critical moment" for Ukraine, as well as for wider European and international security.

Mr Johnson was said to have told Mr Martin that he hoped the "same spirit of co-operation" the UK and EU had shared during the Ukraine crisis could be applied to discussions about the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The Prime Minister is now preparing to embark on a series of meetings with Nordic and Baltic leaders as he seeks to bolster European resilience following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mr Johnson will host a summit of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) in London this week, where he will urge leaders to work together to ensure no further nations fall victim to Russian President Vladimir Putin's aggression, No 10 said.

A Government spokesperson said: "We are standing shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians which is why we've made it easier for those with valid Ukrainian passports to come here. This is alongside changes to visas to ensure Ukrainians in the UK can stay here.

"We have expanded our visa application capacity to 13,000 a week, deployed additional staff across the EU, with a 24/7 helpline in place to ensure those who need appointments can get them to come here. This allows us to balance security risks while welcoming those in need.

"A new sponsorship route, which will allow Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored to come here is also being brought forward and all the measures we've put in place follow extensive engagement with Ukrainian partners. We will keep our support under constant review."

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Many Ukrainians unable to join loved ones in the UK under Home Office scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-RK81-F072-43RX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 3, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 846 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Ukrainian and British nationals living in the UK have said they are "frustrated" after it emerged that their loved ones who have fled Ukraine are likely to be excluded from the UK's bespoke humanitarian route. The Home Office announced on Tuesday that it was expanding the route to include parents, grandparents, adult children and siblings of British nationals and people settled in the UK. They also said a new sponsorship scheme was being established to help people fleeing the Russia invasion.

Home secretary Priti Patel said the offer was in the "best interests" of Ukrainian people and would see thousands of refugees welcomed to the UK, with normal requirements for salary and language tests waived. However, campaigners warn that it still excludes swathes of refugees who would benefit from coming to the UK, such as partners or cousins of British nationals, or close relatives of people in Britain on work or study visas.

Lawyers and charities are also concerned about delays in the sponsorship route, as the UK's general sponsorship scheme has helped only around 500 people to resettle over a period of five years. Ms Patel has so far resisted calls to temporarily waive visas for all Ukrainians entering the UK and carry out security checks on British soil, insisting it would undermine "the strongest security advice".

Tetiana Bykova, a Ukrainian national living in Glasgow, said she was hoping to bring her cousin's wife Julia and three-year-old daughter Miroslava - who recently managed to escape from Ukraine to the Czech Republic - to live with her in the UK, but that the current family route did not allow for that.

Ms Bykova said she and her British husband wished to accommodate and support them while her cousin, Roman, stayed in Ukraine to fight Russian forces, but that due to the visa rules they were having to try to support them from afar. "My cousin was like a brother to me. We want to help his wife and child. We have a warm house for them. We love them. Why should they be somewhere else? Along with financial support, we can give them moral support, because they're so scared," she said.

"I've recently had a baby so my husband is taking time out of job as a doctor to fly to the Czech Republic on Thursday. We're going to have to help them sort accommodation. We'll be going through all these complications when they could just be here with us."

Ms Bykova added: "I've been through the UK immigration system myself and had a lot of difficulties, but come on, this is war. The UK is a wealthy country. Other European countries responded so much better to this. It's disappointing. The UK hasn't even done the minimum."

In another case, Andrii Zharikov, a Ukrainian-born lecturer at the University of Portsmouth who has been in the UK for six years and is on a work visa, is trying to arrange for his younger sister Anna-Maria, 19, to join him after she fled Ukraine on Monday.

But the 30-year-old told The Independent his sister cannot benefit from the extension of the family scheme due to the fact that, although he is a taxpaying British resident, he is not considered "settled" in the UK because he is on a work visa. He said he hoped she might be able to come on the sponsor route, but that this would require finding a British national to sponsor her.

"It's not ideal. I'll need to ask friends who are prepared to do this. I haven't been able to find any information on what the requirements are. The government website hasn't changed, so it's still all a bit unclear," he said.

Responding to Ms Patel's claim that allowing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to enter without visas would undermine security advice, Mr Zharikov added: "It's frustrating to hear statements like this because I'm sure the UK authorities know that the only people able to leave Ukraine are the elderly, women and children."

In a further case, Peter Baron, 65, said he felt "powerless" because he is unable to bring his Ukrainian partner of four years to join him in the UK, as unmarried partners who haven't been living together do not fall under the scheme.

The Chichester resident, whose partner Nina, 41, is currently sleeping on the floor of a friend's apartment in Istanbul, said: "I'm shocked by the whole process. It's like they haven't thought anything through. I've had sleepless nights trying to work out what the hell to do. We're powerless because we have a government that has no understanding whatsoever of the situation people are in, no idea of the suffering that is happening."

Mr Baron added: "To say they aren't waiving visas for 'security reasons' is the most appalling non-excuse I've heard in my life. These are women and children. Why don't we do what Ireland does - let them get on a plane, arrive and then do the security check."

The Independent has set up a petition calling on the UK government to be at the forefront of the international community offering aid and support to those in Ukraine. To sign the petition click here. The Independent is also raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please click here for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The west's military interventions suggest we live in an increasingly insane world*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YY-2BW1-DY4H-K2H7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 7:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 1101 words

**Highlight:** Letters to the editor: our readers share their views. Please send your letters to [*letters@independent.co.uk*](mailto:letters@independent.co.uk)

**Body**

I am not a Putin apologist. Though looking at the horrifying events playing out in Ukraine, I also need to look at the west's dismal history of foreign policies and military interventions in the name of democracy and freedom.

Since 1945, this makes depressing reading, as America appears to have won only one single intervention, on the small island of Grenada. For the rest, it's defeats. Yet we don't see this - or prefer not to see this.

Korea lost, and a stalemate with the north after some 70 years. Cuba, sanctions and stalemate after some 60 years. Vietnam lost too, with 56,000 dead. Cambodia, carpet bombed with countless dead.

Iraq supported in destroying Iran. Iran misadventure ended in failure, unwarranted sanctions leading to serious tension. Lebanon misadventure ended in withdrawal. Afghanistan lost after 20 years and billions wasted. Iraq destroyed and - in effect - lost.

Somalia withdrawn and also (in effect) lost. Syria, nothing achieved other than causing destruction, regime change not achieved. Libya destroyed, causing civil war. Ukraine today.

And let us not look at military juntas installed and supported in South America, namely Argentina, Brazil and Chile, only to torture and murder their own people who did not subscribe to their right-wing dictatorships.

As Albert Einstein suggested? If you keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different results, it's a sign of insanity.

I venture to suggest that we live in an increasingly insane world.

Gunter Straub

London

An assault on our humanity

No one can fail to be horrified by bombs falling on maternity and psychiatric hospitals, killing and maiming children and pregnant mothers. This has shaken our humanity to the core.

However, the west will never have any sway on Russia as long as it is utterly complicit in the wanton destruction of innocent lives and livelihoods, social fragmentation and the murderous shelling of public infrastructures in Libya, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, all under the rubric of regime change and the promotion of democracy and justice.

America's unequivocal support of Israel, its settlement aggrandisement, land usurpation and the uprooting of orchards, and religious and cultural genocide in the occupied Palestinian territories - weren't these an assault on our mutual humanity?

Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob

London

Foreign troops in Russia

I have been reading multiple reports that Russia is to deploy foreign troops - Syria has been mentioned - in the barbarous attack on Ukraine, and to show the full picture I also hear there might be some ex-servicemen from European countries assisting Ukraine.

If this is the case then I find my mind drifting back to the Spanish civil war of 1936-39, when General Franco deployed troops from Spanish colonies to the mainland, then Italian and German planes wrought devastation on Spanish cities - Guernica springs to mind - and (last but not least) Russian advisers along with the international brigade also played a part in the conflagration.

To say this is concerning is, to put it mildly; however, what really worries me is I know only too well what happened after the conflict on the Iberian peninsula finished!

Robert Boston

Kingshill, Kent

Understanding Russia

I appreciate Mary Dejevsky's efforts to illuminate our understanding of Russia and Putin. I was struck by the article about the Kyiv Independent and its mission to publish true stories by first validating their sources and veracity.

Ms Dejevsky's suggestion that we may not be getting the truth, or all the truth, is very possibly correct. What I am certain about is that nothing broadcast by Russian media, politicians, diplomats, or other official sources is worth granting a gram of credibility.

I have little doubt that certain facts are kept from us for strategically important reasons. That we should have acted over Crimea is beyond doubt. That Russia has invaded a peaceful country on the back of lies and obfuscation is also beyond doubt. While the outcome is far from clear there is one undeniable fact - Russia is suffering in Ukraine and at home.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by clicking here

Do not worry too much about the facts in the news, Mary. We should simply support the Ukrainians as best we can. I have a high degree of confidence that the Ukrainian people will achieve their wishes, no matter what successes arise for Russia. Winning the war is what counts and Russia has bitten off much more than it can chew, even if it does achieve some success in its corrupt mission.

Yours,

Michael Mann

Shrewsbury

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

My daughter living in Holland has just taken in a Ukrainian refugee and informs me that they only need to show their passport and they get all public transport free. Despite our government's hostility to foreigners, might we perhaps do the same for the lucky few who manage to obtain visas here?

Michael du Pré

Marlow

Poisonous tissue of lies

We could all do to be cheered up in these darkest of times. And what could be more cheering than hearing that Ian Blackford intends to step down from his role as Scottish National Party leader at Westminster?

Well, actually that it was a "poisonous tissue of lies" and that there was no truth in the rumour. There is now a witch hunt on in the SNP for whoever started it. Let us hope that greater mercy is shown to the malefactors than to Scotland's witches. Otherwise, there will be in time be another case for posthumous pardoning coming down the track.

Jill Stephenson

Edinburgh

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YF-YBJ1-JBNF-W344-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 12:11 PM GMT

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**Length:** 907 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

EDITORS:

Another attempt at evacuating civilians from hard-hit Ukrainian towns is underway. Days of shelling have forced residents of the besieged southern port city of Mariupol to scavenge for food and water. U.S. Vice President [*Kamala Harris*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kamala-harris) heads to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) amid turbulence with Warsaw over how to give Soviet-made warplanes to Ukraine.

Here's a look at the coverage from our journalists in Ukraine, [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) and beyond. All times Eastern. You can find all our text, photos and video by clicking in Russia-Ukraine war hub on AP Newsroom.

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UPCOMING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-EUROPE ENERGY - U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to ban [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) oil will add pressure on Europe to follow suit. But the calculus is much more complicated for Europe, which relies far more heavily on Russia for both oil and natural gas.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-CORPORATE RISKS - A slew of companies have curtailed their operations in Russia in some way. But some are staying put. It may be more complicated for them to exit their business arrangements, or they may not feel as much pressure in their home countries to make a move. By Tali Arbel.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR-US STATES --Governors and state lawmakers across the U.S. are scrambling to provide relief from soaring prices at the gas pump. They are discussing ways to lower or suspended gas taxes, but taking that step has not proved easy, since much of that money goes toward repair of roads and bridges. By David A. Lieb. 900 words. Photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-STRANDED BALLET - The Kyiv City Ballet danced to a full house in Paris for the last show of a French tour that has left the company stranded after the war broke out in Ukraine. They described being physically and emotionally exhausted. Being given the opportunity to train and dance was for many a chance to focus on something other than the war. The young dancers will now have residency at the Théâtre du Chatelet in the heart of the French capital until they can go home. One of the troupe is headed from Paris to Ukraine's border with Poland to retrieve her daughter, who's been evacuated. But many of its members, who were not on the tour, are stuck in Ukraine. By Alex Turnbull. Photos and Video.

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SENT/DEVELOPING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - Renewed efforts to evacuate besieged Ukrainian cities were underway Wednesday as authorities seek to avert a humanitarian crisis in the southern city of Mariupol, where days of shelling have forced residents to scavenge for food and water. Authorities announced a third cease-fire to allow civilians to escape from escape from Kyiv, Chernihev, Sumy, Kharkiv and Mariupol. Previous efforts to establish safe evacuation corridors have largely failed due to attacks by Russian forces. By Yuras Karmanau. SENT: 820 words, photos, videos. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW (both sent).

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-HARRIS - Vice President Kamala Harris' trip to Warsaw to thank Poland for taking in Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion is taking an unexpected turn. Harris will be parachuting into the middle of unexpected diplomatic turbulence over fighter jets. The Polish government came out with a plan to transfer its Russian-made fighter planes to a U.S. military base in Germany, with the expectation that the planes would be handed over to Ukrainian pilots. The Pentagon quickly rejected the plan. That leaves Harris to patch things up as she opens a two-day visit to Poland and Romania on Wednesday. By Aamer Mahdani and Lisa Mascaro. SENT: 800 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-ASSESSING THE WAR - Two weeks into its war in Ukraine, Russia has achieved less and struggled more than anticipated at the outset of the biggest land conflict in Europe since World War II. But the invading force of more than 150,000 troops retains large and possibly decisive advantages in firepower as they bear down on key cities. By Robert Burns and Lolita Baldor. SENT 950 words, photos.

UKRAINE-WAR-REDRAWING EUROPE'S MAP -Russia has lost influence and friends since the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989. But the nuclear superpower still holds sway over several of its neighbors in Europe and keeps others in an uneasy neutrality. The Russian invasion of neighboring Ukraine and the humanitarian tragedy it provoked over the past two weeks may have raised an Western outcry of heartfelt support. The war has also spawned calls for a fundamental rethink of how the geopolitical map of Europe should be redrawn in the future. To anchor that in the reality of 2022 is far more difficult than may appear at first sight. By Raf Casert. SENT: 900 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-REFUGEES - Annamaria Maslovska, a 10-year-old aspiring actress left her hometown of Kharkiv after bombs started falling. The aspiring actress is one of more than 1 million children who have fled Ukraine in the less than two weeks since Russia first invaded the country. That means children make up around half of the 2 million refugees that have fled Russia's invasion of Ukraine. By Justin Spike. SENT: 500 words, photos.

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PHOTOS

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AP PHOTOS: Day 13: Bodies in the street, mass evacuations

AP PHOTOS: Tulips, hugs for refugees on women's holiday

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top VIDEOS:

People desperate in besieged Ukrainian city

Belarusians in Ukraine to fight Russia

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** board train from Polish border

Kyiv City Ballet performs in Paris

- The AP

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Is Boris Johnson really going to criminalise Ukrainians seeking safety in the UK?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WC-7C41-DY4H-K524-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 6:08 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 930 words

**Byline:** Sonya Sceats

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: When shells are falling on your city, you don't have time to apply for visas and travel documents - the UK cannot abandon its human rights obligations

**Body**

The disconnect is extraordinary. With the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) underway, Europe is facing its largest conflict in a generation. War will have huge implications for European security and stability, with the prospect of mass displacement across Ukraine's borders.

Boris Johnson has promised parliament that Britain would protect people fleeing the conflict. But his government is preparing to pass a [*borders bill*](https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/news/everything-you-need-to-know-about-priti-patels-anti-refugee-bill) that will criminalise Ukrainians who make their own way to safety in the UK.

Most of us facing invasion by hostile forces [*known to practise torture*](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/32ndReportUkraine-en.pdf) would take our children and run to wherever we felt safe. If Johnson's Nationality and Borders Bill passes, however, any Ukrainian who arrives in Britain outside of official resettlement schemes will be treated as a criminal, receiving limited rights and risking imprisonment in processing centres thousands of miles from our shores.

Already, tens of thousands of people have been forced from their homes. [*Huge traffic jams*](https://twitter.com/FreefromTorture/status/1496804150243467268?ref_src=twsrc%255Egoogle%257Ctwcamp%255Eserp%257Ctwgr%255Etweet) have formed on roads leading out of Kyiv, every car filled with ordinary people whose lives have been thrown suddenly into chaos. Among them is a Ukrainian psychologist, who reached out to a colleague of mine at [*Freedom from Torture,*](https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/) seeking assistance. She was messaging from a shop where she was buying a Kalashnikov to protect herself and was desperately seeking a way out of Kyiv. When shells are falling on your city, you simply do not have time to apply for visas and travel documents.

Recognition of this fact is at the very core of the Refugee Convention, which ensures that those fleeing persecution are not penalised for their means of arrival in the country where they claim asylum. The convention, which Britain helped draft, was laid down in the wake of the Second World War when much of Europe lay in ruins and the full scale of the horrors of the Holocaust were becoming known. Johnson's anti-refugee bill flies in the face of these rules, designed to keep all of us safe whenever the tragedy of war forces people from their homes.

We at Freedom from Torture believe the bill is the biggest legal assault on international refugee law ever seen in the UK. The UN's refugee agency has warned that the bill is "fundamentally at odds" with the UK's obligations under the Refugee Convention. Former UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon has been even franker: the "damaging precedent" set by this anti-refugee bill would "threaten the integrity of the global asylum system".

In the face of mounting evidence, this government has given up justifying the legality of the bill, instead arguing that it "disagrees" with the UN and that "as a sovereign nation, it is up to us to interpret the convention". This is nonsense; as a comprehensive [*report by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law*](https://binghamcentre.biicl.org/publications/nationality-and-borders-bill-a-rule-of-law-analysis-of-clauses-29-and-39) recently noted, it is not for parliament to define the meaning of international treaties.

By reducing the dispute to one of legal gymnastics, they are betraying the spirit of the international human rights - if the UK abandon its obligations, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's president Vladimir Putin could reasonably question why he should be expected to uphold his. Worse still, they are ignoring the devastating impact these policies will have on the world's most vulnerable people.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

On Monday 27 February, members of the House of Lords have an opportunity to stop this heartless bill from becoming law. Amendments proposed by peers would block penalisation of refugees depending on their mode of arrival and create 10,000 global refugee resettlement places a year. As the bill passes through parliament in the coming weeks, it is crucial that every parliamentarian with a conscience does all they can to support these changes. Make no mistake, anyone who votes in favour of this bill is voting to slam the door in the face of Ukrainian men, women and children in need.

While this government is turning its back on people seeking safety, all over Britain people are showing their support for Ukrainians in need. A [*petition*](https://www.change.org/p/borisjohnson-and-ukhomeoffice-help-ukrainian-refugees-helpukrainianrefugees) launched by Freedom from Torture on the day the Russian invasion began urges the government to accept ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and to abandon clauses in the borders bill that would criminalise them and has already been signed by more than 100,000 people.

All over the country, caring people are showing support for refugees, including through the enormous [*Together With Refugees*](https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/) coalition. If enough of us join together, we can stop this anti-refugee bill and build an asylum system that treats those fleeing torture and conflict with dignity and decency, in accordance with the international rules which Britain helped shape.

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Sonya Sceats is chief executive of Freedom from Torture

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US states adding to financial squeeze on Russian over war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WK-J9M1-JBNF-W4D3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 8:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 958 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Governors and lawmakers in numerous U.S. states are seeking to add to the financial squeeze on Russia over its war against Ukraine

**Body**

Seeking to tighten the financial squeeze on Russian over its war against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , governors and lawmakers in numerous U.S. states were taking actions Monday to pull state investments from Russian companies while encouraging private entities to do the same.

The effect of sanctions by U.S. states often pales in comparison to national ones, but state officials said they wanted to show solidarity with Ukraine and do what they could to build upon the penalties imposed on Russia by the U.S. government and other Western nations.

Georgia House Speaker David Ralston, a [*Republican*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republican) , got a bipartisan standing ovation Monday when he told representatives he would seek to have the state's retirement funds quickly divested from any Russian assets.

"I don't know about y'all, but I don't want one penny of Georgians' money going to subsidize Vladimir Putin," Ralston said. "While our role in international affairs is limited, we make clear we stand with those who want to live in peace."

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who oversees state business registrations, on Monday also called upon Georgia-based businesses and investors to stop doing business with Russia or any companies that support Russia.

Some state actions have been largely symbolic. Over the weekend, [*Pennsylvania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pennsylvania) Gov. Tom Wolf's administration lit the front of the Capitol in the yellow and blue colors of Ukraine's flag.

But other state actions have potential teeth.

On Monday, the [*Indiana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/indiana) House passed legislation that would block Russian-controlled businesses and nonprofits from acquiring property in Indiana for one year. It now goes to the Senate.

"Indiana will not be a safe haven for ill-gotten Russian funds, nor for its oligarchs trying to find financial shelter in the wake of Putin's unconscionable invasion of Ukraine," Democratic state Rep. Ryan Dvorak said while proposing the amendment last week.

New York Gov. [*Kathy Hochul*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kathy-hochul) signed an executive order Sunday forbidding her state from doing business with Russia. She ordered state agencies to divest money and assets from companies or institutions aiding Russia in its war against Ukraine. The Democratic governor also said New York would welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, noting that New York already is home to the largest Ukrainian population in the U.S.

"We strongly condemn the action of Putin and Russia for this unprovoked attack, which is now leading to atrocities against innocent human beings," she said.

Pennsylvania lawmakers said Monday they will file legislation requiring state pension funds to pull investments connected to the Russian government and its critical supporters. The state Treasury Department also has begun divesting its minimal holdings in Russian-based companies.

In a memo to fellow senators, Democratic state Sen. Sharif Street said Pennsylvania "must wield our economic power to ensure that Russia faces grave consequences for their flagrant violations of international law and human cooperation."

Pennsylvania House Majority Leader Kerry Benninghoff, a Republican also seeking co-sponsors for the legislation, said state lawmakers "have a moral obligation to ensure that our public fund investments are not inadvertently supporting those who are engaging in an unprovoked invasion of their democratically elected neighbors."

Arkansas lawmakers also have filed proposals authorizing banks in the state to freeze the assets of Russian oligarchs and to require a boycott of Russian-made goods.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, a Democrat, has banned state agencies from doing business with Russian state-owned firms and their subcontractors. Colorado's $61 billion state pension fund is pulling $8 million from a Russian state-owned bank identified in federal sanctions.

Governors in New Jersey and Virginia also have ordered a review of whether any state money is going to Russian companies or investments supporting the Russian government.

Some governors are seeking to sever good-will relationships between their home states and those in Russia. Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, asked the cities of Norfolk and Roanoke to end their sister city partnerships with Russian cities. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, a Republican, has called for an end to its sister state relationship with Stavrapol Krai, Russia, and a strengthening of its sister state relationship with Cherkasy Oblast, Ukraine.

Several states have expressed a willingness to provide housing to Ukranian refugees. The Washington state House and Senate each have added amendments to their budget proposals setting aside $19 million to provide services and temporary housing to refugees who come from Ukraine.

Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott, a Republican, posted on Twitter over the weekend that he has asked restaurants and retailers " to voluntarily remove all Russian products from their shelves."

Officials in Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah and Virginia - all states that control the sale of alcohol - have directed Russian-sourced alcohol to be removed from store shelves, joining a pro-Ukranian movement along with some bars and private businesses.

"Utah stands in solidarity with Ukraine and will not support Russian enterprises, no matter how small the exchange," Republican Utah Gov. Spencer Cox said.

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Associated Press writer David A. Lieb reported from Jefferson City, Missouri. Also contributing were AP writers Jeff Amy in Atlanta; Jim Anderson in Denver; Michael Catalini in Trenton, New Jersey; Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas; Susan Haigh in Norwich, Connecticut; Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington; David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa; Sarah Rankin in Richmond, Virginia; Marc Levy and Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Casey Smith in Indianapolis; and Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: How many of us in the UK would offer our homes up to a Ukrainian family?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-0N91-JBNF-W4GK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 838 words

**Byline:** Jenny Eclair

**Highlight:** Our hearts say yes, but the reality is daunting and exhausting, writes Jenny Eclair

**Body**

Call me naive, but I genuinely didn't believe this could happen. Obviously, I knew there were ugly rumblings over Russia and the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , but I never thought that one man could inflict so much pain and chaos - while the rest of the world stood by and watched.

"Surely someone will kill him," sprang to mind, which is what a lot of people have been saying, but is ultimately a bad idea. Still, I can't help myself wondering, sometimes: "Why can't someone simply assassinate [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) ? Someone close, who pretends to be on his side and then betrays him and saves the world?"

In a film this would happen, and the assassin in question could be played by [*Voldymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/voldymyr-zelensky) , the heroic Ukranian leader who - already, in his own lifetime - has won Ukraine's Strictly Come Dancing and been the voice of the Ukrainian Paddington Bear. Beat that, Boris.

Turns out, though, that in an emergency I am not capable of rational grown-up thought. Because I don't know enough about world politics or Nato, I find myself responding like a schoolgirl: "Just kill him" (to be honest, after seeing the footage of this catastrophic war, given the chance, I would do the job myself).

It's a very odd feeling, seeing a deliberate manmade disaster unfold in real time as we go about our daily business. I think many of us thought that the worst we would see in our cozy little lives was the pandemic. Surely, once that was in retreat, we deserved many years of ease and contentment?

After all, as a universe, we'd gone through something pretty traumatic together. Surely that gave us a shared experience and some kind of perspective on the world? I genuinely thought, post-Covid, that even if we struggled to get back on our feet financially we'd feel a sense of global optimism and dare to relax and have some fun - after all, the worst had happened and more of us had survived than we ever dared hope. Ha!

"How dare he, how dare he," I find myself muttering instead, my hatred intense - but utterly futile. Like many people, I can only take small doses of the news and much to my shame, I find that for whole swathes of the day I can blank out the entire situation, distracted by Wordle and the fact that I'm in the middle of filming a telly job which I love, while living on the 20th floor of a high-rise hotel in Manchester for the duration.

Last time I was here, recording the same show, it was November 2020 - the city was in level 3 lockdown and the entire place was eerily deserted. Now, the puddles of post-Friday night puke are back on the Saturday morning pavements and once again the city is a thriving, raucous hub. People are dressed up and ready to party, Covid seems to be on the back foot and there's a celebratory air.

Only now and then it catches you: how dare we have fun while the Ukrainians suffer?

How can we go about our normal routines, running baths, boiling kettles and putting a wash on, while millions of people have seen their water and electricity cut off and their homes bombed?

Less than two weeks ago, they were doing what we're doing: eating pizza, making telly shows and spending weekends throwing up on pavements. Now, women are giving birth in underground bunkers and the old sit huddled on makeshift seating, surrounded by their possessions, dazed by this cruellest turn of events.

Apart from donating, what can we really do? Watching the generosity of the other European nations is humbling. They are stepping forward to offer shelter without hesitation. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are being met at railway stations in Hungary, while on other platforms, travellers lucky enough to live in other countries are arriving for their weekend city breaks. It's the same story in Germany, Poland and Moldova.

How many of us in the UK would offer our homes up to a Ukrainian family? Our hearts say yes, but the reality is daunting and exhausting.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

If we're honest, most of us struggle to cope with our nearest and dearest for more than a few days over Christmas - massive props to anyone who opens their home to traumatised strangers without a shared language in common.

The utter weirdness of this situation beggars belief. While all my sympathies lie with the people of the Ukraine, I can't help wondering how countless westernised Russians and their children must feel in this country, right now. It must be pretty weird to be completely accepted one day and feel like an utter pariah the next.

How do the Ukrainians in this country deal with Russian workmates? What would you do if you'd booked a trip of a lifetime to Russia? Visiting St Petersburg has always been a dream for my partner - not anymore.

Less than a fortnight ago, not many people (hand on heart) knew the colours of the Ukranian flag, never mind their national flower. We do now, because, in a war played out on the TV screens in our living rooms, there is no such thing as blissful ignorance.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: War in Europe has fostered a more grown-up relationship between London and Brussels*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-51S1-JBNF-W3B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 12:34 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:3

**Length:** 891 words

**Byline:** Andrew Grice

**Highlight:** Close cooperation over sanctions is a reminder of how much stronger we are working with the EU

**Body**

Could there be a tiny silver lining to the massive dark cloud of the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) crisis, if the close cooperation between the UK and EU on sanctions against Russia ushers in a more grown-up relationship between London and Brussels? Some Tory backbenchers dare to hope so.

Of course, it would be better if the UK were still at the EU table. Having covered EU summits for 30 years before the UK walked out, I'm sure our status as a leading Nato member would have given us real clout in the EU's current debates, whatever the tensions with its members on other issues.

Pro-Europeans rue the UK's absence and even think Brexit was one factor that emboldened Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine. "Brexit has weakened Britain, undermined our friends and allies, and played its part in breaking such a hard-earned peace in Europe," said Richard Corbett, the last leader of Labour's MEPs. [*Michael Heseltine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-heseltine) , president of the European Movement, said: "I am ashamed that the country that in my lifetime saved European democracy has now absented itself as others determine Europe's response."

If this crisis has proved one thing, it is the strength of multilateral organisations. Nato, which Emmanuel Macron [*diagnosed as having*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nato-macron-trump-military-syria-turkey-europe-a9192356.html) "brain death", is suddenly alive and kicking. So is the EU, and it would be even stronger with the UK in it. One day, the "UK" seat at the table will be taken by "UKR" and Ukraine, which knows you don't have to sacrifice sovereignty to be a member.

Perhaps all is not lost. The cooperation on sanctions offers a ray of hope for a better UK-EU working relationship. The EU's remarkably quick, united and tough response has erased the Brexiteers' caricature of a bloc plagued by sclerotic decision-making and a "lowest common denominator" approach, especially on foreign policy, in which the convoy moved at the pace of its slowest member. The EU has surprised itself by outperforming its response to previous crises, such as on Greek debt, the annexation of Crimea, Covid and even Brexit.

UK ministers claim they "led the way" on arming the Ukrainians but the EU has, surprisingly, caught up. Germany's decision to supply arms and boost defence spending is a watershed moment; the UK will now need to catch up by raising its defence budget to protect eastern Europe. One of the alleged benefits of Brexit was that the UK could be more agile in imposing sanctions. But the EU sanctioned members of the Duma and the RT television channel before the UK. The suspicion grows that some oligarchs will sell their UK assets while the government delays moving against them.

The bad news for pro-Europeans is that appearances can be deceptive. Revealingly, one EU diplomat told me: "There is good coordination on sanctions. But the UK goes to the US to agree a line before they then come to us." Another said: "Washington is still driving the process. The UK is not in the [EU] picture and relies much more on Nato for the overview."

I'm told there have been differences behind the scenes: for example, the US (and therefore the UK) wanted a United Nations resolution based on a total condemnation of Russia, while the EU's instinct was for a slightly softer line.

Johnson's top priority is to hug the US administration close and repair the damage done by the Afghanistan debacle - another own goal that encouraged Putin. His priority hasn't changed in the past week. Nor have the populist instincts of his government, as witnessed by its slow, grudging response towards accepting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, on which the EU - despite its deep divisions on migration - did the right thing by opening its borders, and quickly.

Johnson had the nerve to claim: "The UK is way out in front in our willingness to help with refugees." Yet it is the slowest member of the European convoy and the government's true colours were revealed when the immigration minister Kevin Foster suggested Ukrainians [*should apply for*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-russia-crisis-kyiv-tory-mp-b2024163.html) seasonal work visas.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment sign up to our free weekly Voices newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dfooter%26itm_audience%3Dprospecting%26itm_content%3Dnewsletters&data=04%7C01%7CVictoria.Richards%40independent.co.uk%7C062b3d811f2541e4220808d98fb59a11%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637698832400255119%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cljURBTtBLaWfVwBrZv8UPgOVVFGM0rPoexRmk0aRHA%3D&reserved=0)

This populism means Johnson wants to "keep Brexit alive" because he believes it is Keir Starmer's weak point. It is why he indulges in Brussels-bashing and childish, counterproductive Macron-baiting ("Donnez-moi un break") to grab easy headlines. It is why "Global Britain" senselessly avoids cooperating with the EU on foreign and defence policy and would rather talk to individual member states than the EU institutions that have proved their worth in this emergency.

Perhaps Johnson will come to realise that the UK and EU are stronger together in the face of their common enemy in Putin; the irony is that the US would prefer such a united Europe. Growing up and having a more grown-up EU relationship would help Johnson throw off his untrustworthy image in foreign capitals and be taken more seriously on the world stage.

But can this leopard change his spots? Perhaps we will have to wait for [*the now delayed succession*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/truss-ben-wallace-ukraine-russia-sanctions-b2021321.html) and Rishi Sunak, rightly keen to stop Johnson stumbling into a trade war with the UK's biggest trading partner, or Liz Truss, sensibly taking a constructive approach to EU negotiations on the Northern Ireland protocol because she can see the global big picture. It may fall to one of them to end Johnson's playground politics with the EU.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Customs red tape is delaying Ukraine aid delivery, charities say*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XW-P571-DY4H-K423-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 10:56 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 876 words

**Byline:** Sophie Wingate

**Highlight:** Three vans loaded with essential supplies for refugees were stuck at the port of Dover for two days due to paperwork issues.

**Body**

Concerns have been raised by some charities that aid shipments for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are being delayed from leaving the UK due to customs red tape.

The post-Brexit rules for moving donations into the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) are confusing and unclear, aid workers have said.

The Lewisham Polish Centre, a charity based in south-east [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) , said three of its vans loaded with sleeping bags, nappies and sanitary items for refugees were stuck in [*Dover*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dover) for two days due to paperwork issues.

It's quite heart-breaking for us because we have resources but the law isn't helping

Volunteer Kasia Zimna

The drivers were on Friday turned away by port authorities who said they did not have the correct documentation, according to the charity's chair.

Agnieszka Lokaj told the PA news agency: "The guys had cover letters from us that this is humanitarian aid with all the information that this is going to be distributed for the refugees, it's not for reselling; we listed all the items."

Every item being transported to the EU from the UK has to be accounted for under post-Brexit legislation.

Officials insisted the vehicles needed T1 documents, which Ms Lokaj said would have incurred costs too high for her small organisation.

"We are not clear on the rules because everybody's saying something else.

"Some vans were able to get through without the T1", she said, describing the situation as a "waste of money, waste of time" for busy volunteers.

UPDATE: This was all the aid you have helped us collect a few hours ago. Stranded in Dover after two days, held back by paperwork and customs wrangles. But please do read on.... [*pic.twitter.com/vZuMAm18LG*](https://t.co/vZuMAm18LG) - LewishamPolishCentre (@lewpolishcentre) [*March 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/lewpolishcentre/status/1500488931451752449?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The vans finally got onto a ferry on Sunday with the help of Ciaran Donovan, a St Albans-based courier who transports goods across [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) for a living.He said: "What they did in the end, which is absolutely mental, is they went on a tourist ticket, which you're not supposed to do."It's chaos, there's no law to it, there's no rule to it."Mr Donovan also said he knew of 13 other vans transporting medical equipment on behalf of charities that "still haven't left the UK after four days of trying to get customs paperwork".The new tickets were £170 per van, a cost that had to be covered by the Lewisham Polish Centre.The donations have now arrived in Przemysl, a Polish city on the border with Ukraine.The charity has four more tonnes of donated goods ready to be transported to the continent, but fears this will be complicated by further customs wrangles. Other aid organisations have appealed for financial contributions rather than specific donated items, partly because of complicated and costly transport.Government advice is to donate money through the Disasters Emergency Committee or other trusted charities.The Polish British Social Integration Club Wawel, a London-based community organisation, has closed its donation point and stopped shipments due to the border issues.Its chair Kasia Zimna told PA: "When Lewisham gave us information that (their vans) were stuck, we didn't send anything else."Sometimes they allow you to go but this is not certain so it depends on the person on the border."And we just want to follow the rules."It's almost feeling that we need to be cheeky but we just want to deliver the stuff, people are dying from hunger."It's quite heart-breaking for us because we have resources, but the law isn't helping".[*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine%EF%B8%8F?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) | Customs procedures in the Netherlands have been temporarily simplified for humanitarian aid to [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for goods arriving from the UK. Humanitarian relief goods are now treated as non-commercial goods, so that they can be transported without delay. [*pic.twitter.com/kRduCeHLEV*](https://t.co/kRduCeHLEV) - Netherlands Embassy (@NLinUK) [*March 5, 2022*](https://twitter.com/NLinUK/status/1500103306416463874?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The organisations have urged the governments of the UK, France and the Netherlands to urgently clarify guidance for trucks carrying humanitarian goods across their borders.

The Dutch Embassy in the UK said customs procedures in the Netherlands have been temporarily simplified for Ukraine aid arriving from the UK.

"Humanitarian relief goods are now treated as non-commercial goods, so that they can be transported without delay," it tweeted.

Ellie Reeves, the Labour MP for Lewisham West and Penge, told the Lewisham Polish Centre she would raise the issue in Parliament.

She tweeted: "Very pleased that you got through and can now deliver the aid to those in desperate need. But it didn't need to be so difficult & slow and I hope to get the opportunity to raise this in Parliament tomorrow."

HM Revenue & Customs said: "Anyone requiring advice about transporting humanitarian aid to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can contact the free-to-use Export Support Service (ESS) or ESS helpline 0300 303 8955 which can be used by individuals, businesses or charities.

"The UK has committed a £120 million humanitarian aid package for Ukraine to help aid agencies respond to the deteriorating situation, creating a lifeline for Ukrainians with access to basic necessities and medical supplies.

"Our humanitarian aid takes the UK's overall aid support for Ukraine during the current crisis to £220 million, after a £100 million economic package for Ukraine was announced earlier this month."

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The west's interventions suggest that we live in an increasingly insane world*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-G7M1-JCS0-D49Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 12, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 37

**Length:** 917 words

**Body**

I am not a Putin apologist. Though looking at the horrifying events playing out in Ukraine, I also need to look at the west's dismal history of foreign policies and military interventions in the name of democracy and freedom.

Since 1945, this makes depressing reading, as America appears to have won only one single intervention, on the small island of Grenada. For the rest, it's defeats. Yet we don't see this - or prefer not to see this.

Korea lost, and a stalemate with the north after some 70 years. Cuba, sanctions and stalemate after some 60 years. Vietnam lost too, with 56,000 dead. Cambodia, carpet bombed with countless dead.

Iraq supported in destroying Iran. Iran misadventure ended in failure, unwarranted sanctions leading to serious tension. Lebanon misadventure ended in withdrawal. Afghanistan lost after 20 years and billions wasted. Iraq destroyed and - in effect - lost.

Somalia withdrawn and also (in effect) lost. Syria, nothing achieved other than causing destruction, regime change not achieved. Libya destroyed, causing civil war. Ukraine today.

And let us not look at military juntas installed and supported in South America, namely Argentina, Brazil and Chile, only to torture and murder their own people who did not subscribe to their right-wing dictatorships.

As Albert Einstein suggested? If you keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different results, it's a sign of insanity.

I venture to suggest that we live in an increasingly insane world.

Gunter Straub London

<strong>An assault on our humanity</strong>

No one can fail to be horrified by bombs falling on maternity and psychiatric hospitals, killing and maiming children and pregnant mothers. This has shaken our humanity to the core.

However, the west will never have any sway on Russia as long as it is utterly complicit in the wanton destruction of innocent lives and livelihoods, social fragmentation and the murderous shelling of public infrastructures in Libya, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, all under the rubric of regime change and the promotion of democracy and justice.

America's unequivocal support of Israel, its settlement aggrandisement, land usurpation and the uprooting of orchards, and religious and cultural genocide in the occupied Palestinian territories - weren't these an assault on our mutual humanity?

Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob London

<strong>Foreign troops in Russia</strong>

I have been reading multiple reports that Russia is to deploy foreign troops - Syria has been mentioned - in the barbarous attack on Ukraine, and to show the full picture I also hear there might be some ex-servicemen from European countries assisting Ukraine.

If this is the case then I find my mind drifting back to the Spanish civil war of 1936-39, when General Franco deployed troops from Spanish colonies to the mainland, then Italian and German planes wrought devastation on Spanish cities - Guernica springs to mind - and (last but not least) Russian advisers along with the international brigade also played a part in the conflagration.

To say this is concerning is, to put it mildly; however, what really worries me is I know only too well what happened after the conflict on the Iberian peninsula finished!

Robert Boston Kingshill, Kent

<strong>Understanding Russia</strong>

I appreciate Mary Dejevsky's efforts to illuminate our understanding of Russia and Putin. I was struck by the article about the Kyiv Independent and its mission to publish true stories by first validating their sources and veracity.

Ms Dejevsky's suggestion that we may not be getting the truth, or all the truth, is very possibly correct. What I am certain about is that nothing broadcast by Russian media, politicians, diplomats, or other official sources is worth granting a gram of credibility.

I have little doubt that certain facts are kept from us for strategically important reasons. That we should have acted over Crimea is beyond doubt. That Russia has invaded a peaceful country on the back of lies and obfuscation is also beyond doubt. While the outcome is far from clear there is one undeniable fact - Russia is suffering in Ukraine and at home.

Do not worry too much about the facts in the news, Mary. We should simply support the Ukrainians as best we can. I have a high degree of confidence that the Ukrainian people will achieve their wishes, no matter what successes arise for Russia. Winning the war is what counts and Russia has bitten off much more than it can chew, even if it does achieve some success in its corrupt mission.

Michael Mann Shrewsbury

<strong>***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***</strong>

My daughter living in Holland has just taken in a Ukrainian refugee and informs me that they only need to show their passport and they get all public transport free. Despite our government's hostility to foreigners, might we perhaps do the same for the lucky few who manage to obtain visas here?

Michael du Pré Marlow

<strong>Poisonous tissue of lies</strong>

We could all do to be cheered up in these darkest of times. And what could be more cheering than hearing that Ian Blackford intends to step down from his role as Scottish National Party leader at Westminster?

Well, actually that it was a "poisonous tissue of lies" and that there was no truth in the rumour. There is now a witch hunt on in the SNP for whoever started it. Let us hope that greater mercy is shown to the malefactors than to Scotland's witches. Otherwise, there will be in time be another case for posthumous pardoning coming down the track.

Jill Stephenson Edinburgh

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-C091-DY4H-K3YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 1:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 954 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

EDITORS:

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's president blamed [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) for a missile strike that hit the heart of country's second largest city, as a 40-mile convoy of Russian tanks and other military vehicles threatened the capital.

Here's a look at the coverage from our journalists in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , eastern Ukraine and beyond. All times are Eastern. You can find all our text, photos and video in the Russia-Ukraine war hub on APNewsroom.

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UPCOMING

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-GLOBAL ECONOMY -Russia's invasion of Ukraine --and the unprecedented sanctions that followed --have raised the risks for an already vulnerable world economy. Essentially cutting Russia off from global finance and trade will push up energy prices and disrupt supply lines for key minerals and grain. And it's all coming at a terrible time --as the world's central banks start raising interest rates to combat resurgent inflation.

RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR - KHARKIV UNDER FIRE - As Ukraine's second-largest city comes under attack from Russian forces, we will focus on what's it like to live there now.

SENT/DEVELOPING

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - Russian shelling pounded the central square in Ukraine's second-largest city and other civilian targets and a 40-mile convoy of tanks and other vehicles threatened the capital. Ukraine's embattled president accused Moscow on Tuesday of resorting to terror tactics to press Europe's largest ground war in generations. The casualty toll mounted as Ukraine faced Day 6 of a Russian invasion that has shaken the 21st century world order. By Yuras Karmanau, Jim Heintz, Vladimir Isachenkov and Dasha Litvinova. SENT; developing: 1,300 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR-THE LATES T (sent; developing); RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR-THINGS TO KNOW (sent; developing); RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR-EYES ON THE GROUND (sent; developing).

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-PUTIN - For two decades, [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has struck rivals as reckless or impulsive. But his behavior leading up to ordering an invasion of Ukraine - and now putting Russia's nuclear forces on high alert - has some in the West questioning whether the Russian president has become dangerously unstable. By Nomaan Merchant and Vladimir Isachenkov. SENT: 1,200 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-RUSSIA'S ISOLATION - It's a globalized world - a planet stitched together by intricate supply chains, banking, international sports and countless other tentacles. Until it isn't. Case study No. 1: Russia this week. In barely three days, the country has become an international pariah in ways startling for - and in some cases helped by - the extremely connected world in which we live. By Ted Anthony. SENT: 1,000 words by 2 a.m., photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-SANCTION WORKAROUNDS -The massive sanctions imposed on Russia has the Kremlin scrambling to keep the country's economy running. For Vladimir Putin, that means looking for workarounds to the unprecedented economic blockade, even as he continues the invasion of Ukraine. By Fatima Hussein. SENT: 900 words by 1 a.m., photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-HUNGARY - Hungary's right-wing nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, has nurtured close political and economic ties with Russia for more than a decade. That has given him a reputation among many across Europe as the Kremlin's closest ally in the European Union. But following Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, Hungary's neighbor, Orban is facing growing pressure to change course. By Justin Spike. SENT: 950 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-SOCIAL MEDIA -As Russia's war in Ukraine plays out for the world on social media, big tech platforms face increased calls to bar Russian state media from using their platforms to spread propaganda and misinformation. By David Klepper and Amanda Seitz. SENT: 980 words, photos.

SYRIA-RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - From rebel-held Idlib province in northern Syria, Ahmad Rakan is closely following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "We feel their pain," he said of Ukrainian civilians under Russian bombardment. For the past seven years, Russia has played a decisive role in Syria's civil war, propping up President Bashar Assad's regime. By Zeina Karam, Bassem Mroue and AJ Naddaff. SENT: 1,000 words, photos.

UKRAINE-WAR-NON-***UKRAINIAN*** ***REFUGEES*** - As trains and buses bring people fleeing Ukraine to the safety of Polish border towns, they carry not just Ukrainians fleeing a homeland under attack but large numbers of citizens of other countries who had made Ukraine their home and whose fates, too, are now uncertain. By Vanessa Gera. SENT: 500 words, photos.

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RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR-SPORTS

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-SPORT - Russia has been excluded from all international ice skating events as sporting sanctions continue to mount following the country's invasion of Ukraine. SENT: 500 words, photos.

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PHOTOS

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RUSSIA UKRAINE-CHILDREN-PHOTO GALLERY -What is Russia's attack on Ukraine doing to the children.

Here are links to some of the day's related top PHOTOS:

BA106 -Ukrainians prepare to board a bus to Poland at Lviv bus main station, western Ukraine

XVG104 -A woman walks on a platform as people crowd to board a Lviv-bound train in Kyiv

XAZ139 -Kateryna Suharokova kisses her newborn son Makar in the basement of a maternity hospital converted into a medical ward and used as a bomb shelter in Mariupol

XAZ118 -Damaged cars and a destroyed accommodation building are seen near a checkpoint in Brovary, outside Kyiv, Ukraine on Tuesday

XAZ107 -A view of the damaged City Hall building in Kharkiv after a missile strike on Tuesday

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top consumer-ready VIDEOS:

Russia's assault slowed by fierce resistance

Children shelter underground from Russian shells

Cumberbatch: 'We need to act' in support of Ukraine

- The AP

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'I walked to Poland': Thousands embark on 'harrowing' 43-mile walk to border*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64VX-G3V1-DY4H-K52R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 25, 2022 Friday 1:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 855 words

**Byline:** Edd Dracott

**Highlight:** Manny Marotta described the 'brutal' 20-hour journey, seeing toddlers 'dragged out of bed' and Ukrainian men being conscripted to fight 'on the spot'.

**Body**

A man who walked for more than 43 miles with thousands of refugees to the Polish border from the Ukrainian city of [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) has described the "brutal" and "harrowing" 20-hour journey.

Manny Marotta, 25, was part of a group determined to reach the Polish border from Lviv in western Ukraine - a 43-mile (70 kilometres) walk on which he saw children "dragged out of bed" and families separated as Ukrainian men were conscripted to fight "on the spot".

Usually working as a tour guide in an art museum, Mr Marotta, from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, told the PA news agency he had been in Ukraine for a week and a half working as an independent journalist when [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded Ukraine on Thursday - and decided to flee Lviv when rumours spread about the incoming of a Russian bombing.

He described feeling part of a "humanitarian nightmare" as he watched men, women and children rush to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , where he arrived the next day at 7am local time.

Long story short: I just walked to Poland. It was a hellish 20-hour journey undertaken in the middle of winter with thousands of refugees. I saw some terrible things:- Ukraine Conflict Live 2022 (@UkraineLive2022) [*February 25, 2022*](https://twitter.com/UkraineLive2022/status/1497106536828710912?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Marotta told PA: "You had elderly people walking alone on the side of the road with these sticks, hobbling along.

"There was one grandmother that told me she was going to Poland - Poland was far away, it's amazing the result of these people (trying) to escape."

He also described the "heartbreaking" moment he saw Ukrainian men being plucked out of the group and off buses heading for the border to conscript into the Ukrainian army.

"It was about 10, 15 kilometres from the border and Ukrainian army soldiers started coming out onto the streets with speakers, announcing 'no Ukrainian man aged 18 to 60 is allowed to leave the country - you must go east and fight'," he said.

"They were saying, 'say goodbye to your girlfriend, to your wife, say goodbye to your mothers and daughters, you're going east'.

"I started seeing these surreal scenes of fathers saying, 'I don't want to leave my family,' and Ukrainian soldiers yanking them away ... [*Mothers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mothers) were protesting, they were screaming: 'Why are you doing this?'

"There was this guy standing up on a box saying 'forget your wives, forget about your girlfriends - you need to defend your country. Don't be a coward.'"

Mr Marotta added he will "never forget" meeting a 24-year-old pulled away by soldiers with "AK-style weapons" to conscript.

"He had no choice, he gave me this look that I'll never forget, it was a sad sort of smile ... I hope he's okay," he said.

"It was just tragic - fathers being torn from their kids to go fight in the war.

"When I got to the border, I made friends with this 18-year-old Ukrainian kid ... they conscripted him on the spot, it was just very brutal to see the terror in his eyes knowing he was going to go east and fight the Russians.

"It was harrowing to watch."

Mr Marotta saw children on his journey who had been "dragged out of bed" by their parents.

"The toddlers were cold, they were hungry, they were tired," Mr Marotta said.

"They were crying, asking, 'where are we going? What is going on?'

"Nobody could answer."

He began his journey at 4pm local time in Lviv.

"I woke up in Lviv to air raid sirens," he explained.

"I went out to the centre of the city to see what was going on, there was a voiceover, a loud speaker urging everybody to stay calm and seek shelter.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) seemed panicked, everybody was calling their relatives ... Nobody knew what was going on."

Mr Marotta said it was a "terrifying moment" and decided to leave the city immediately, only to be met with fully-booked trains, no car hires and no buses running.

"I was getting a little desperate at this point, the country was under attack - so on a fight or flight impulse, I began walking west along one of the main roads that leads directly from Lviv," he explained.

"I just started walking, it was about four in the afternoon and I was just walking along the road with my backpack.

"Soon, I come upon a long line of cars - a gridlock, it was a strange sight ... every petrol station I pass, there are signs that (they) have no gas."

Mr Marotta said many were abandoning their vehicles and fled "carrying anything they could" as an "exodus" of people formed three or four hours into the journey.

By the time he reached the border, he was sandwiched among tens of thousands of Ukrainians - many of whom were in a "car pile-up" still waiting at the border, those on foot "cold and hungry".

Having reached Poland and been offered tea by a welcoming committee at the border, he said he was "inconsolably happy" after the "longest and worst night" of his life.

He is now staying in one of the last available hotel rooms in Przemysl, south-east Poland, with other ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and plans to sleep before locating an American presence.

"The Western world should be should be aware of how terrifying this is for the Ukrainian people," he said.

"They should turn their eyes right now to the fullest possible humanitarian aid for those on the road right now.

"Those on the road right now are suffering dismally."

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Johnson to address MPs over Ukraine as UK steps up sanctions pressure on Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WX-D5B1-DY4H-K33N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 1:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 941 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** Across the Atlantic, Joe Biden announced US airspace has been closed to all Russian flights.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) will update [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) on his talks with allies in eastern Europe as the UK piled more pressure on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) over its [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) invasion.

It comes as US President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) used his first State of the Union address to announce US airspace was closed to Russian flights, adding his administration would be joining the UK and other allies in pursuing the Russian oligarchs and "corrupt leaders who built billions of dollars off (Vladimir Putin's) violent regime".

Following his trip to Poland and Estonia, Mr Johnson will address the House of Commons during Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, during which he is likely be pressed on further action the Government could take on sanctioning Russian oligarchs and supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

As the Prime Minister returns from meeting British troops on Nato's border with Russia, the Foreign Office is expected to follow suit by announcing further financial sanctions on Moscow banks and also ban all Russia-linked ships from docking at UK ports.

Liz Truss said the measures, which include prohibiting UK individuals and entities from providing financial services to Russia's central bank, were designed to "degrade" Russia's economy.

Belarusian military individuals and organisations were also sanctioned as the UK looks to punish Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko for supporting his close ally, Russian president Vladimir Putin, to launch his attack on Ukraine.

Meanwhile in Washington DC, Mr Biden said as well as closing its airspace to all Russian flights, the US was assembling a task force to "find and seize their yachts and luxury apartments (and) their private jets".

Mr Biden went on: "The free world is holding (Mr Putin) accountable along with 27 members of the European Union... as well as countries like the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand and many others. Even Switzerland are inflicting pain on Russia (and) supporting the people of Ukraine.

"Putin is now isolated from the world more than he has ever been. Together with our allies, we are right now enforcing powerful economic sanctions: We're cutting off Russia's largest bank to the international financial system... (and) choking Russia's access to technology that will sap its economic threat and weaken its military for years to come.

"Tonight, I say to the Russian oligarchs and the corrupt leaders who built billions of dollars off this violent regime... We're coming for your ill-begotten gains."

The UK's earlier sanctions announcement came after there were cross-party calls from MPs to "go even faster and further" in targeting Russian money and power.

Former Labour minister Dame Margaret Hodge used parliamentary privilege to read out the names of 10 Russian oligarchs with "links to the UK", from a list of 105, who she said should be sanctioned.

The Lukashenko regime actively aids and abets Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and will be made to feel the economic consequences for its support for Putin.We've launched a first tranche of sanctions against Belarusian individuals and organisations.[*https://t.co/wjDf4zdUyF*](https://t.co/wjDf4zdUyF) - Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1498740941632516101?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Also speaking in Tuesday's Commons debate, Conservative MP Bob Seely questioned the morality of UK-based lawyers working for Russian oligarchs in what he called a "rotten" system.He said "Putin's henchmen" were "teaming up with amoral lawyers" and called for ministers to order a public inquiry into dirty money in UK public life.In a possible hint that the UK Government could still go further in terms of individual sanctions, the Prime Minister said the silence of Russian oligarchs who had investments in the UK over the Ukraine invasion was "inexplicable" and pressed them to "denounce this act of aggression."Mr Johnson told ITV News during his trip to Poland: "And those oligarchs who have connections with the Putin regime and who are benefiting from their association with the Russian state, we are going to expose and distrain their assets." Western fears are growing that Russia could intensify bombing on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, with a 40-mile convoy of tanks and other military vehicles amassed on the outskirts of the city.It comes after Ukrainian officials said Russian forces fired at the Kyiv TV tower and Ukraine's main Holocaust memorial in an attack that killed five people and left five more wounded.The memorial at Babi Yar, a ravine in Kyiv, is where nearly 34,000 Jews were killed within 48 hours in 1941 when the city was under Nazi occupation.Kyiv is braced for even more shelling as the Prime Minister said he feared the Kremlin could look to "Grozny-fy" the capital - a reference to the way Russian forces flattened the city during the Second Chechen War in 1999-2000.Mr Johnson, speaking to ITV, said Mr Putin, after finding his invasion hampered by strong Ukrainian resistance and logistical issues, could "double down and to try and 'Grozny-fy' Kyiv"."I think that that would be an unalterable moral humanitarian catastrophe and I hope he doesn't do that," he added.For the sake of Ukraine, Russia and the world - Putin must fail. [*pic.twitter.com/uUn0WEJ78W*](https://t.co/uUn0WEJ78W) - Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 1, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1498783727467520005?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

But despite anxieties over further killings and possible atrocities, the Prime Minister consistently ruled out Nato policing a no-fly zone over Ukraine during his trip to visit allies, saying shooting Russian planes out of the sky was not under consideration.

The UK Government also announced a further £80 million in aid for Ukraine on Tuesday, with the money due to be used to "tackle the growing humanitarian crisis" in the country, the Foreign Office said.

**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russians find asylum lifeline to US, but at a high price*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673J-WV91-JBNF-W49D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 16, 2022 Friday 7:24 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1050 words

**Byline:** Elliot Spagat

**Highlight:** The pastor of a San Diego-area church promises to arrange entry to the United States for Russian-speaking asylum-seekers through connections with U.S. officials and unnamed “opportunists” who guarantee customers' safety in Mexico

**Body**

Phil Metzger promises to arrange entry to the United States for Russian-speaking asylum-seekers through unmatched connections with U.S. border officials and people in [*Mexico*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mexico) who can guarantee safety while traveling. Though seeking asylum is free, the pastor of Calvary [*San Diego*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/san-diego) said his services are “not cheap.”

In an interview with a Russian-language YouTube channel, he touted director computer access to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to enroll migrants and was vague about “opportunists” in Mexico who ensure customers’ safety after they fly there on tourist visas and while they wait in [*Tijuana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tijuana) to cross.

“I just know there’s a lot of power on that side that I just don’t control,” the evangelical Christian pastor said. “But I do have one control. I control who goes across. So I have to negotiate. To keep those people safe, I have to negotiate with those in power (in Mexico).”

Asylum is supposed to be free and for those most in need; many have been unable to even ask for protection under COVID-19 restrictions that are set to expire Wednesday.

Yet Metzger’s service, as described in the 25-minute interview last month at his church in the San Diego suburb of Chula Vista, is a private money-generating enterprise that uses its government connections to bypass those restrictions. It’s part of an opaque, bewildering patchwork of exemptions CBP has developed. Immigration advocates select who gets in, though CBP has final say.

Asked about an outside group charging money, the [*Department of Homeland Security*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/department-of-homeland-security) said there is no fee related to exemptions from asylum restrictions and that it will “look into any allegation of abuse.”

“DHS takes any allegations of fraud or abuse of our immigration systems very seriously,” it said in a written response to questions about the service.

The pastor did not respond to text, email and phone messages left over a week and his office was closed when a reporter went there on a recent weekday afternoon.

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This story is part of an ongoing Associated Press series, “Migration Inc,” which investigates individuals and companies that profit from the movement of people who flee violence and civil strife in their homelands.

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Migrants have been denied rights to seek asylum more than 2.5 million times since March 2020 on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19 under Trump-era restrictions known as Title 42.

Exemptions are supposed to be for migrants deemed most vulnerable in Mexico — perhaps for gender identity or sexual orientation, or for being specifically threatened with violence — but some partners say CBP doesn't question choices and that migrants selected often face no unusual danger. The agency doesn’t publicly identify its partners or how many slots are made available to each, leaving migrants guessing who they are and which ones are best connected to U.S. authorities.

In El Paso, Texas, CBP gives out 70 slots daily, half for the government of Mexico's Chihuahua state and the rest for attorneys and advocacy groups, said Nicolas Palazzo, an attorney for Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, which participates in the arrangement. He said some attorneys unaffiliated with his organization charge migrants for the service.

In Piedras Negras, Mexico, across from Eagle Pass, Texas, the city government chooses who escapes the reach of Title 42, according to a report last month from the University of Texas at Austin Strauss Center for International Security and Law. In Reynosa, across from McAllen, Texas, a migrant shelter picks who crosses, while in Laredo, Texas, there are no exemptions, the report says.

In San Diego, CBP exempts about 200 people daily, including 40 slots that are set aside for Russian speakers working through Calvary San Diego, said Enrique Lucero, the city of Tijuana's director of migrant affairs, who regularly communicates with U.S. officials.

Other slots in San Diego are for advocacy groups Al Otro Lado, which operates an online registration list, and Border Angels, which leans on migrant shelter directors to select who gets to cross, and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, a refugee resettlement organization.

CBP is allowing more Russians to enter the United States with Title 42 exemptions, with about 3 in 4 coming through California border crossings with Mexico. In October, it exempted 3,879 Russians, more than triple the same period a year earlier. It exempted 21,626 Russians in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, more than five times the previous year.

In the YouTube interview last month with Alex Moore, Metzger said his call center fields more than 1,000 inquiries a day. CBP tells him how many people can cross and “I control who crosses.”

“Honestly, we think it was God opening a door for us,” said Metzger, who grew up in Southern California but spent much of his adult life in Eastern Europe.

Metzger is unclear on who he pays to greet customers in Mexico and bring them to the border, saying he doesn’t know them.

Through a Telegram account called Most V USA, the cost for single adults paying cash was 1,800 (presumably U.S. dollars) Monday — a “price reduction.” For married couples paying cash, the cost was $3,500. Online payments were $300 less for individuals and $500 less for couples. Children were free.

“You pay not for the crossing, but for the consultation on the crossing,” Most V USA says on its website. “We use the only legal way available to our organization — making an appointment with a CBP officer at the border.”

The price includes crossing to the United States safely in groups from Tijuana to San Diego, with a bag containing water and protein bars.

Metzger opened his large church to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** after Russia's invasion this year, working with volunteers on a smooth-running operation that deployed a mobile app used to track church attendance. Ukrainians who flew to Tijuana were told to report to a San Diego border crossing as their numbers approached, a system organizers likened to waiting for a restaurant table.

Metzger touts connections with CBP developed during that time and warns about falling for scammers who use his Most V USA brand.

“No, it’s not cheap. No, it’s not easy but we will make sure that it is safe and that you will get into the States,” he said.

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Associated Press writer Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine war – live: Putin claims West helped Kyiv mount acts of ‘terror and sabotage’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67Y2-5Y01-DY4H-K530-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 5, 2023 Wednesday 10:12 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:20

**Length:** 12638 words

**Byline:** Emily Atkinson and Arpan Rai

**Highlight:** It comes as a former bodyguard to Putin claims the president had installed ‘perfect replicas of his Kremlin office to avoid assassination attempts’

**Body**

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has accused Western intelligence agencies of helping [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) carry out acts of “terror and sabotage” – but fell short of providing any evidence for his bold claim.

He made the remarks during a call with members of his Security Council that focused on efforts to shore up control of the four Ukrainian provinces that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) claimed as part of its territory in September — a move that most of the world rejected as an illegal annexation.

“There are reasons to believe that the capabilities of third countries, Western special services, have been involved in preparation of acts of sabotage and terror attacks,” Putin said, without elaborating.

It comes after a former bodyguard of the Russian president claimed[*Putin had installed “perfect replicas of his Kremlin office to avoid assassination attempts.”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

Mr Putin has installed the replicas in order to confuse foreign intelligence so there are no assassination attempts, said former bodyguard Gleb Karakulov.

Mr Karakulov 35, had served as an engineer in the Federal Guard Service (FSO) presidential communications unit and said he has fled Russia over the war in [*Ukraine*](https://indy-cms-prod.brightsites.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Key Points

Putin claims West helped Kyiv mount acts of ‘terror and sabotage’ Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled Finland joins Nato, doubling military alliance’s border with Russia Putin responsible for Finland’s ‘historic’ accession to Nato, says alliance chief Paranoid Putin stays in bunker because he 'fears for his life', says ex-security guard Wagner raised ‘flag over some kind of toilet’, says Ukraine

Putin claims West helped Kyiv mount acts of ‘terror and sabotage’

Vladimir Putin has accused Western intelligence agencies of helping Ukraine carry out acts of “terror and sabotage” – but fell short of providing any evidence for his bold claim.

He made the remarks during a call with members of his Security Council that focused on efforts to shore up control of the four Ukrainian provinces that Russia claimed as part of its territory in September — a move that most of the world rejected as an illegal annexation.

“There are reasons to believe that the capabilities of third countries, Western special services, have been involved in preparation of acts of sabotage and terror attacks,” Putin said, without elaborating.

He said the four provinces have experienced Ukrainian shelling and acts of sabotage aimed at scaring the local population, and that Russian authorities must act “harshly and effectively to ensure control over the situation.”

Ukraine will speak to Russia on Crimea if counteroffensive succeeds – official

Ukraine is willing to speak with Russia about the future of Crimea if the forces sent by Kyiv reach the border of the Russia-held peninsula, a top official to Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

“If we will succeed in achieving our strategic goals on the battlefield and when we will be on the administrative border with Crimea, we are ready to open [a] diplomatic page to discuss this issue,” Andriy Sybiha, the deputy head of Mr Zelensky’s office, told FT.

“It doesn’t mean that we exclude the way of liberation [of Crimea] by our army,” the top adviser said.

After Crimea’s annexation in 2014 and since taking office in 2019, Mr Zelensky has ruled out peace talks on the disputed peninsula with the Russian forces along with all separatist territories, seeking that the soldiers deployed by Moscow leave all of Ukraine.

UN nuclear chief discusses Ukraine nuclear plant in Russia

The head of the UN’s atomic energy watchdog met with Russian officials in [*Kaliningrad*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kaliningrad) on Wednesday for negotiations on the safety of Ukraine’s [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) nuclear power plant, currently held by Russian forces.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi’s trip to the Russian exclave came a week after he visited the plant, which is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe.

“I met high level officials from several Russian agencies in Kaliningrad,” Grossi said on Twitter. “I continue my efforts to protect the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant,” he said, emphasizing that this was “in everyone’s interest.”

Read our full report here:

[*UN nuclear chief discusses Ukraine nuclear plant in Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-zaporizhzhia-estonia-kaliningrad-b2314761.html)

Watch: Zelensky and wife welcomed with military honours to Poland

Ukraine and Poland ‘find solution to ease farmer anger’

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said on Wednesday he expected decisions to be announced in the coming days and weeks to alleviate anger among Polish farmers linked to Ukrainian grain imports.

He told reporters at a briefing standing alongside Poland’s prime minister that he had discussed the matter of Ukrainian and Polish farmers at talks in Warsaw on Wednesday and found a solution.

“We have found a way out, I believe that in the coming days and weeks we will finally resolve all issues as there cannot be any questions, any complications between such close partners and real friends as Poland and Ukraine,” he said.

Polish agriculture minister Henryk Kowalczyk resigned earlier on Wednesday amid rising anger among farmers over the impact of Ukrainian grain imports on prices.

Putin: West helped Ukraine mount acts of sabotage

Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) charged Wednesday that Western intelligence agencies have helped [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) carry out acts of sabotage, as he urged his officials to mount a stronger response.

Putin spoke during a call with members of his [*Security Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/security-council) that focused on efforts to shore up control of the four Ukrainian provinces that Russia claimed as part of its territory in September — a move that was rejected by most of the world as an illegal annexation.

“There are reasons to believe that the capabilities of third countries, Western special services, have been involved in preparation of acts of sabotage and terror attacks,” Putin said, without elaboration and without providing any evidence.

More from the Associated Press here:

[*Putin: West helped Ukraine mount acts of sabotage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/vladimir-putin-ap-ukraine-security-council-moscow-b2314848.html)

Kyiv: Situation at front is completely under control

The situation at the front is “completely under control” despite repeated Russian attempts to take Bakhmut and other cities in eastern Ukraine, Kyiv’s deputy defence minister Hanna Malyar has stated.

Malyar wrote on Telegram that Ukrainian soldiers were repelling dozens of attacks a day around Bakhmut, Lyman, Avdiivka and Marinka.

Russian media mocks Trump over arrest days after he defended Putin

[*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) ’s [*indictment in New York City*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-speech-indictment-34-felony-charges-judge-b2314385.html) has been met with ridicule by state TV in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , where hosts have enjoyed themselves by showcasing artwork depicting the former president wearing an orange prison jumpsuit and speculating about future jail time.

Mr Trump appeared at the Manhattan Criminal Courthouse on Tuesday afternoon to [*plead not guilty to 34 felony charges*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-indictment-charges-plead-not-guilty-b2313921.html) relating to the falsification of business records to conceal a series of hush money payments made to porn star [*Stormy Daniels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stormy-daniels) , Playboy model [*Karen McDougal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/karen-mcdougal) and a former Trump Tower doorman on his behalf in exchange for their silence about his alleged extramarital affairs.

More on this from my colleagueJoe Sommerlad here:

[*Russian media mocks Trump over arrest days after he defended Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-russia-state-tv-mockery-b2314786.html)

Poland will help form coalition to supply warplanes to Ukraine -Zelensky

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said during his trip to Warsaw today that Poland would help form a coalition of Western powers to supply warplanes to Ukraine, as it did with battle tanks.

The Ukrainian leader, in a speech on a square in Warsaw, said that Russia would not defeat Europe while Ukraine and Poland are standing “shoulder to shoulder”.

Putin opens talks with Belarus leader

Russian president Vladimir Putin welcomed Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko to Moscow on Wednesday for two days of talks, but in their opening public remarks both men steered clear of the war in Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week the two leaders would discuss Lukashenko’s call for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine. Last month Putin said Russia would deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

“I must say that we have done a lot as a result of our joint work in all areas,” Putin told Lukashenko in comments broadcast by state television.

“We will discuss all of this tomorrow -this applies to our cooperation in the international arena and jointly solving questions of ensuring the security of our states.”

Moscow is Minsk’s closest political and financial backer. Lukashenko allowed Putin to use the territory of Belarus as a launch pad for the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia and Belarus are formally part of a Union State, a borderless union and alliance between the two former Soviet republics. Russia’s pre-war population was around 140 million compared to just 9 million for Belarus.

Russia has committed war crimes, says Polish president

Russia has committed war crimes in Ukraine which must be punished, the Polish president said on Wednesday during a visit to Warsaw by his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

“(Ukraine) could not be intimidated even though the targets of attacks are civilian facilities, hospitals, kindergartens.. these are war crimes that must be brought to justice and the criminals must be punished,” Andrzej Duda said.

ICYMI: Zelensky visit tightens bonds with Poland amid Russian war

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky won new pledges of deeper cooperation on a state visit to Poland on Wednesday as the neighbours sought to forge a tighter relationship in defiance of Russia’s full-scale war against Kyiv that has reshaped international alliances.

Polish president Andrzej Duda said his country has provided four Soviet-designed MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine to help it beat back the Kremlin’s assault. Four more are in the process of being handed over and another six are being prepared, he said.

Zelensky said at a news conference with Duda that his government would “extend a hearty welcome” to Polish businesses seeking to help Ukraine’s postwar rebuilding, which the World Bank has estimated could cost $411 billion. He met later with prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki and said he would sign agreements on developing Ukrainian infrastructure.

Poland heaped military honours and praise on Zelenskyy as it welcomed him and his wife on a joint visit, during which they thanked the country for its crucial military support as well as being a haven for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The former Soviet satellite that is now a member of the European Union and NATO feels especially threatened by Russia and has been a leading advocate for aid to Kyiv.

Russian president Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, said Moscow’s relations with Washington are “in deep crisis” as the U.S. has led its allies in supplying aid and weapons to Ukraine.

Speaking at a ceremony where he accepted diplomatic credentials from ambassadors of 17 nations, including the U.S., Putin alleged that Washington’s support for the 2014 protests in Kyiv that ousted a pro-Kremlin president led to Russia’s sending troops into Ukraine.

Zelensky and Duda said they wanted to leave behind any World War II-era grievances that linger in Ukraine and Poland.

“There are no taboo topics between us,” Duda said. “There are still open wounds in the memory of many people.”

The visit to Warsaw was a rare wartime foray out of Ukraine for Zelenskyy. While he also travelled to the United States, Britain, France and Belgium, the trip to Poland stood out because it was announced in advance and undertaken without the secrecy of past foreign trips. It also was the first time Zelensky and first lady Olena Zelenska travelled abroad together since the war began in February 2022, said Marcin Przydacz, head of Duda’s foreign policy office.

Duda awarded Zelensky Poland’s oldest and highest civilian distinction, The Order of the White Eagle.“We have no doubt that your attitude, together with the bravery of the nation, has saved Ukraine,” the Polish president told Zelensky.

At a ceremony in the courtyard of the presidential palace, Duda and the two countries’ first ladies were dressed in formal attire, while Zelensky wore the military-style sweatshirt and khaki trousers that have become his uniform since the invasion.

His trips to London, Paris and Brussels in February were part of his push for warplanes and for his country admission to the EU and NATO, and his visit to Washington in December was intended to shore up U.S. support.

Zelenskyy travelled through Poland on his previous foreign trips, but until now had not made it his sole destination. The purpose of the journey to Warsaw was primarily to thank a country that has been an international cheerleader for Ukraine, as well as a safe haven for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and a transit hub for Ukraine-bound humanitarian aid and weapons.

The visit highlighted the central European nation’s rising role in a new international security order that has emerged from the war. Poland is seeking to modernize its military by purchasing tanks and other equipment from U.S. and South Korean producers. The United States has also bolstered its military presence in Poland.

Zelensky also was meeting with Ukrainians who have fled to Poland. More than 1.5 million Ukrainians have registered with the Polish government since the war began.

His visit comes at a delicate time, with Polish farmers increasingly angry because Ukrainian grain that has entered the country has created a glut, causing prices to fall.

The grain is only meant to be stored temporarily before being sent to markets in North Africa and the Middle East. But farmers say the grain is taking up space in silos and entering Polish markets, causing local prices to fall. Romanian and Bulgarian farmers say they face the same problem.

That anger is emerging as a headache for Morawiecki’s government ahead of fall elections, particularly since his conservative ruling party, Law and Justice, gets much of its support in rural areas. Agriculture minister Henryk Kowalczyk, the focus of the farmers’ anger, resigned Wednesday.

In Ukraine, the military authorities said Russian forces in the previous 24 hours had launched 47 airstrikes, three missile strikes and 42 attacks from multiple rocket launchers. At least four civilians were killed and 16 others wounded in that period, Zelensky’s office reported.

UN nuclear chief discusses Ukraine nuclear plant in Russia

The head of the U.N.’s atomic energy watchdog met with Russian officials in [*Kaliningrad*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kaliningrad) on Wednesday for negotiations on the safety of Ukraine’s [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) nuclear power plant, currently held by Russian forces.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi’s trip to the Russian exclave came a week after he visited the plant, which is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe.

“I met high level officials from several Russian agencies in Kaliningrad,” Grossi said on Twitter. “I continue my efforts to protect the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant,” he said, emphasizing that this was “in everyone’s interest.”

[*UN nuclear chief discusses Ukraine nuclear plant in Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-zaporizhzhia-estonia-kaliningrad-b2314761.html)

Blinken says WSJ reporter 'wrongfully detained' by Russia

U.S. Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) said Wednesday he has “no doubt” that Russia has wrongfully detained an American reporter for The Wall Street Journal who was arrested last week on spying allegations.

However, Blinken said a formal determination of Evan Gershkovich’s wrongful detention has not yet been made, something that would elevate the priority of his case within the U.S. government. Blinken said the legal process for such a determination would be completed soon.

“In Evan’s case we are working through the determination on wrongful detention. There is a process to do that,” he said. “I’ll let that process play out.

“In my mind, there is no doubt that he is being wrongfully detained by Russia,” Blinken told reporters.

Matthew Lee reports:

[*Blinken says WSJ reporter 'wrongfully detained' by Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/antony-blinken-ap-sergey-lavrov-brittney-griner-kremlin-b2314741.html)

As Finland joins its ranks NATO ponders Ukraine's prospects

As [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) joined NATO this week, casting aside a history of military nonalignment, a small but noisy group of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) supporters outside the security fence at the alliance’s headquarters used a loudspeaker system to chant “Ukraine needs NATO,” “Ukraine in NATO,” and “Ukraine needs fighter jets.”

Russia’s war on Ukraine has driven Finland into NATO’s ranks to benefit from its security guarantee that an attack on any one of the now-31 member countries will be met with a response from them all. Sweden, Bosnia, Georgia and — most urgently — Ukraine, want in, too.

At their summit in Lithuania on July 11-12, U.S. President Joe Biden and his counterparts want to offer Ukraine something more, something stronger, in line with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s expectations more than a year into a war that has killed tens of thousands and driven millions from their homes. The question, NATO diplomats say, is: What, exactly?

Read the full story:

[*As Finland joins its ranks NATO ponders Ukraine's prospects*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/nato-ap-ukraine-jens-stoltenberg-russia-b2314613.html)

Russia's Lavrov to discuss Ukraine, grain and energy in visit to Turkey

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu will discuss the conflict in Ukraine, energy cooperation and the Black Sea grain deal during a two-day visit by a Russian delegation this week.

Turkey has positioned itself as a potential intermediary between Kyiv and Moscow in the 13-month conflict, brokering the only significant diplomatic breakthrough so far in the shape of a deal that facilitates exports of grain from Ukraine’s Black Sea ports despite a Russian blockade.

Russia’s foreign ministry said on Wednesday that Mr Lavrov and Mr Cavusoglu would use the visit on Thursday and Friday to touch base on the “situation in Ukraine” as well as consult on a wide range of regional and international issues.

“The ministers will exchange views on the current state of the Ukraine crisis, discuss the principles and means of a peaceful settlement of the conflict -which is only possible if Kyiv takes into account Russian interests and concerns,” the ministry said.

Moscow has said it is open to negotiations, but that Kyiv, must recognise the “new realities” of the conflict -namely Russia’s unilateral annexation of four Ukrainian regions last year and Crimea in 2014.

President Zelensky has said he will not discuss a ceasefire until Russian troops have left every inch of Ukrainian territory.

Moscow said Mr Lavrov and Mr Cavusoglu would also discuss the state of the grain deal -which Russia said last month it would extend for 60 days despite the United Nations, Ukraine and Turkey pushing for a repeat 120-day rollover.

Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan said a week ago that Russian president Vladimir Putin could visit in April for the inauguration of the Russian-built Akkuyu nuclear power plant, but the Kremlin has said there are no plans for a visit

Macron says China could play ‘major role’ in Ukraine peace as he arrives in Beijing

[*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) said [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) can “play a major role” towards establishing “peace” amid [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , in his first remarks while on a visit to the country.

The French president reached Beijing on Wednesday with a delegation of 50 people, including business executives, filmmakers, artists and EU chief [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) , for a three-day visit.

This is Mr Macron’s first trip to China since 2019 and has been widely billed as an attempt to engage with Chinese president [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) on hastening the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine by wielding his influence with Vladimir Putin.

Shweta Sharma reports:

[*Macron says China could play ‘major role’ in Ukraine peace as he arrives in Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/macron-china-visit-russia-ukraine-peace-b2314595.html)

Poland scraps fencing event because of Russian participation

A fencing World Cup event in Poland has been cancelled because the sport’s governing body decided last month to let Russians and [*Belarusians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) compete.

The Polish Fencing Association said Wednesday it will not host the Olympic qualifying event for women’s foil from April 21-23 in Poznan.

Last month, the International Fencing Federation voted to allow athletes from Russia and Belarus to resume competing after an exclusion of more than a year.

Read the full story:

[*Poland scraps fencing event because of Russian participation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/poland-ap-warsaw-belarus-poznan-b2314634.html)

Russia says it will ignore media lobbying for release of arrested US reporter

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told journalists on Wednesday that Moscow would ignore a letter from media organisations urging the release of a U.S. reporter accused of espionage, saying it was hypocritical.

Blinken says U.S. working on "wrongful detention" label for WSJ reporter

The United States is working through the process to determine if Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich’s detention by Russia is “wrongful”, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday, adding that it would soon be completed.

“It’s something that we’re working through very deliberately, but expeditiously as well. And I’ll let that process play out. In my own mind, there’s no doubt that he’s being wrongfully detained by Russia,” Mr Blinken said at a press conference in Brussels.

Russia complains that West has not expressed concern over blogger killing

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova complained on Wednesday that Western countries had not expressed concern over the killing of a military blogger with a bomb in St Petersburg on Sunday, which Russia has called an act of terrorism.

Zelensky visits Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Poland state visit

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during a state visit in Poland on Wednesday.

Mr Zelensky attended wreath laying ceremony at the Pilsudski Square in Warsaw and lay a wreath in the colours of the Ukrainian flag on the tomb, before signing a commemorative book.

Future NATO membership has to be based on independent, democratic Ukraine -Stoltenberg

NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday Ukraine’s future membership of the alliance had to be based on the country being independent and democratic, which is now challenged by Russia’s invasion.

Stoltenberg told a media briefing after a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels that Ukrainian forces should have the highest possible level of interoperability with the alliance when the war ended.

US envoy demands journalist's release in call with Russian counterpart

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on Wednesday she had spoken with her Russian counterpart Vassily Nebenzia to demand the immediate release of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich.

Mr Gershkovich was arrested and charged with espionage in Russia last week. Thomas-Greenfield said she spoke with Mr Nebenzia on Tuesday.

Russia's Belarus nuclear threat shows "empty promises" of China statement: Stoltenberg

Russia’s announcement that it will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus shows that a Russia-China joint statement days earlier amounted to “empty promises”, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Wednesday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s announcement came just days after Russia and China jointly declared countries should not deploy nuclear weapons outside their borders, Mr Stoltenberg told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

He said this showed such statements are “empty promises and what we need to watch closely is what Russia is doing.”

Mr Stoltenberg said NATO had not seen any signs so far that Russia was following through on Putin’s announcement.

Putin tells US its support for 2014 revolution led to today's Ukraine situation

Russian president Vladimir Putin told new U.S. ambassador Lynne Tracy in a Kremlin ceremony on Tuesday that U.S. support for a revolution in Ukraine in 2014 had led to the current situation where Russia and Ukraine were in conflict.

He said relations with Washington were in a deep crisis.

Mr Putin also told the European Union’s ambassador at a Kremlin ceremony on Wednesday that relations between Russia and the bloc had “seriously degraded”, and that the EU had initiated a “geopolitical confrontation” with Russia.

To counter China, US trade rep seeks closer ties to allies

The [*Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biden) administration is pressing its case for a new approach to global trade, arguing that America’s traditional reliance on promoting free trade pacts failed to anticipate China’s brass-knuckled brand of capitalism and the possibility a major power like [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) would go to war against one of its trading partners.

In a speech Wednesday at American University, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai is calling for a strategy of what’s known as “friend-shoring’’ — building up supply chains among allied countries and reducing dependence on geopolitical rivals such as [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china). Rising tension with Beijing and supply-chain bottlenecks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the risks of relying too heavily on Chinese suppliers.

[*To counter China, US trade rep seeks closer ties to allies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world-trade-organization-ap-china-biden-washington-b2314602.html)

Russia's Lavrov to visit Turkey for talks April 6-7

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit Turkey on April 6-7 for talks with his Turkish counterpart, ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday.

Poland to give Ukraine 14 MiG-29 fighter jets, says Polish president

Poland will send 14 MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine, the Polish president said on Wednesday during an official visit by his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskiy to Warsaw.

“Four MiG-29s that remained in storage have been handed over to the Ukrainian Armed Forces in recent months. Four MiGs are now being given, so eight in total,” Andrzej Duda told a news conference. “We are ready... to give six more that are currently being prepared. We assume they could be transferred soon.”

Ukraine will take 'corresponding' decisions if troops risk encirclement in Bakhmut -Zelenskiy

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Wednesday the situation in the Ukrainian eastern city of Bakhmut was really difficult and that the “corresponding decisions” would be taken if Kyiv’s troops there risk being encircled by Russian forces.

The Ukrainian leader told a news conference in Poland that most important to him was to protect the lives of soldiers.

Lawyers meet with jailed American reporter in Moscow prison

In case you missed it...

[*Lawyers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lawyers) representing an [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) reporter arrested in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) on spying charges met with him in a [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) prison on Tuesday for the first time since his detention last week and said “his health is good,” according to his employer, The Wall Street Journal.

Evan Gershkovich, 31, was arrested Thursday in [*Yekaterinburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yekaterinburg) , Russia’s fourth-largest city. He is the first U.S. correspondent since the Cold War to be detained on espionage accusations. The Journal has denied the charges.

“Evan’s health is good, and he is grateful for the outpouring of support from around the world. We continue to call for his immediate release,” the Journal’s editor-in-chief, Emma Tucker, said in a note to the newsroom Tuesday. She said the paper was encouraged by the visit.

[*Lawyers meet with jailed American reporter in Moscow prison*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ap-lawyers-moscow-american-russia-b2314232.html)

Russian tycoon Deripaska cleared of contempt of court in London

Russian aluminium tycoon Oleg Deripaska was cleared of contempt of court by London’s High Court on Wednesday in a long-running legal battle with his former business partner.

The founder of aluminium giant Rusal was alleged to have breached an undertaking to the court in a lawsuit brought by former Russian finance minister Vladimir Chernukhin over a joint venture to develop real estate in Moscow.

Chernukhin said Deripaska was in contempt by allowing EN+ Group, which owns a 57% stake in Rusal, to relocate from Jersey to Russia in response to U.S. sanctions.

But Judge Mark Pelling ruled on Wednesday that Chernukhin had not proved his case against Deripaska.

Chernukhin alleged Deripaska breached an undertaking to preserve 45.5 million EN+ shares in Jersey to meet a $95 million debt to Chernukhin, which has since been paid in full.

His lawyer Jonathan Crow argued at a hearing last month that the shares were rendered “worthless” because of the difficulty in enforcing debts against Deripaska in Russia.

But Deripaska, giving evidence by videolink from Moscow, said the shares would have been worthless if EN+ was not redomiciled as the company would have been bankrupted.

In his written ruling, Pelling said the “central premise” of Chernukhin’s case was that the EN+ shares were effectively cancelled when the company was relocated to Russia, which he said was “simply wrong”.

Takeaways from AP's report on elite Russian defector

In October, an officer in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s elite personal security service defected while on a business trip in [*Kazakhstan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kazakhstan).

Now a wanted man in Russia, Gleb Karakulov spoke out for the first time in a series of interviews with the Dossier Center, an investigative group in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) funded by Russian opposition figure [*Mikhail Khodorkovsky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mikhail-khodorkovsky). The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) took steps to review and verify the material.

“Our president has become a war criminal,” said the 35-year-old engineer. “It is time to end this war and stop being silent.”

Karakulov is one of few Russians to flee and go public who have rank, as well as knowledge of intimate details of Putin’s life. Karakulov was a captain in Russia’s secretive Federal Protective Service. or FSO, tasked with setting up secure communications for the Russian president and prime minister.

Read the full story:

[*Takeaways from AP's report on elite Russian defector*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/ap-vladimir-putin-mikhail-khodorkovsky-takeaways-london-b2314501.html)

Macron in China urges 'shared responsibility for peace'

French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday he wants to “engage China toward a shared responsibility for peace” in Ukraine when he meets Chinese leader Xi Jinping this week.French officials said earlier Macron planned to urge Xi in talks Thursday to use Beijing’s influence with Russian President Vladimir Putin but didn’t expect a big shift in the Chinese position.

Emmanuel Macron arrives in China for talks with Xi Jinping over Russia’s war in Ukraine

[*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) arrived at Beijing airport on Wednesday 5 April to begin his state visit to [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china).

The French president touched down ahead of meetings with Chinese president [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) , where discussions about [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are expected to be high on the agenda.

“China is the only country in the world capable of having an immediate and radical impact on the conflict, in one direction or the other,” an official from Mr Macron’s office said ahead of the visit.

Beijing claims to hold a neutral stance on the war, but has previously stressed its “no-limits friendship” with Russia.

Turkish foreign minister will discuss Ukraine war with Russia's Lavrov

Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Wednesday that he will discuss developments in the Ukraine war with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov during his visit to Turkey this week.

Speaking to reporters, Cavusoglu said Ankara is working with the United Nations to solve issues regarding grain and fertiliser exports via the Black Sea.

Cavusoglu also said he was concerned about the warring parties’ preparations for further attacks.

Putin installs ‘perfect replicas of Kremlin office to avoid assassination attempts’

Vladimir Putin installs ‘perfect replicas of his Kremlin office to avoid assassination attempts,’ a former bodyguard of the Russian president has said.

Mr Putin has installed the replicas in order to confuse foreign intelligence so there are no assassination attempts, said former bodyguard Gleb Karakulov.

Mr Karakulov 35, had served as an engineer in the Federal Guard Service (FSO) presidential communications unit and said he has fled Russia over the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The identical offices also mean the Russian president can work from home in secret, Mr Karakulov claimed.

“He has offices in St Petersburg, in Sochi, in Novo-Ogaryovo. They are identical.

“This is, firstly, an attempt to confuse foreign intelligence, so that there are no assassination attempts,” he told Russian opposition media group Dossier Centre.

Novo-Ogaryovo is Mr Putin’s official residence on the outskirts of Moscow.

Mr Karakulov escaped to safety via [*Istanbul*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/istanbul) while on a business trip to [*Kazakhstan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kazakhstan) in October 2022 after accompanying president Putin on more than 180 trips over the past 13 years, labelling the Russian president a ‘paranoid war criminal’.

Mr Karakulov has claimed that president Putin is obsessed with his safety, and he opts to stay “in his bunker” rather than make trips because he is so paranoid about an assassination attempt.

Voices: Proof that Putin’s Ukraine invasion has spectacularly backfired

Finland’s membership of Nato will benefit both the alliance and Helsinki, writesJamie Shea.

[*Proof that Putin’s Ukraine invasion has spectacularly backfired*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-join-nato-vladimir-putin-b2314478.html)

More pictures from Zelensky’s state visit to Poland

Putin officer defects and says ‘paranoid’ president lives in a bunker and is terrified of Covid

A protection officer for [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has defected and labelled the Russian [*president*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) a “paranoid war criminal”.

Gleb Karakulov, 35, had served as an engineer in the Federal Guard Service (FSO) presidential communications unit and said he has fled Russia over the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr Karakulov escaped to safety via [*Istanbul*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/istanbul) while on a business trip to [*Kazakhstan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kazakhstan) in October 2022 after accompanying president Putin on more than 180 trips over the past 13 years. It is unclear where the 35-year-old is now.

Martha McHardy reports:

[*Putin officer says ‘paranoid’ president lives in bunker and is terrified of Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

Ukraine's Zelenskiy visits Poland as allies step up military aid

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy visited Poland on Wednesday, buoyed by the latest announcement of U.S. military aid, as Russian troops pressed on with their long and costly battle to seize the eastern city of Bakhmut.

Zelenskiy planned to thank his Polish allies, who have provided vital weaponry to his government since Russia’s invasion and have taken in millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

French president Emmanuel Macron, meanwhile, was visiting China after he and U.S. President Joe Biden agreed they would try to engage Beijing to hasten the end of the Russian assault on Ukraine, now in its second year.

The West has stepped up aid as Ukrainian forces prepare to mount a counteroffensive in the east against Russian forces, although when exactly it might kick off has not been disclosed.

Spain said six Leopard 2A4 tanks it has promised to send to Ukraine would leave the country in the second half of April, later than initially planned. Spain has also trained 40 tank crew members and 15 mechanics at a military base in the northeastern city of Zaragoza.

Other NATO countries, including Germany, Poland and Portugal, have promised to send a total of 48 Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine.

The battlefield focus remained on Bakhmut, a mining city and transport hub on the edge of a chunk of Donetsk province largely under Russian control. Both sides have suffered huge casualties and much of the city has been reduced to ruins after months of street fighting and bombardments.

Near the town of Niu-York, 50 km (30 miles) south of Bakhmut, Ukrainian soldiers in muddy dugouts described repelling Russian attacks on a daily basis.

Ukrainian military commanders have stressed the importance of holding Bakhmut and other towns and inflicting losses prior to the anticipated counteroffensive.

Mercenaries from the Wagner group -who have spearheaded the assault on Bakhmut -said at the weekend they had captured the city centre, a claim dismissed by Kyiv.

In pictures: President Zelensky and wife visit Poalnd on state visit

Watch: Finland joins Nato as war in Ukraine continues

Zelensky to meet president and PM and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on Poland state visit

Ukrainian presdient Volodymyr Zelensky will meet president Andrzej Duda and prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on a rare state visit to Poland with his wife.

Mr Zelensky is to meet Mr Duda and Mr Morawiecki, attend an economic forum focused on the reconstruction of Ukraine and meet some of the Ukrainians who have found refuge in Poland.

Poland has been a key destination for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, particularly those who want to remain close because they plan to return or want to be able to visit loved ones.

More than 1.5 million Ukrainians have registered with the Polish government since the war began, joining large numbers of Ukrainians who had already arrived in recent years for work.

The exact number of Ukrainians present in the country at any given moment is impossible to measure, especially with many going back and forth.

Mr Zelensky has travelled through Poland on his other trips but until now has not made Poland the focus of one his trips.

Zelensky and wife welcomed to Poland on rare state visit

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and his wife have been welcomed with military honours in Poland at the start of a state visit.

The trip is a rare foray for Mr Zelensky out of Ukraine since Russia unleased the war in February 2022 and is meant as a gesture of thanks to Poland for supporting Ukraine’s defence.

While it follows visits to the United States, Britain, France and Belgium, it stands out from the others because it was announced in advance without the secrecy of past visits.

It is also unusual that the president is joined by the first lady, Olena Zelenska.

Marcin Przydacz, the head of Polish president Andrzej Duda’s foreign policy office, described it as Mr Zelensky’s first visit of this kind since the war began.

The visit shines a light on Poland’s rising international role in a new security order that is emerging after Russia’s aggression against Ukraine.

Poland, a member of Nato and the European Union, is modernising its military with orders of tanks and other equipment from US and South Korean producers, while the United States has beefed up its military presence in Poland.

Warsaw has been a key ally for Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale invasion last year, also becoming a hub for humanitarian aid and weapons to move into Ukraine.

ICYMI: Suspect in Russia cafe bombing that killed pro-Putin blogger charged with terror offences

A 26-year-old woman has been charged with terrorism offences in Russia over a [*bombing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bombing) that killed [*a pro-war military blogger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-finland-nato-b2313588.html).

Footage released by the Russian interior ministry on Monday [*appeared to show*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/darya-trepova-vladlen-tatarsky-bomb-putin-b2313148.html) Darya Trepova admitting to [*bringing a statuette to the restaurant in St Petersburg,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/st-petersburg-female-assassin-vladlen-tatarsky-b2312967.html) which blew up, also allegedly injuring 42 others.

She did not say that she knew there would be an [*explosion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/explosion) or who had given her the object.

While it is unclear whether her account was given under duress, Ms Trepova’s husband told Russian website SVTV News that – despite being against the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) – his wife “would never kill” and “was framed”.

[*Russia charges St Petersburg cafe bombing suspect with terror offences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-cafe-bombing-suspect-charged-terrorism-b2314177.html)

EU lashes out at China for support of Russia in Ukraine war

The European Union’s foreign policy chief on Tuesday lashed out at [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) for its support of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) amid the invasion of Ukraine and called it “a blatant violation” of [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) ‘s United Nations commitments.

“There cannot be siding with the aggressor,” [*Josep Borrell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/josep-borrell) said. “There is a clear expectation from a permanent member of the (U.N.) Security Council to stand up in defense of international rules-based order and China as a moral duty to contribute to a fair peace.”

Standing alongside visiting U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Borrell was forceful in his condemnation of a nation that has increasingly moved from being a partner to being a rival on the global stage.

Raf Casert reports:

[*EU lashes out at China for support of Russia in Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-ap-beijing-josep-borrell-russia-b2313781.html)

Polish agriculture minister resigns amid anger over Ukrainian grain imports

Polish Agriculture Minister Henryk Kowalczyk will resign from his post, he said on Wednesday, amid rising anger among farmers over the impact of Ukrainian grain imports on prices.

In pictures: In Ukraine, the grief-stricken bear the pain of war

Spanish Leopard tanks to leave to Ukraine in second half of April -Defence Minister

The six Leopard 2A4 tanks Spain committed to send to Ukraine will leave the country in the second half of April, defence minister Margarita Robles said on Wednesday in an interview on 24H TV station.

She added the country’s army services are working on four additional tanks to make them ready for combat and possibly send them to Ukraine too.

Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he only has himself to blame

Russia’s President Vladimir Putin will not be happy with [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) becoming the 31st member of [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato). The date is significant – 4 April – which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Nato treaty 74 years ago, writes Jamie Shea.

Yet Putin has only himself to blame for this most significant enlargement of the Western alliance in some time.

Before Putin invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) last year, barely 30 per cent of Finns wanted their country to join Nato.

Finland was largely comfortable with the dense network of security partnerships that it had devised since the end of the Cold War: close cooperation with Nato, participation in the EU’s common security and defence policy and military integration with its neighbour, Sweden, and the other Nordic partners.

[*Analysis: Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he can only blame himself*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-russia-nato-membership-putin-b2313988.html)

Zelensky arrives in Poland to deepen ties with key Western ally

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in neighbouring Poland on Wednesday, a Polish presidential aide said, as he begins an official visit to a close ally that has galvanised Western military and political support for Kyiv.

The visit, which was announced this week by Poland but has not been officially confirmed by Kyiv, comes with Ukraine planning to conduct a counter-offensive in the coming weeks or months to recapture occupied land in its east and south.

“I can say that President Zelensky has crossed the Polish border,” Marcin Przydacz told private broadcaster TVN24 on Wednesday.

In televised comments on Tuesday ahead of the visit, Przydacz had said the visit “should be taken as a sign of trust and of thanking Poland and Poles”.

Poland has taken in more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** over the past 13 months of war. The NATO member has also played an important role in persuading other Western powers to supply battle tanks and other weaponry to Ukraine.

Military deliveries have been vital for Ukraine to fend off and fight back Russian forces that poured over the Ukrainian border in February 2022. Swathes of Ukraine remain occupied in the south and the east.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov said on Tuesday that Kyiv was grateful to Poland for clearing the way for deliveries of MiG fighter jets. Przydacz said earlier this week the first MiGs had already been delivered to Ukraine.

“MiGs from Poland will significantly strengthen our defence, allow us to make our skies safer, save the lives of our citizens and also reduce the destruction caused by Russian attacks,” Reznikov wrote on Telegram.

Zelensky will meet President Andrzej Duda and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on the trip, and speak to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and Polish members of the public, Przydacz said.

“It will not be a surprise to anyone that the Ukrainian side will ask Poland and other foreign partners for more support... but we must be aware that we as Poland have already really done a lot,” he said.

Poland has said talks will focus on developments on Ukrainian front lines, international support and economic cooperation, he said.

Ukraine‘s presidential office has not said anything in advance about the trip or what it will focus on.

Ukrainian drone crashes near Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant

A Ukrainian drone has crashed near the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Russia‘s RIA news agency cited a Russian officer as saying on Wednesday, as the chief of the global nuclear watchdog was expected in Russia for talks on the plant’s security.

International Atomic Energy Agency head Rafael Grossi was due to travel to Russia‘s Kaliningrad region on Wednesday, a week after visiting the Zaporizhzhia facility in southern Ukraine, which is controlled by Russian forces.

According to the Russian military officer cited by RIA, a Polish-made drone weighing more than 2 kg (4.4 pounds) had crashed near the plant. The news agency did not say when.

Grossi has been pushing for a demilitarised zone around Europe’s largest nuclear facility, which has come under repeated shelling, with Russia and Ukraine have blamed on each other.

Russian foreign ministry claims Finland has ‘lost its special voice in international affairs'

Russia's foreign ministry has claimed that, in dropping non-alignment, Finland was committing a dangerous historical mistake that would fray relations with Moscow and undo its status as a confidence-building presence in the Baltic Sea and Europe at large.

“This is now a thing of the past. Finland has become one of the small members of [Nato] that doesn’t decide anything, losing its special voice in international affairs. We are sure that history will judge this hasty step,” a ministry statement said.

France boosts military spending amid war in Ukraine

The French government has approved a key budget bill presented as the country’s biggest military spending spree in more than 50 years, underscoring the impact of Russia’s war in Ukraine.

The bill foresees €413bn in military spending or the period covering 2024-2030 – up by more than a third relative to the previous timeframe.

Defence minister Sébastien Lecornu said bill’s political, budgetary, military and technological drive is comparable to the huge push in the 1960s that saw France develop nuclear weapons, making the country one of the world’s major military powers.

Championed by French President Emmanuel Macron, the bill would notably modernise France’s nuclear arsenal, boost intelligence spending by 60 per cent, double the number of military reservists, reinforce cyberdefense and develop more remote-controlled weapons.

It would also boost the arms industry’s production capacity in order to provide assistance to Ukraine and adequately supply the French military.

[*France boosts military spending amid war in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/france-ap-russia-emmanuel-macron-ukraine-b2313906.html)

Zelensky heads to Poland to deepen ties with key Western ally

Volodymyr Zelensky is expected to reach Poland shortly as he looks to thank one of Ukraine’s staunchest allies.

Poland has played a key role in galvanising Western military and political support for Kyiv against Russia’s full-scale invasion.

“(The visit) should be taken as a sign of trust and of thanking Poland and Poles,” Polish presidential foreign policy adviser Marcin Przydacz said in televised comments yesterday evening, ahead of Mr Zelensky’s expected arrival.

The visit, which was announced this week by Poland but has not been officially confirmed by Kyiv, comes with Ukraine planning to conduct a counter-offensive in the coming weeks or months to recapture occupied land in its east and south.

Poland has taken in more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** over the past 13 months of war.

The Nato member has also played an important role in persuading other Western powers to supply battle tanks and other weaponry to Ukraine.

Hopeful Zelensky welcomes Finland’s entry into Nato

Volodymyr Zelensky has welcomed Finland’s entry into Nato, cheering on the strengthening of the alliance.

“Today, by the way, a historic event took place for our region, for all of Europe, for the entire Euro-Atlantic community. Finland becomes the 31st member of Nato. The alliance is getting stronger on the eastern flank,” he said in his nightly address.

Mr Zelensky congratulated all the people of Finland and the country’s president “personally on a reliable security guarantee – a collective guarantee”.

“Russian aggression clearly proves that only collective guarantees, only preventive guarantees can be reliable. That’s what we always talked about. We also talked about speed – the speed of security decisions matters. Now we can see how fast the procedures can be,” he said.

He added: “By the way, this year’s Nato Summit in Vilnius deserves to be quite ambitious. The more ambitious the one who protects freedom, the less opportunities for aggression the one who wants evil has. The day will come when security will be guaranteed for our country as well.”

Putin officer defects and says ‘paranoid’ president lives in a bunker

A protection officer for Vladimir Putin has defected and labelled the Russian president a “paranoid war criminal”.

Gleb Karakulov, 35, had served as an engineer in the Federal Guard Service (FSO) presidential communications unit and said he has fled Russia over the war in Ukraine.

The former FSO officer claims president Putin opts to stay “in his bunker” rather than make trips because he is so paranoid about an assassination attempt. The Russian president also allegedly travels with a 2.5 metre-high box to prevent his secret talks from leaking and Western bugging.

Mr Karakulov escaped to safety via Istanbul while on a business trip to Kazakhstan in October 2022 after accompanying president Putin on more than 180 trips over the past 13 years. It is unclear where the 35-year-old is now.

Read the full story here:

[*Putin officer says ‘paranoid’ president lives in bunker and is terrified of Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

Watch: Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin 'war criminal'

Lawyers meet with jailed WSJ reporter in Russian prison

Lawyers representing an American reporter arrested in Russia on spying charges met with him in a Moscow prison yesterday for the first time since his detention last week and said “his health is good,” according to his employer, The Wall Street Journal.

Evan Gershkovich, 31, was arrested on Thursday in Yekaterinburg, Russia’s fourth-largest city.

He is the first US correspondent since the Cold War to be detained on espionage accusations. The Journal has denied the charges.

“Evan’s health is good, and he is grateful for the outpouring of support from around the world. We continue to call for his immediate release,” the Journal’s editor-in-chief, Emma Tucker, said in a note to the newsroom on Tuesday. She said the paper was encouraged by the visit.

Read the full story here:

[*Lawyers meet with jailed American reporter in Moscow prison*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ap-lawyers-moscow-american-russia-b2314232.html)

Ukrainian fighters describe Bakhmut battle: ‘They creep in, fire’

Ukrainian forces placed in the muddy dugouts have described the battlefield situation in Bakhmut where dozens of Russian artillery and missile attacks continue on a daily basis.

Near the town of Niu-York, 50 km south of Bakhmut, a commander of an infantry unit explains: “They creep in, fire and try to exhaust us. Then they evaluate the situation and can move forward for a little more".

"Meanwhile, we try to let them get closer to us so that we can hit them more precisely,” the military commander who gave his nom-de-guerre as "Bodia" told Reuters.

Earlier this week, the chief of Russia’s Wagner mercenary force, Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed that his forces have “legally” captured the mining city and logistics hub but Ukraine swiftly denied the reports and said that the fighting continues.

Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled

Ukrainian commanders leading the charge in the bitter battle for Bakhmut have said that the relentless attacks from Russia have continued.

“In the Bakhmut sector, there was no let-up in enemy actions aimed at storming the city of Bakhmut. At least 20 enemy attacks were repelled here alone over the past 24 hours,” the Ukrainian general staff said in a report on Facebook.

At least tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides have been killed in the Russian invasion of Ukraine that started in February last year.

The battle for Bakhmut has been one of the bloodiest of the conflict, with heavy casualties on both sides and the city largely destroyed.

Mike Pompeo warns of Putin’s ‘broader war in Europe'

Former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo has warned against larger threats from Vladimir Putin to Europe if Russia wins the war against Ukraine after he returned from his visit to the war-hit nation yesterday.

“I’ve just left Ukraine. I’ve seen the damage caused by Putin’s invasion. And I’ve been inspired by the bravery of the Ukrainian people. One thing is clear: helping Ukraine end this war is in America’s core interest,” Mr Pompeo said.

He added: “Supporting Ukraine isn’t about abstract ideals like ‘global democracy’: it’s about strengthening OUR national and economic security.”

“If Putin wins, he’ll control critical exports to the US. And he’ll be on the brink of a broader war in Europe. We can’t let that happen,” the former top US official from Donald Trump administration said.

Lauding the Ukrainian people for enduring “indescribable suffering”, Mr Pompeo said that the “resilient” people are “not asking for American troops—just our support”.

We should give it to them, Mr Pompeo said.

Visuals from the former director of the CIA visit showed him dressed in casual attire and interacting with locals and children in Ukraine at a site of the attack as a building hollowed out likely in an artillery attack appeared in the backdrop.

Mr Pompeo said he had travelled to Ukraine with a delegation of US businessmen and representatives of several humanitarian institutions. He visited a military hospital and also met Ukrainian government officials.

Britain blocks UN webcast of Russian meeting on Ukraine

Britain has blocked the UN webcast of an informal Security Council meeting on Ukraine on Wednesday at which Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights – who the International Criminal Court wants to arrest on war crimes charges – is due to speak, diplomats said.

Russia had told council members that the discussion about Ukraine will focus on “evacuating children from conflict zone” and signalled that commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova would feature.

Such meetings are held at UN headquarters, but not in the Security Council chamber, and briefings can be done virtually. All 15 council members have to agree to allow it to be webcast by the United Nations.

Britain blocked the webcast because Russia would not confirm who would brief, diplomats said on Tuesday. Russia’s Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy confirmed Britain’s move on Twitter.

“Russia will from now on block UN webcasts of all similar meetings citing ‘UK censorship clause’,” Polyanskiy wrote. Later on Tuesday Russia confirmed that Lvova-Belova would speak at the briefing.

Diplomats have said it is rare for a U.N. webcast to be blocked. However, last month China blocked the UN webcast of a US-convened informal Security Council meeting on human rights abuses in North Korea.

Moscow hosts talks aimed at Syria-Turkey rapprochement

Senior diplomats from Russia, Turkey, Syria and Iran wrapped up two days of talks in Moscow on Tuesday, part of the Kremlin’s efforts to help broker a rapprochement between the Turkish and Syrian governments.

The Russian and Turkish foreign ministries issued terse readouts, saying diplomats discussed preparations for a planned meeting of the four countries’ foreign ministers. Moscow described the consultations as “frank and direct,” and Ankara said they were held in a “transparent and clear manner,” while offering no details.

The talks in Moscow were held as UN-mediated negotiations aimed at reaching a political solution to Syria’s conflict have stalled.

[*Moscow hosts talks aimed at Syria-Turkey rapprochement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/syria-ap-turkey-moscow-bashar-assad-b2314193.html)

Russia’s Lavrov accuses US of trying to ‘torpedo’ Moscow’s upcoming African summit

Russia’s foreign minister has accused Washington of trying to wreck Russia’s planned summit with African countries as part of efforts to isolate Moscow.

Moscow is preparing for its second summit with African countries, scheduled for the end of July in St Petersburg, including work on infrastructure, technology and energy projects.

Sergei Lavrov told the news site Argumenty i Fakty that Moscow was different from Western countries in its relations with Africa in that “we never tell our foreign partners how they are supposed to live,” claiming: “We have no secret agenda.”

“It is true that the United States and its vassals are doing everything possible to achieve Russia’s international isolation,” Mr Lavrov told the website. “In particular, they are trying to torpedo the planned second Russia-Africa summit ... to persuade our African friends not to take part.”

He claimed, however, that the chances of damaging the conference were diminishing as “fewer and fewer people are now willing to pull out all the stops for former colonial powers”, saying: “Attempts to interfere in our cooperation with countries for the global South and East will therefore continue, but success is far from guaranteed.”

The US State Department did not address Lavrov’s accusations directly, but said in a statement that Washington was pursuing strong relationships with African countries “to address the shared challenges we face. Our Africa policy is about Africa.”

Full report: Suspect in Russia cafe bombing charged with terror offences

A 26-year-old woman has been charged with terrorism offences in Russia over a bombing that killed a military blogger who had been a high-profile cheerleader for Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.

Footage released by the Russian interior ministry on Monday appeared to show Darya Trepova admitting to bringing a statuette to the restaurant in St Petersburg, which blew up, also allegedly injuring 42 others. She did not say that she knew there would be an explosion or who had given her the object.

While it is unclear whether her account was given under duress, Ms Trepova’s husband told Russian website SVTV News that – despite being against the war in Ukraine – his wife “would never kill” and “was framed”.

But on Tuesday, Russian investigators said they had charged Trepova with committing “a terrorist act by an organised group that caused intentional death” and the “illegal possession of explosive devices by an organised group”.

[*Russia charges St Petersburg cafe bombing suspect with terror offences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-cafe-bombing-suspect-charged-terrorism-b2314177.html)

Russia accuses US of ‘increasing civilian casualties’ with new military aid package

The Russian embassy in Washington has reacted to the Pentagon’s announcement of $2.6bn of military aid for Ukraine by accusing the United States of wanting to drag out the conflict as long as possible.

“The decision to supply weapons to Kyiv is a step towards escalating the Ukrainian crisis and increasing the number of civilian casualties,” Russian news agency Tass cited an embassy statement as saying.

US can protect its values by helping Ukraine, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has told the US National Governors Association that the United States could protect its values by helping Ukraine.

“Our cooperation will allow for the new enhancement of your security, for our economy and yours, for jobs in both our countries,” the Ukrainian president said by video link on Tuesday.

“The main thing is not to lose time, not to lose the chance we have. Act now, help now. Ukrainians act so that Americans don’t have to fight – and together we gain new strength for our countries,” he added.

US unveils £2.6bn in military aid for Ukraine, Pentagon says

The United States has unveiled $2.6bn of military assistance for Ukraine, as Kyiv prepares for its spring counterattack.

The weapons aid package was comprised of $2.1bn from Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funding which allows Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry rather than from US weapons stocks.

The USAI package included additional munitions for NASAMS air defenses that the US and allies have given to Kyiv, precision aerial munitions, Soviet-era GRAD rockets, anti-tank rockets, armored bridging systems used in assaults, and 105 fuel trailers, along with funding for training and maintenance.

The remaining $500m came from Presidential Drawdown Authority funds, which allows the president to take from current U.S. stocks in an emergency.

That segment of the package included a half a dozen types of munitions, including munitions for Patriot air defense systems, tank munitions, and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

US journalist jailed by Russia meet lawyers for first time

Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich has met his lawyers for the first time since being arrested and charged with espionage in Russia last week, editor-in-chief Emma Tucker has said in a message to staff.

“Evan’s health is good, and he is grateful for the outpouring of support from around the world,” Ms Tucker said in the letter, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

“Evan’s family ... are relieved to know we finally have contact with Evan,” she said, adding she was encouraged by the meeting. Last Thursday a Moscow court remanded Gershkovich in pre-trial detention until May 29 on charges that carry a prison term of up to 20 years.

He has appealed the detention through his lawyers, as Washington said it was pushing hard to secure his release. The Wall Street Journal denies the charges. The Kremlin said last week, without providing evidence, that Gershkovich had been “caught red-handed”.

“We continue to call for his immediate release. The legal avenue is one of several avenues we are working to advocate for Evan’s release,” said Ms Tucker.

First Polish MiG-29 fighter jets arrive in Ukraine

The first MiG-29 fighter jets sent from Poland have arrived in Ukraine in a major escalation of military backing for Kyiv, my colleague [*Mary-Kate Findonreports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-polish-mig-fighter-jet-b2314041.html%22%20title=%22First%20Polish%20MiG-29%20fighter%20jets%20arrive%20in%20Ukraine).

Poland and Slovakia became the first Western countries to announce the shipment of 41 MiG-29s to the war-torn country.

The move is anticipated to start a precedent that could lead to other Nato allies sending fighter jets.

Analysis | Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he only has himself to blame

Jamie Shea writes:

Russia’s president Vladimir Putin will not be happy with Finland becoming the 31st member of Nato. The date is significant – 4 April – which marks the anniversary of the signing of the Nato treaty 74 years ago.

Yet Putin has only himself to blame for this most significant enlargement of the Western alliance in some time.

Before Putin invaded Ukraine last year, barely 30 per cent of Finns wanted their country to join Nato. Finland was largely comfortable with the dense network of security partnerships that it had devised since the end of the Cold War: close cooperation with Nato, participation in the EU’s common security and defence policy and military integration with its neighbour, Sweden, and the other Nordic partners.

Yet overnight public support for joining Nato shot up to around 80 per cent, and has stayed there ever since. Nato membership did not feature as an issue in last weekend’s Finnish elections despite the broad spectrum of parties participating. So, what has changed? Essentially two things.

Read the full analysis here:

[*Analysis: Putin will be angry Finland has joined Nato – but he can only blame himself*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-russia-nato-membership-putin-b2313988.html)

Suspect in killing of Russian war blogger charged with terrorism

Russian investigators have charged 26-year-old Darya Trepova with terrorist offences over the killing of pro-war blogger Vladlen Tatarsky in a bomb blast in St Petersburg, and remanded her in pre-trial detention.

Tatarsky, a cheerleader for Russia’s military campaign in Ukraine whose real name was Maxim Fomin, was killed on Sunday in a cafe where he was due to talk.

Russia’s Investigative Committee said it had charged Ms Trepova with committing “a terrorist act by an organised group that caused intentional death”. The charges carry a maximum jail term of 20 years. It claimed she had acted under instructions from people working on behalf of Ukraine.

Russia’s health ministry said 40 other people had been injured in the blast, and 25 were still in hospital on Tuesday morning.

Ms Trepova was transferred from St Petersburg to Moscow, where the Basmanny district court remanded her in custody on Tuesday until 2 June, Russian news agencies reported.

Subject of ICC arrest warrant denies claims she unlawfully deported children to Russia

Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights has rejected International Criminal Court (ICC) allegations that she is responsible for unlawfully deporting children from Ukraine.

The ICC has issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and children’s commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova for the war crime of hundreds of children allegedly being taken from orphanages and children’s care homes in areas of Ukraine claimed by Russia. Some children, the ICC said, had been given up for adoption in Russia.

But Ms Lvova-Belova told reporters on Tuesday that her commission had acted on humanitarian grounds to protect children in a militarised area, and had not moved anyone against their will or that of their parents or legal guardians, whose consent was always sought unless they were missing.

Children were not given up for adoption but were placed with temporary legal guardians in foster homes, she insisted.

“As far as the ICC’s accusations are concerned, we don’t understand what we are accused of. Give us the facts and we will look into it. So far, it all looks like a farce without specifics and is incomprehensible,” she said.

The ICC had not submitted any documents to her office, Ms Lvova-Belova said, noting that Russia did not recognise the court’s jurisdiction anyway. Ukraine has not sent any official requests regarding children allegedly separated from their parents, she claimed.

UN council extends Ukraine inquiry into crimes since Russia's invasion

The United Nations Human Rights Council has overwhelmingly voted in favour of extending the mandate of an investigative body probing possible war crimes committed since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Twenty-eight countries voted in favour of extending the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine by a year. Seventeen abstained and two voted against the body, which Ukraine says is essential for keeping Russia accountable for its crimes.

“The scope and brutality of Russia’s atrocities in Ukraine are simply beyond any human comprehension,” Ukraine’s ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Yevheniia Filipenko, told the Council ahead of the vote.

“We strongly believe that the continued work of the Commission in further investigating, documenting and reporting human rights violations and international crimes committed against the people in Ukraine could save more innocent lives (and) could contribute to accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims.”

In a report published last month, the commission found that some crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture and attacks against the country’s energy infrastructure, could constitute crimes against humanity.

Watch: Finland joins Nato

Biden urges Turkey and Hungary to approve Sweden’s Nato bid ‘without delay’

Joe Biden has welcomed Finland’s accession to Nato, and urged Turkey and Hungary to conclude their ratification processes for Sweden to join the military alliance “without delay”.

“I look forward to welcoming Sweden as a Nato member as soon as possible,” the US president said in a statement.

Finland joining Nato is ‘direct result of Putin’s aggression’, says UK

Finland’s accession to Nato is a “direct result” of Vladimir Putin’s aggression and demonstrates the strength of the alliance, Britain’s foreign secretary has said.

Mr Cleverly, who was at Nato’s headquarters, said: “Today we see, as a direct result of Vladimir Putin’s aggression and his illegal invasion of Ukraine, the day where a new ally joins our defensive alliance.”

He added: “Russia thought its aggression would divide us. Instead, we are bound tighter together, resolute in our defence of the principles of freedom and the rule of law. Let us be clear that our door remains open. We will welcome further allies with open arms and we continue to push for Sweden’s swift accession.”

Calling it “a historic day”, prime minister Rishi Sunak said Finnish membership “made our alliance stronger and every one of us safer”, adding: “All Nato members now need to take the steps necessary to admit Sweden too, so we can stand together as one alliance to defend freedom in Europe and across the world.”

Defence secretary Ben Wallace said the tectonic shift should “be a lesson to President Putin”, adding: “Finland chose to join, based on their own free will. The freedom to choose their alliances as a sovereign state is a matter for their citizens and their citizens alone.”

[*Finland joining Nato is ‘direct result of Putin’s aggression’, says UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/finland-rishi-sunak-james-cleverly-sweden-nato-b2313944.html)

West should not ‘provoke Moscow’ as tactical nuclear weapons to move to Belarus, says Russian official

The West should acknowledge realities after Russia’s decision to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and not “provoke Moscow”, deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov has said.

The senior Russian official claimed on Tuesday that Russia had gained new opportunities to guarantee its security after suspending its participation in the New START nuclear arms control treaty, the TASS news agency reported.

Lukashenko to join Putin in Moscow for two-day talks

Belarussian president Alexander Lukashenko will travel to Moscow on Wednesday for two days of talks with Vladimir Putin, according to the Kremlin.

Russia’s defence minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday that Moscow was boosting Belarus’s nuclear capabilities in response to Finland joining Nato.

Last week, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov that the two presidents would discuss Mr Lukashenko’s call for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine at an upcoming face-to-face meeting.

In an anouncement on Tuesday, the Kremlin said the pair would discuss “topical bilateral and international issues” on Wednesday, before a meeting on Thursday of the Supreme Council of the Union State.

Russia and Belarus are formally part of a Union State, a borderless union and alliance between the two ex-Soviet countries, though long-standing plans for closer integration of their economies have repeatedly stalled.

Finland’s president hails ‘great day’ for his country as it joins Nato

Finland’s president has said that “it is a great day for Finland” and “an important day for Nato” as his country joined the military alliance.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Nato general secretary Jens Stoltenberg, Mr Niinisto said Finland’s most significant contribution to Nato’s common deterrence and defence would be to defend its own territory.

There is still significant work to be done to coordinate this with Nato, he said.

Full report: Finland joins Nato, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

My colleagueLiam Jameshas more details on Finland’s accession to Nato in this breaking report, which you can refresh for updates:

[*Finland joins Nato, doubling alliance’s border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/finland-nato-russia-brussels-border-b2313909.html)

Breaking: Finland joins Nato

Finland has officially joined Nato, doubling the military alliance’s border with Russia and dealing a significant blow to president Vladimir Putin.

Finland’s membership became official when its foreign minister handed over documents completing its accession process to US secretary of state Antony Blinken.

The US State Department is the repository of Nato texts concerning membership.

Russia has warned that it would be forced to take “retaliatory measures” to address what it called security threats created by Finland’s membership, and that it will bolster forces near Finland if Nato sends any additional troops or equipment to what will be its 31st member country.

Watch: Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin 'war criminal'

Putin officer defects and says ‘paranoid’ president lives in a bunker and is terrified of Covid

More now from my colleague Martha McHardy on the interview given by a former protection officer of Vladimir Putin...

[*Putin officer says ‘paranoid’ president lives in bunker and is terrified of Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/world/vladimir-putin-russia-war-criminal-b2313828.html)

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[*Ireland minister: `The world is a crazy and tragic place'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673D-WY51-JBNF-W3HB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Edith M. Lederer

**Highlight:** Ireland’s foreign minister says “the world is a crazy and tragic place at the moment.”

**Body**

Ireland’s foreign minister says “the world is a crazy and tragic place at the moment,” pointing to the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and other conflicts, looming famine in the Horn of Africa, Iran’s expanding nuclear program, global impacts of climate change and a polarized U.N. Security Council as some of the major challenges.

In a wide-ranging interview Wednesday with The Associated Press, Simon Coveney also addressed problems closer to home, saying he hopes that quiet ongoing negotiations between [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) , Ireland and the European Commission can resolve difficult Brexit issues by April 10, the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which largely ended three decades of sectarian violence in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) in which more than 3,000 people died.

Coveney, who came to New York as Ireland is nearing the end of its two-year term on the Security Council, called his country’s experience on the U.N.’s most powerful body “one of frustration at times,” saying there are examples of the council achieving “good things, but unfortunately, there are many more examples where the Security Council has failed.”

He cited its failure “over and over again” to protect vulnerable people around the world, its failure to adopt a single resolution on the war in Ukraine because of Russia’s veto power, and the council’s membership which reflects the post-World War II world not today’s global powers, and importantly has no permanent seat for an African country.

Coveney said history will also be “a very harsh judge” of a lot of countries for what has been allowed to happen during the 11-year war in Syria, “and the human suffering that has flowed from that.”

He said Ireland and Norway are trying to renew a resolution that expires Jan. 9 before they leave the council at the end of December that would continue U.N. authorization for humanitarian aid to be delivered from Turkey to rebel-held northwest Syria where 4.5 million people --“almost the population of Ireland” --need food, medicine, tents and education for their children.

“I think we can get it done,” Coveney said. “I don’t want to say that with too much confidence because, of course, ultimately, this is up to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) to decide.” Russia, Syria’s closest ally, has sought to reduce cross-border aid, with the aim of eliminating it, using its veto threat — and deliveries are now limited to a single crossing for just six months.

“And let’s hope that we find a way of bringing the madness of war in Ukraine to an end in a much, much shorter timeframe than has happened in Syria, or in Yemen,” he said. Civil war in Yemen began in 2014 and is continuing after a six-month truce ended in early October.

When Ireland joined the Security Council in January 2021, Coveney said it never dreamed of the scale of conflict the council would attempt to try to deal with, including in Ethiopia which is “hardly in the news,” in Afghanistan where the U.S. and NATO exit and the Taliban takeover have created “huge suffering and vulnerability for the female population,” and in Ukraine.

As a foreign minister and defense minister, Coveney said he never thought he would see a war in Europe with a level of “brutality and aggression” not seen since World War II where “a military superpower,” decided to try to change international borders by force by invading Ukraine on Feb. 24 and is “now unapologetically and blatantly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure as well, to try and make life impossible in Ukraine.”

The minister said Ireland sees “significant war crimes happening almost on a daily basis” and is supporting the International Criminal Court, which is investigating alleged crimes, both politically and financially.

Ireland is militarily neutral, he said, but it has taken in 65,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and is supporting the Ukrainian military by paying for items including uniforms, fuel, body armor, food and medical supplies.

“So we are part of this war and we want to bring it to an end,” Coveney said.

But he said Russia can’t be allowed to succeed in Europe or anywhere else because “it creates a precedent for other powerful countries to dominate their neighbors militarily,” he said.

Given the sacrifices Ukraine has made --and Coveney estimated at least 250,000 civilians and military have been killed --the world must be guided by what the Ukrainian government can accept when it comes to ending the war, he said.

Coveney expressed hope that through diplomacy and the military reality on the ground, Russia will change course.

“I can assure you that the EU and the U.S. and other partners will not ever abandon Ukraine,” he said.

Closer to home, Coveney spoke of the ongoing Brexit issues following Britain’s 2020 exit from the European Union which upended the open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of Britain, following the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement, and the lifting of trade barriers because Ireland and Britain were both EU members.

When Britain left the EU, an agreement known as the Northern Ireland Protocol was reached to keep the Irish land border free of customs posts and other checks because an open border is a key pillar of the peace deal. But instead, there are checks on some goods entering Northern Ireland from the rest of the United Kingdom.

In May, Northern Ireland elected a new Assembly that saw the Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein that seeks union with Ireland win the most seats for the first time and the Protestant pro-British Democratic Unionist Party coming in second.

But the DUP says the checks on goods undermine their place in the U.K. and have refused to join a power-sharing government until they are scrapped. Under the Good Friday agreement, no government can be formed without agreement of both the biggest unionist and nationalist parties.

Coveney expressed hope “that in the next few weeks we will find a way to make the protocol work for everybody --unionists, nationalists, London, Dublin, Brussels, and we’ll finally allow ourselves to be able to move on from this circular and negative debate.”

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Hear me out: Suella Braverman isn’t entirely wrong about multiculturalism...*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698M-6FS1-JBNF-W3M1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 28, 2023 Thursday 5:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** Mary Dejevsky

**Highlight:** COMMENT: Her right-wing posturing and leadership posing do her no favours, but some of the home secretary’s views on immigration and integration shouldn’t be dismissed without some consideration, writes Mary Dejevsky

**Body**

The home secretary landed herself in not just hot, but fiercely boiling water this week with a speech she delivered thousands of miles away, at a right-wing think tank in Washington.

The choice of host – the American Enterprise Institute – guaranteed [*Suella Braverman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/suella-braverman) a friendlier reception for her [*speech on migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/suella-braverman-migrants-home-office-rishi-sunak-b2419673.html%22%20title=%22Time%20the%20PM%20took%20back%20control%20of%20a%20‘dog-whistling’%20Home%20Office) than she might have received even at some of the most steadfastly Conservative venues in London. There could also have been some benefit to the AEI.

Her speech, coming from an ally, set out [*some of the arguments*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/suella-braverman-elton-john-speech-b2420063.html%22%20title=%22Suella%20Braverman%20hits%20back%20at%20Elton%20John%20after%20he%20criticised%20her%20call%20to%20curb%20asylum%20for%20gay%20people) for a wholesale updating of the international asylum system, which could be useful in the run-up to a US presidential election where migration is shaping up as a major issue. Never underestimate how authoritative a British-English accent can (still) sound in Washington’s corridors of power.

What [*made the headlines*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/suella-braverman-rishi-sunak-home-secretary-washington-mps-b2419582.html%22%20title=%22Braverman%20plays%20down%20Tory%20leadership%20ambition%20speculation%20after%20migration%20speech) at home, however, was Braverman’s rejection of “multiculturalism”. And while what she said on this score was initially condemned in some quarters as the personal ravings of a xenophobic home secretary in pursuit of her supposed ambition to be the next Tory leader, this particular attack became harder to sustain after the confirmation, somewhat late in the day perhaps, that her script had been signed off by her department and by No 10.

At least some of the venom hurled in her direction seemed to reflect a misunderstanding, or at least a degree of confusion, about what “multiculturalism” means. And it seems to me it has two meanings. There is the general sense of a multicultural society – of which the UK may be seen as a reasonably successful example – a country where different ethnic and religious groups coexist in reasonable concord and enjoy similar prospects. Of course, the UK is a long way from being perfect, but it has been more successful than many in integrating and promoting people from a wide variety of backgrounds, as a glance at our parliament and the current cabinet would attest.

Those who took Braverman to task for rejecting society were quite simply wrong. She was talking about something quite different, and this was clear from her words. What she was condemning was not the multicultural society of which she is incontrovertibly a stellar example, but what she called “a misguided dogma of multiculturalism”, which is something quite different. It is the atomisation of society along ethnic and religious lines; it is a society where different groups are, if not actually encouraged to preserve and cultivate their difference, then given no real incentive to integrate and left to live in their own separate, or parallel, world.

This is what Angela Merkel was talking about when she said, back in 2010 – in reference largely to Germany’s Turkish minority, who had originally arrived as temporary “guest workers” – that multiculturalism (“multikulti”, as the policy of fostering pride in different identities, rather than an over-arching national identity, was known in Germany) had “failed”. The goal from then on was to be integration, to develop a unified sense of belonging and statehood. This does not mean enforced assimilation, or asking new arrivals to reject their heritage, but it does mean requiring an effort to fit in, by learning the language, for a start, abiding by the law of the land and accepting common values – such as gender equality – in the country where they have settled.

Braverman not only made that clear in her form of words, but she referred back specifically to Merkel, and to Nicolas Sarkozy and to David Cameron, in support of that same view, and even went so far as to set out what she meant. “Multiculturalism makes no demands of the incomer to integrate”, she said. “It has failed, because it allowed people to come to our society, and live parallel lives in it.” The term “parallel lives” in this sense, in fact went back further, to the report written by Ted Cantle after race riots in Bradford and several other cities, published in 2001.

Personally, I do not see what is so mistaken about this as a verdict, either then or now. Or about the idea that integration is preferable to separation, and indeed necessary, for a cohesive state. It also seems to me that most of those laying in to the home secretary this week for supposed hypocrisy – in wanting to prevent others from doing what she and her family had done – had simply got the wrong end of the stick. They weren’t, by and large, opposed to integration; they were using the term multiculturalism in a different way.

In fact, her political foes in the UK might have done better to engage her on the real meat of her speech, which was the need, as she and many others have seen it, to update the international protections for, and definitions of, refugees. However difficult, such a process must surely come – or else the whole system risks falling apart.

The majority of provisions are rooted in the aftermath of the Second World War and the imperative to resettle millions of people displaced by six years of fighting, destruction and changed borders across Europe. My late in-laws were part of this vast human tide. They had been taken from Ukraine to occupied Sudetenland as forced labour; they had walked across Europe after their factory was bombed out by the British, and spent two years in a [*refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee) camp in the US zone of occupation near Frankfurt, before being sponsored to the US by relatives who had fled the Bolshevik revolution.

These Second World War refugees had no homes, and often no countries, to go back to – which did not prevent the British among others from trying to send Soviet citizens back to the USSR, where many faced prison camp, and worse, for what the Soviets deemed treachery.

With the war in Ukraine, some of the post-Second World War refugee provisions may seem applicable once again – and the reception accorded to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in much of Europe, including the UK, could been seen as a vindication of the protections first enshrined in the UN’s Refugee Convention of 1951. But this is an exception – or perhaps a justification for restricting refugee status to those fleeing war, with the added proviso that the primary reception countries should be those nearby.

The vast majority of those arriving in Europe now, however, come from much further away and from countries where living standards are generally lower. They have made journeys that would not have been possible in the past, applying knowledge that past generations of those moving country for whatever reason would not have. Braverman posed legitimate questions about definitions of migrants and refugees.

No Western country, and it is almost exclusively Western countries that are favoured destinations, can take in potentially all minority groups from countries where they face discrimination. All Afghan women? All LGBT+ people from Uganda and other African countries? All Rohingya from Burma? Under some current interpretations, they would all have a claim.

How much, if any, of what Braverman said to the AEI, I wonder, will find its way into her speech to the Conservative Party conference this week? The home secretary’s address on such occasions is commonly a tub-thumper, quite far removed from policy as it would be implemented even by a home secretary as far to the right as Braverman is presumed to be.

Doubtless, Braverman will follow this course – which would be a pity. In the unlikely event that she used her platform to present the same arguments for reform that she made in Washington, I rather think she might get quite a favourable reception – if not from certain sections of her party, then from the country at large.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*‘Millions of dogs and cats could be put down or abandoned’ due to cost of living crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66T4-6H11-DY4H-K1S5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 6, 2022 Sunday 8:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 977 words

**Byline:** Jane Dalton

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Government urged to set up fund to save pets’ lives as owners forced into debt

**Body**

Millions of [*dogs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dogs) and [*cats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cats) could be put down or abandoned, it is feared, as people struggle with their [*pets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pets) ’ bills in the cost of living crisis.

Campaigners are warning that without government intervention, swathes of Britain’s 20 million companion animals are at risk of being euthanised or will suffer from a lack of veterinary care because of the cost.

Ministers are being urged to set up a “cost of living pet crisis fund” to limit the damage and to help owners, many of whom are heartbroken at having to give away their animals.

A new poll for Dogs Trust reveals that more than one in 10 owners – 13 per cent – have been forced into debt to care for their animal.

Are you worried about the cost of keeping your pet? Email [*jane.dalton@independent.co.uk*](mailto:jane.dalton@independent.co.uk)

RSPCA research this year found that soaring household bills are the biggest threat to [*animal welfare*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/animal-welfare).

According to the charity’s Animal Kindness Index Survey, 28 per cent of pet owners are worried about being able to care for their pets. The concern is especially high among cat owners, with a third (32 per cent) worried over being able to care properly for their pet.

Nearly one in five owners (19 per cent) are worried about feeding their pets, the charity said.

And rehoming charities report soaring numbers of cats and dogs being handed to them this year as inflation has gripped the nation, while fewer people are prepared to adopt because of the cost.

The Dogs Trust charity says enquiries from people wanting to give up their pooches shot up by 26.5 per cent this autumn, to 14,128, from 11,168 last autumn.

“For the whole of 2022 so far we have received 42,318 handover enquiries,” a spokesperson said.

“Since September we have asked people if the cost of living is a factor in their need to hand over their dog to us; 22 per cent of calls have been logged as cost of living-specific – that’s over a fifth.”

We have real concerns that we will get to a point where we’ll be forced to start turning dogs away

Owen Sharp, chief executive of Dogs Trust

Dominic Dyer, a leading animal welfare campaigner who has launched a government [*petition*](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/626807) calling for the fund, warned that more dogs and cats could be euthanised in the coming year than were lost in the pet cull at the start of the Second World War.

As many as 750,000 British pets were killed in just one week in the summer of 1939 after the government told owners it would be kinder to have their animals put down because of expected food shortages.

Mr Dyer, who this year played a key role in the government decision to let ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** bring their pets to Britain, said: “The nation faces a companion-animal-welfare crisis of unprecedented proportions as a direct result of the cost of living crisis.

“Without intervention, millions of dogs and cats are at risk of being abandoned, suffering due to delays receiving veterinary care or being euthanised on economic – rather than welfare – grounds.

“Losing a pet due to the cost of living crisis will not only have a significant and negative impact on the emotional and mental health of millions of families across Britain, but it will also negatively affect those working in the charity and veterinary sectors.”

The RSPCA reported 22,908 abandonments in the first seven months of this year, compared with 18,375 in the same period last year.

And research by the People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) found 9 per cent of owners – 2 million pets – said they would have to consider rehoming their animal if they were not able to afford vet bills.

Owners searching for charity support with medical care bills have shot up by more than half – 51 per cent.

Vets say animal welfare is being compromised, with some owners delaying seeking care because of financial difficulties or even trying to treat animals themselves, which can prove fatal, according to the British Veterinary Association.

Iain McGill, a vet in Brighton, told The Independent: “I’ve had a lot of clients asking for help with keeping the bills low, going for fewer investigations and only essential treatment. I am sure some people aren’t actually making appointments for reasons of financial hardship.”

Under Mr Dyer’s plan, animal charities would carry out pet care using taxpayer cash, supported by the veterinary industry and involving a national helpline and pop-up clinics.

It would also provide funding for a network of pet food banks in supermarkets, pet care stores and food banks.

He said local authorities should support the fund so that dogs and cats were not left on the streets to suffer or pose a danger to the public.

More than half of UK adults own a pet, 27 per cent owning dogs (10.2 million dogs) and 24 per cent owning cats (11.1 million cats), statistics show.

The PDSA estimates that owners should expect to spend at least £5,000 over the lifetime of a small dog but, depending on the breed, size and lifespan, this could rise to at least £12,200. For cats, the minimum expected lifetime cost is £11,100. That is without the cost of veterinary care or extras such as dog-sitters.

Owen Sharp, chief executive of Dogs Trust, said: “We already have 1,000 dogs on the waiting list to come into our rehoming centres.

“However, we have real concerns that, despite our best efforts, we will get to a point where we’ll be forced to start turning dogs away. If this happens, dog welfare will become a true emergency.”

A spokesperson for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, said: “The government is actively considering the impact of the rise in the cost of living on all aspects of people’s lives.

“We meet regularly with animal welfare stakeholders and sector groups to monitor the situation and identify where more support may be needed. We welcome the support these groups are providing for their members during these difficult times.”

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Braverman is not completely wrong on multiculturalism*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698R-TPP1-JCS0-D0MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

September 29, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 22

**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** MARY DEJEVSKY

**Body**

The home secretary landed herself in not just hot, but fiercely boiling water this week with a speech she delivered thousands of miles away, at a right-wing think tank in Washington.

The choice of host - the American Enterprise Institute - guaranteed Suella Braverman a friendlier reception for her speech on migration than she might have received even at some of the most steadfastly Conservative venues in London.There could also have been some benefit to the AEI.

Her speech, coming from an ally, set out some of the arguments for a wholesale updating of the international asylum system, which could be useful in the run-up to a US presidential election where migration is shaping up as a major issue. Never underestimate how authoritative a British-English accent can (still) sound in Washington's corridors of power.

What made the headlines at home, however, was Braverman's rejection of "multiculturalism". And while what she said on this score was initially condemned in some quarters as the personal ravings of a xenophobic home secretary in pursuit of her supposed ambition to be the next Tory leader, this particular attack became harder to sustain after the confirmation, somewhat late in the day perhaps, that her script had been signed off by her department and by No 10.

At least some of the venom hurled in her direction seemed to reflect a misunderstanding, or at least a degree of confusion, about what "multiculturalism" means. And it seems to me it has two meanings.

There is the general sense of a multicultural society - of which the UK may be seen as a reasonably successful example - a country where different ethnic and religious groups coexist in reasonable concord and enjoy similar prospects. Of course, the UK is a long way from being perfect, but it has been more successful than many in integrating and promoting people from a wide variety of backgrounds, as a glance at our parliament and the current cabinet would attest.

Those who took Braverman to task for rejecting society were quite simply wrong. She was talking about something quite different, and this was clear from her words. What she was condemning was not the multicultural society of which she is incontrovertibly a stellar example, but what she called "a misguided dogma of multiculturalism", which is something quite different. It is the atomisation of society along ethnic and religious lines; it is a society where different groups are, if not actually encouraged to preserve and cultivate their difference, then given no real incentive to integrate and left to live in their own separate, or parallel, world.

This is what Angela Merkel was talking about when she said, back in 2010 - in reference largely to Germany's Turkish minority, who had originally arrived as temporary "guest workers" - that multiculturalism ("multikulti", as the policy of fostering pride in different identities, rather than an over-arching national identity, was known in Germany) had "failed". The goal from then on was to be integration, to develop a unified sense of belonging and statehood. This does not mean enforced assimilation, or asking new arrivals to reject their heritage, but it does mean requiring an effort to fit in, by learning the language, for a start, abiding by the law of the land and accepting common values - such as gender equality - in the country where they have settled.

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Personally, I do not see what is so mistaken about this as a verdict, either then or now. Or about the idea that integration is preferable to separation, and indeed necessary, for a cohesive state. It also seems to me that most of those laying in to the home secretary this week for supposed hypocrisy - in wanting to prevent others from doing what she and her family had done - had simply got the wrong end of the stick. They weren't, by and large, opposed to integration; they were using the term multiculturalism in a different way.

In fact, her political foes in the UK might have done better to engage her on the real meat of her speech, which was the need, as she and many others have seen it, to update the international protections for, and definitions of, refugees. However difficult, such a process must surely come - or else the whole system risks falling apart.

The majority of provisions are rooted in the aftermath of the Second World War and the imperative to resettle millions of people displaced by six years of fighting, destruction and changed borders across Europe. My late in-laws were part of this vast human tide. They had been taken from Ukraine to occupied Sudetenland as forced labour; they had walked across Europe after their factory was bombed out by the British, and spent two years in a refugee camp in the US zone of occupation near Frankfurt, before being sponsored to the US by relatives who had fled the Bolshevik revolution.

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With the war in Ukraine, some of the post-Second World War refugee provisions may seem applicable once again - and the reception accorded to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in much of Europe, including the UK, could been seen as a vindication of the protections first enshrined in the UN's Refugee Convention of 1951. But this is an exception - or perhaps a justification for restricting refugee status to those fleeing war, with the added proviso that the primary reception countries should be those that are nearby.

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How much, if any, of what Braverman said to the AEI, I wonder, will find its way into her speech to the Conservative Party conference this week? The home secretary's address on such occasions is commonly a tub-thumper, quite far removed from policy as it would be implemented even by a home secretary as far to the right as Braverman is presumed to be.

Doubtless, Braverman will follow this course - which would be a pity. In the unlikely event that she used her platform to present the same arguments for reform that she made in Washington, I rather think she might get quite a favourable reception - if not from certain sections of her party, then from the country at large.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Hundreds of Ukrainian children fleeing war made homeless in UK due to ‘broken’ refugee schemes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PK-R8Y1-JBNF-W3SJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 16, 2022 Thursday 4:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 947 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** New figures show 660 households from Ukraine forced to register as homeless after being granted protection in UK, which critics say is ‘entirely avoidable’

**Body**

Hundreds of [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) and their [*families*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/families) have been made homeless after being granted sanctuary in the UK, new figures reveal.

Ministers have been accused of presiding over “broken” refugee schemes for Ukrainian nationals after it emerged that 660 households who have come to Britain via these routes have been forced to register as homeless.

The data, published by the department for levelling up, communities and housing on Thursday, reveals that of the homeless households, 480 were families with at least one child, while 180 were single households.

In total 51,800 people so have arrived under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which enables refugees to “match” with people offering rooms, while 25,400 have come under the family scheme, which allows refugees to join relatives in the UK.

The figures show that seven in 10 households (480) that have been made homeless arrived under the family scheme, of which 62 per cent became homeless because the housing was “not available or suitable on arrival”, while the remaining 175 left their housing because the arrangement “broke down”.

Of the 145 households who registered as homeless after arriving under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 55 left because the accommodation was not available or suitable, while 90 left because the arrangement broke down.

Only 140 households who have registered as homeless -one in five -have so far been provided with alternative housing, according to the data.

It comes after[*The Independent revealed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-families-home-office-uk-refugees-b2067805.html) that thousands of Ukrainians seeking refuge in the UK had been forced to live in overcrowded accommodation, with whole families sharing single rooms.

In other cases refugees coming under the Homes for Ukraine scheme have been [*placed with unvetted hosts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-sponsorship-hosts-councils-uk-b2068498.html) and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks.

Clive Betts, Labour MP and chair of the levelling up committee, said the fact that Ukrainian families were falling homeless was “entirely avoidable” and demanded that ministers allow people who become homeless on the family scheme to rematch under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Currently, if a placement under the family scheme breaks down, the household is not permitted to move over the Homes for Ukraine scheme – despite many individuals offering to host still not having been matched with refugees.

“There are still many who really want to offer a home to refugees and the government seems to have an absolute obsession that if you come on one, you can’t switch to the other,” Mr Betts said.

“We’re bringing people thousands of miles to this country and then put them in unsuitable B&Bs. The government should allow people to switch. It should allow local authorities to look at lists of people who want to offer a home and put people in touch with each other.

“It would save money and human cost. It would save trauma to refugees. The schemes are broken. The government’s approach is wrong and blinkered.”

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: "It is worrying to hear that desperate Ukrainian families who have fled war, endured trauma and heartbreak, arriving here intrusting their safety in our hands have been left to fall into homelessness.”

He said the government should provide the same level of funding to local councils for the family scheme as for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

"We welcomed the thousands of British people that came forward to open their homes, however these hosting relationships were always going to come with risks, and responsibilities,” he added.

“That is why it is vital the government ensure that hosts and refugees are provided with the right training and specialist support -including help to find alternative accommodation when necessary to avoid the risk of homelessness.”

[*The Independent revealed last month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-afghan-b-b-homeless-uk-b2077849.html) that ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK who become homeless could be housed in B&Bs indefinitely under new laws quietly pushed through by the government.

The changes also set out that councils can place these groups out of area – potentially hundreds of miles away – without taking into account factors such as the disruption to employment and education and access to medical facilities or other support.

Cllr David Renard, housing spokesperson for the Local Government Association, echoed Mr Betts’ calls to enable people on the family scheme who present as homeless to be re-matched with a sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

He added: “Urgent work is needed on how councils can work with government and the community, faith and voluntary sector so those offering their homes can be quickly matched with a family in need.”

Mr Renard also called for better data-sharing with local councils, saying: “Currently councils receive no data on, or funding for, people who are coming under the family visa scheme.

“Councils also need information on arrivals through Homes for Ukraine, and those supporting them, as quickly as possible so they can ensure sponsor accommodation is suitable and safe before they arrive.

“Data does not always arrive in time to enable this and many councils are still reporting significant issues with this data.”

A government spokesperson said all of those arriving in the UK under the two schemes had access to benefits and public services, as well as the right to work or study, from the day they arrive.

They added: “The overwhelming majority of people are settling in well but in the minority of cases where family or sponsor relationships break down, councils have a duty to ensure families are not left without a roof over their head. Councils also have access to a rematching service to find a new sponsor in cases under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.”

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*War surges Norway's oil, gas profit. Now, it's urged to help*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65JH-8HR1-JBNF-W2C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 28, 2022 Saturday 10:53 AM GMT

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**Length:** 981 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Europe's frantic search for alternatives to Russian natural gas has dramatically increased the demand - and price - for Norway's oil and gas

**Body**

Europe's frantic search for alternatives to Russian energy has dramatically increased the demand - and price - for Norway's oil and gas.

As the money pours in, [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) 's second-biggest natural gas supplier is fending off accusations that it's profiting from the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Polish Prime Minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) , who is looking to the Scandinavian country to replace some of the gas Poland used to get from Russia, said Norway's "gigantic" oil and gas profits are "indirectly preying on the war." He urged Norway to use that windfall to support the hardest-hit countries, mainly Ukraine.

The comments last week touched a nerve, even as some Norwegians wonder whether they're doing enough to combat Russia's war by increasing economic aid to Ukraine and helping neighboring countries end their dependence on Russian energy to power industry, generate electricity and fuel vehicles.

Taxes on the windfall profits of oil and gas companies have been common in Europe to help people cope with soaring energy bills, now exacerbated by the war. Spain and Italy both approved them, while the United Kingdom's government plans to introduce one. Morawiecki is asking Norway to go further by sending oil and profits to other nations.

Norway, one of Europe's richest countries, committed 1.09% of its national income to overseas development - one of the highest percentages worldwide - including more than $200 million in aid to Ukraine. With oil and gas coffers bulging, some would like to see even more money earmarked to ease the effects of the war - and not skimmed from the funding for agencies that support people elsewhere.

"Norway has made dramatic cuts into most of the U.N. institutions and support for human rights projects in order to finance the cost of receiving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***," said Berit Lindeman, policy director of human rights group the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

She helped organize a protest Wednesday outside Parliament in Oslo, criticizing government priorities and saying the Polish remarks had "some merits."

"It looks really ugly when we know the incomes have skyrocketed this year," Lindeman said.

Oil and gas prices were already high amid an energy crunch and have spiked because of the war. Natural gas is trading at three to four times what it was at the same time last year. International benchmark Brent crude oil burst through $100 a barrel after the invasion three months ago and has rarely dipped below since.

Norwegian energy giant Equinor, which is majority owned by the state, earned four times more in the first quarter compared with the same period last year.

The bounty led the government to revise its forecast of income from petroleum activities to 933 billion Norwegian kroner ($97 billion) this year - more than three times what it earned in 2021. The vast bulk will be funneled into Norway's massive sovereign wealth fund - the world's largest - to support the nation when oil runs dry. The government isn't considering diverting it elsewhere.

Norway has "contributed substantial support to Ukraine since the first week of the war, and we are preparing to do more," State Secretary Eivind Vad Petersson said by email.

He said the country has sent financial support, weapons and over 2 billion kroner in humanitarian aid "independently of oil and gas prices."

European countries, meanwhile, have helped inflate Norwegian energy prices by scrambling to diversify their supply away from Russia. They have been accused of helping fund the war by continuing to pay for Russian fossil fuels.

That energy reliance "provides Russia with a tool to intimidate and to use against us, and that has been clearly demonstrated now," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, a former prime minister of Norway, told the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

Russia has halted natural gas to Finland, Poland and Bulgaria for refusing a demand to pay in rubles.

The 27-nation European Union is aiming to reduce reliance on Russian natural gas by two-thirds by year's end through conservation, renewable development and alternative supplies.

Europe is pleading with Norway, along with countries like Qatar and Algeria, for help with the shortfall. Norway delivers 20% to 25% of Europe's natural gas, vs. Russia's 40% before the war.

It is important for Norway to "be a stable, long-term provider of oil and gas to the European markets," Deputy Energy Minister Amund Vik said. But companies are selling on volatile energy markets, and "with the high oil and gas prices seen since last fall, the companies have daily produced near maximum of what their fields can deliver," he said.

Even so, Oslo has responded to European calls for more gas by providing permits to operators to produce more this year. Tax incentives mean the companies are investing in new offshore projects, with a new pipeline to Poland opening this fall.

"We are doing whatever we can to be a reliable supplier of gas and energy to Europe in difficult times. It was a tight market last fall and is even more pressing now," said Ola Morten Aanestad, a Equinor spokesman.

The situation is a far cry from June 2020, when prices crashed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and Norway's previous government issued tax incentives for oil companies to spur investment and protect jobs.

Combined with high energy prices, the incentives that run out at the end of the year have prompted companies in Norway to issue a slew of development plans for new oil and gas projects.

Yet those projects will not produce oil and gas until later this decade or even further in the future, when the political situation may be different and many European countries are hoping to have shifted most of their energy use to renewables.

By then, Norway is likely to face the more familiar criticism - that it is contributing to climate change.

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) reporter Monika Scislowska in Warsaw, Poland, contributed.

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hill bargainers seek Ukraine aid deal, COVID aid in question*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CS-XVV1-DY4H-K2DY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2022 Friday 5:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 981 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Lawmakers are working toward a compromise on President Joe Biden's $33 billion Ukraine aid request that they hope to have ready as soon as next week

**Body**

Lawmakers are working toward compromise on President Joe Biden's $33 billion [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) aid request, even as signs emerge that [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) may need to swallow another COVID-19 setback and drop their goal of wrapping pandemic spending into the package.

Bipartisan talks among House and Senate Appropriations committee leaders are underway in hopes of producing legislation Congress could vote on as soon as next week, members of both parties say. Changes in Biden's proposal are likely - the price tag, particularly for military spending, could rise - but there's wide agreement on the urgency of helping Kyiv and regional allies resist Russia's 10-week-old onslaught.

Republican budget-writers "are probably knocking some things out and adding some things. But I think by and large, everybody agrees we've got to do all we can to help," said No. 2 Senate GOP leader [*John Thune*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-thune) of South Dakota. He said some Republicans believe "this package may not be robust enough, but I think it probably strikes close to the right balance."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., cited broad backing for the measure Thursday but warned, "This isn't about battling climate change." McConnell aides said he was objecting to some proposed funding to international organizations that Republicans have criticized for spending money on alternative energy initiatives.

"If the Senate is serious about helping Ukraine win, we need to show it by passing supplemental assistance. Clean, no strings attached, and soon," McConnell said.

One participant said bargainers must resolve details of Biden proposals to provide health care, food and other benefits to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the U.S. and to strengthen government powers to use assets seized from billionaire friends of Russian President Vladimir Putin to help Ukraine. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to describe the talks publicly.

When Biden sent his $33 billion proposal to Congress last week, he wrote that "to avoid needless deaths in the United States and around the world," Congress should include additional billions for COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines. Democrats have hoped doing so would pressure the GOP to accept the pandemic spending, which Democrats say is needed to prepare for the virus' all but inevitable next curveball.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has resorted to more lawyerly language, not specifying that the two issues should be combined. "We need to figure out the best way to get both done, and that's what we're going to try to do in the next few weeks," he told reporters Tuesday.

Minutes earlier, McConnell spelled out his view of the best way forward.

"There is overwhelming bipartisan support for getting the Ukrainians as much help as they need as quickly as possible," McConnell said. "For that to happen here in Congress, that package needs to be moved without the other extraneous issues."

While combining Ukraine and pandemic money into one package has broad Democratic support, bargainers say party leaders haven't made a final decision on that yet. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said in an interview that he wants funding for Ukraine and COVID-19 tied together because both are crucial.

"It may" fall out of the bill, Leahy said of the pandemic money, "and I think that would be a mistake."

Biden's overall proposal is anchored by $20 billion to help Ukraine and nearby countries defend themselves and replenish U.S. arms shipped to the area. There's $8.5 billion to bolster Ukraine's economy and government and $3 billion for refugees and to supplement food supplies around the world disrupted by the war.

The proposal's fine print, contained in White House documents sent to Congress, adds texture to Biden's plans.

It would make it easier for Russians with advanced degrees in more than two dozen sciences - including missile propulsion, artificial intelligence, semiconductors and cybersecurity - to get job-based visas and come to the U.S. Besides strengthening the U.S. in those fields, the move would "undercut Russia's innovative potential, benefitting U.S. national security," according to the materials accompanying Biden's proposal.

The documents, which break down Biden's defense request by each branch of the military, include $800,000 for the new U.S. Space Force. The expenditures are described as covering intelligence analysis, flying hours, weapon system sustainment and other costs, but no other details are provided. The overall U.S. defense budget is around $800 billion.

There's nearly $600 million for Patriot anti-missile systems in Europe, money to care for wounded Ukrainian troops at an American military medical center in Germany and a proposal to let Afghan refugees who've fled to this country since the U.S. withdrawal become lawful permanent residents if they qualify.

Rapid approval of Ukraine aid would let both parties avoid an election-year display of dysfunction by spiraling into a spat over the widely popular cause of helping Ukraine avoid being overpowered by Russia.

Passage of Ukraine aid separately would also preserve GOP hopes of boxing Democrats into a corner on border security, an issue Republicans are banking on in November's elections for congressional control.

Should Senate Democrats press ahead with a separate pandemic bill, Republicans plan to force a vote on retaining a Trump-era order citing the pandemic as justification for quickly removing asylum-seekers crossing the Mexican border into the U.S. The Biden administration has planned to let that rule expire May 23, and Democrats are divided over whether to extend it.

Already this year, a White House request for $30 billion for the pandemic was cut in half and ultimately dropped by the House. A bipartisan Senate compromise then trimmed it to $10 billion, but stalled over GOP demands for a vote on immigration.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Hill bargainers seek Ukraine aid deal, COVID aid in question*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CN-9551-DY4H-K23Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 5, 2022 Thursday 7:24 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 981 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Lawmakers are working toward a compromise on President Joe Biden's $33 billion Ukraine aid request that they hope to have ready as soon as next week

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** May 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*EXPLAINER: Why US needs a law to sell off oligarchs' assets*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B6-0MX1-JBNF-W310-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 10:21 PM GMT

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**Length:** 970 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** President Joe Biden doesn't want to just seize the yachts, luxury homes and other assets of Russian oligarchs, he wants to sell off the pricey goods and use the money to help rebuild Ukraine

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) doesn't want to just seize the yachts, luxury homes and other assets of Russian oligarchs, he wants to sell off the pricey goods and use the money to help rebuild [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

He's asking [*Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) to streamline the process to allow that to happen.

In the latest attempt to pressure Russia to end its war and to pay for the enormous costs of defending Ukraine, the Biden administration on Thursday called on Congress to enhance U.S. authority to liquidate assets seized from Russian elites - the "bad guys," as Biden called them.

A look at what's afoot:

WHAT'S ALREADY BEING DONE?

The House on Wednesday passed the Asset Seizure for Ukraine Reconstruction Act, with only four lawmakers voting against the measure. The bill, which now goes to the Senate, would allow the president to confiscate and liquidate property owned by sanctioned individuals. The money could only be used for specific purposes.

The package that Biden sent to Congress goes further to create a new criminal offense, making it unlawful for anyone to knowingly own proceeds directly obtained from corrupt dealings with the Russian government. Additionally, property used to facilitate sanctions violations would also be eligible for seizure.

The [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) says the new tools make sanctions more difficult to evade and the administration said it wants to use the money "to remediate harms of Russian aggression toward Ukraine."

WHY DOES THE GOVERNMENT NEED LEGISLATION?

Under current federal law, only the Justice Department has the authority to determine how seized funds can be spent. And there are strict rules on who can benefit from seized proceeds. The Biden administration wants to make it easier for officials to decide how to use the proceeds of the blocked and seized property.

The White House proposal also wants to make forfeiture decisions reviewable in federal court on an expedited basis.

Ryan Fayhee, a former Justice Department prosecutor who now works in private practice on sanctions cases, said that because of the nature of the U.S. sanctions program, "we could see a lot of lawsuits as there's a process one could take to challenge the forfeiture itself and they absolutely will," anticipating sanctioned oligarchs' future litigation.

HOW MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN SEIZED?

The White House says the Treasury Department has sanctioned and blocked vessels and aircraft worth over $1 billion, and has frozen bank accounts containing hundreds of millions of dollars of assets belonging to Russian elites. During a House committee hearing Thursday, the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's acting director, Himamauli Das, said the agency has received 2,000 suspicious activity reports connected to Russian oligarchs. Of those, 271 were forwarded to intelligence and law enforcement and Treasury's sanctions arm.

HOW CAN THE MONEY FROM SEIZED ASSETS BE USED?

Among other proposals, the administration's package extends the statute of limitations of money laundering investigations based on foreign crimes from five years to 10 years, adds sanctions evasion to the definition of "racketeering activity" in the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act and would enhance the government's powers to work with other countries to recover assets linked to foreign corruption.

The House-passed Asset Seizure proposal is more limited than the president's proposal, where confiscated funds could only be used for specific purposes, including post-conflict reconstruction of Ukraine, support for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, weapons for Ukraine's military and humanitarian support for the Russian people.

Additionally, the administration could only seize assets, within two years of the bill's enactment, if Russia remains engaged in its invasion of Ukraine, the president has imposed sanctions on the owner of the assets due to the ongoing conflict and the assets are worth more than $5 million.

Attorneys have said the process of actually liquidating and using the funds could take years.

WHAT ABOUT RUSSIAN CENTRAL BANK ASSETS?

The package that Biden sent to Congress does not address Russian Central Bank assets.

However Russia's more than $600 billion foreign reserve fund has been frozen by the U.S. and its allies.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said last week that the prospect of using frozen Russian Central Bank funds to support Ukraine should be considered but "I wouldn't want to do so lightly," adding that it would have to be done in consensus with U.S. allies and partners.

In a virtual address to International Monetary Fund and World Bank leaders last week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the proceeds of sanctioned property and Central Bank reserves should be used to compensate Ukraine for its losses.

HOW WOULD THE NEW LAW ON PROCEEDS FROM CORRUPT DEALINGS WORK?

The Justice Department and Treasury are already targeting the assets of Russian oligarchs who they say have evaded sanctions, including a 254-foot yacht that was in Spain and owned by an oligarch with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said Thursday that the Justice Department's task force focusing on Russian oligarchs - known as KleptoCapture - anticipates taking on "at least 30 complex investigations over time."

In order for the Justice Department to seize a yacht, prosecutors must first spell out their case and obtain a seizure warrant from a federal judge. The U.S. government would then need to pay to maintain, transport and dock the mega yachts until they can be sold off at auction.

The funds from the sale flow into the Justice Department's asset forfeiture fund.

The government wants to use some of the forfeiture funds to support Ukraine, though the law doesn't currently easily allow for that to happen, Garland said at a House subcommittee hearing on Thursday.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: We can't solve the UK's refugee crisis with a culture war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6587-F0F1-DY4H-K264-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 19, 2022 Tuesday 4:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 1005 words

**Byline:** Vince Cable

**Highlight:** Sadly, the home secretary is more interested in the efficient expulsion of people, than in efficient recruitment of competent Home Office staff

**Body**

Over Easter, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke powerfully for Britain's committed Christian minority when he said that sending asylum seekers to Rwanda was "against the judgement of God". The response from critics has been, essentially, "what has this got to do with God?" The home secretary has invited God, through the archbishop, to come up with his own solution.

Both sides are talking at cross-purposes here. On one hand, refugee and human rights campaigners condemn the new policy as "inhumane". On the other, those who say or imply: "of course it is inhumane. The point is to deter people from attempting dangerously to cross the Channel in dinghies."

My heart is with the archbishop, but I can't help but think that, for the secular majority of Britons, practical arguments about what works weigh more heavily than spiritual judgements or the government's attempts to stir up a "culture war".

The politician who best captured a spirit of what I would call "enlightened practicality" was Yvette Cooper, Labour's shadow home secretary. She wisely refused to be drawn onto the moral high ground, to denounce the human rights abuses of the Rwandan government and our own, in interviews.

Instead she had technical but sensible proposals starting with the slow and difficult task of cooperating with the French authorities to track down and prosecute criminal trafficking gangs: this being more effective than sending asylum seekers to Central Africa.

Much of the difficulty comes because the distinction between someone seeking asylum, and someone (supposedly less deserving) merely seeking a better life, is not nearly as clear as people make out. The cross-channel dinghies may well contain Afghans or Syrians, Eritreans or Somalis who are fleeing conflict and persecution but they are also fleeing hunger and the hopelessness of "safe" refugee camps.

In other words, the difference between "economic" and "political" refugees has therefore become largely meaningless. But decisions must be made as to who stays and who goes.

In the latest full year, 13,000 were given refugee status out of 48,000 seeking asylum (out of a net immigration figure of around 300,000). The numbers are relatively modest, but the public concern is that global demand is potentially almost infinite while the British supply of compassion is finite.

I don't buy the cynical view that the British public is irredeemably racist and must be constantly placated by organised nastiness. But I don't buy either the idealistic optimism of the Canterbury pulpit that there is unlimited goodwill towards those in desperate need.

The problem with British public opinion, and the politicians who are led by it, is that it is fickle and unpredictable, and has long been so. The considerable demand for a more open approach to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** - [*embodied recently in The Independent's own campaign to which 250,000 readers have signed up*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fworld%2Feurope%2Fukraine-refugees-petition-landmark-help-b2058286.html&data=05%7C01%7CSunny.Hundal%40independent.co.uk%7Ce73e8edc71c44218682408da22158238%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637859773024872049%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=JBdFpZ3gw8OvakqMLnGRfhhF7N38dlczFncAswhJn60%3D&reserved=0) - is a contrast with the general attitude that had prevailed over refugees fleeing from further afield.

A similar capriciousness was on display in the late 1960s when an exodus of Kenyan Asians prompted panic legislation to bar their entry and led to an outpouring of hostility towards non-white immigrants in general expressed in Enoch Powell's infamous "rivers of blood" speech. Three years later a Conservative government freely admitted Asians expelled from Uganda to apparent public approval. As an East African Asian by heritage, Priti Patel will be aware of the history, as I am through marriage.

There have been similar panics and reversals in attitudes towards refugees from Hong Kong, the former Yugoslavia and Syria and to economic migrants from the Commonwealth and latterly Eastern Europe.

To keep up to speed with all the latest opinions and comment, sign up to our free weekly Voices Dispatches newsletter by [*clicking here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independent-premium#newsletters)

All this means that amidst the partisanship of British politics, there is now a rough consensus. Governments must demonstrate control over their borders. Some economic migration is necessary and desirable, but must be managed based on individual migrants' usefulness rather than their ethnicity or nationality or arbitrary net migration targets. Humanitarian crises, as in Syria, Afghanistan and - now - Ukraine should be met by rationed generosity.

There remains the issue of those who are trying to get here "illegally", claiming asylum, but for whom legal routes are largely blocked. The answers are not to be found either on high moral ground or in grubby, expensive gimmicks like the Rwanda scheme.

The real solutions lie in the mundane but apparently elusive work of cross-border law enforcement: a European-wide policy on asylum was a hated bogeyman of Eurosceptics before Brexit, but now looks a more useful idea than ever.

Sadly, the home secretary is more interested in the efficient expulsion of those who do not meet the government's mark, than in efficient recruitment of competent Home Office staff to process applications quickly and to mete out safe, humane treatment to those who do not qualify to stay.

Sir Vince Cable is the former leader of the Liberal Democrats and served as secretary of state for business, innovation and skills from 2010 to 2015. His podcast 'Cable Comment' is available [*here*](https://pod.co/cable-comments)

The Independent has a proud history of campaigning for the rights of the most vulnerable, and we first ran our Refugees Welcome campaign during the war in Syria in 2015. Now, as we renew our campaign and launch this petition in the wake of the unfolding Ukrainian crisis, we are calling on the government to go further and faster to ensure help is delivered. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome-0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK's Rwanda asylum plan breaches international law, says UN refugee agency*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657D-67S1-DY4H-K28C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 9:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** The UNHCR 'strongly condemns' policy of sending migrants who arrive in Britain unlawfully more than 4,000 miles to Africa

**Body**

The UK's proposal to send migrants who arrive in Britain unlawfully to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) is "unacceptable" and a breach of international law, the UN's refugee agency said.

The Government announced this week it plans to provide failed [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) , including those crossing the Channel in small boats, with a one-way ticket to Rwanda, where they will have the right to apply to live in the African country.

Gillian Triggs, an assistant secretary-general at the [*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) , said the agency "strongly condemns outsourcing the primary responsibility to consider the refugee status", as laid out in the scheme put forward by Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel).

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's World At One programme, the former president of the Australian Human Rights Commission said the policy was a "troubling development", particularly in the light of countries taking in millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** displaced by the conflict in eastern Europe.

Put to her that [*Australia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/australia) had effectively deployed a similar tactic to cut migration numbers, Ms Triggs said: "My point is, just as the Australian policy is an egregious breach of international law and refugee law and human rights law, so too is this proposal by the United Kingdom Government.

"It is very unusual, very few states have tried this, and the purpose is primarily deterrent - and it can be effective, I don't think we're denying that.

"But what we're saying at the UN refugee agency is that there are much more legally effective ways of achieving the same outcome."

She said attempting to "shift responsibility" for asylum seekers arriving in Britain was "really unacceptable".

Minister [*@VBiruta*](https://twitter.com/Vbiruta?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) makes it clear ⤵ "There is a global responsibility to prioritise the safety and well-being of migrants, and Rwanda welcomes this Partnership with the United Kingdom to host asylum seekers and migrants, and offer them legal pathways to residence." [*pic.twitter.com/1nWNhHHERm*](https://t.co/1nWNhHHERm) - Home Office (@ukhomeoffice) [*April 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1514903045779374084?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ms Triggs pointed out that Israel had attempted to send Eritrean and Sudanese refugees to Rwanda, but that they "simply left the country and started the process all over again"."In other words, it is not actually a long-term deterrent," she added.Tom Pursglove, minister for justice and tackling illegal migration, said on Friday that the policy was "in line" with the UK's legal obligations.However, he accepted that it would be "difficult" to implement the plan to remove asylum seekers to Rwanda, with the Government braced for legal challenges.He told Times Radio: "I think what is also really important to make (clear) in dealing with that issue is that, at all times, we act in accordance with our international obligations, the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights) and the refugee convention."We are absolutely confident that our policies are in line with that and entirely compliant, which by extension would mean that those legal challenges would be without merit."But it will be difficult, there will be challenges."The UK has an obligation to ensure access to asylum for those seeking protection.UNHCR strongly opposes the plan to export its asylum obligations. We urge the UK to refrain from transferring asylum seekers and refugees to Rwanda for asylum processing. [*https://t.co/01ygqrmuu4*](https://t.co/01ygqrmuu4) [*pic.twitter.com/TMkq1z6KiD*](https://t.co/TMkq1z6KiD) - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency (@Refugees) [*April 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Refugees/status/1514699018500292617?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Pursglove also suggested during broadcast interviews that other countries in Europe were considering emulating the UK's Rwandan policy, which he described as a "world first".

He said there was a "moral imperative" to crush the business model of human traffickers and avoid a tragedy like that seen in November, when a dinghy sank in the [*English Channel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english-channel) , drowning dozens of migrants heading to Britain.

"The point I would make is that what is cruel and inhumane is allowing evil criminal gangs to take advantage of people, to take their money, to put them in small boats, often with force, including women and children, to put them in the Channel with all the risks that that presents to human life," he told ITV's Good Morning Britain.

"We simply cannot allow that to happen, which is why we've introduced the new plan for immigration to stop these illegal journeys."

The minister also argued that in the "longer term" the scheme would save Britain money, with almost £5 million per day currently spent on accommodating those arriving in the country.

Former Tory international development secretary Andrew Mitchell questioned that, saying calculations had been made that suggested it would be cheaper to put those arriving in Britain up at The Ritz hotel in London's Mayfair for a year.

Ms Patel agreed a £120 million economic deal while in Kigali on Thursday, and money for each removal is expected to follow, with reports suggesting each migrant sent to Rwanda is expected to set British taxpayers back between £20,000 and £30,000.

The Times said this would cover accommodation both before and after the journey, as well as the cost of a seat on the flight itself.

The Royal Navy has been put in charge of policing the Channel as part of the reform package announced this week, in a bid to curb the number of small boat crossings.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said that, in the 24-hour period up to 11.59pm on Thursday April 14, the navy detected 562 migrants in 14 small boats in the strait.

The department said it did not believe any migrants arrived "on their own terms in a small boat" on Thursday, but on Good Friday women, children and single men were among hundreds of people brought ashore.

Naval ships were spotted towing empty dinghies used by people smugglers back to the UK after those on board were offloaded on to boats operated by Border Force, which is part of the Home Office.

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Moscow bans Johnson and Cabinet ministers from Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657K-0P41-DY4H-K509-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 16, 2022 Saturday 1:57 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 982 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** The Kremlin said the move was in response to 'unprecedented hostile actions'.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and other British [*Cabinet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cabinet) ministers have been placed on a Kremlin blacklist and banned from entering [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in response to sanctions against the country, reports suggest.

The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, Justice Secretary Dominic Raab, and former PM Theresa May are believed to be among those on the list, according to the Russian news agency Tass.

Russia's foreign ministry said in a statement the move was due to the "unprecedented hostile actions of the British Government, expressed, in particular, in the imposition of sanctions against top officials" in Russia.

It added: "The Russophobic course of action of the British authorities, whose main goal is to stir up negative attitude toward our country, curtailing of bilateral ties in almost all areas, are detrimental to the wellbeing and interests of the residents of Britain. Any sanctions attack will inevitably backfire on their initiators and receive a decisive rebuff."

It comes as Russian troops restarted assaults on the Ukrainian capital after a brief reprieve.

A UK Government spokesperson said: "The UK and our international partners stand united in condemning the Russian government's reprehensible actions in Ukraine and calling for the Kremlin to stop the war. We remain resolute in our support for Ukraine."

Mr Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) on Saturday afternoon.

A Downing Street spokesperson said: "The Prime Minister paid tribute to the bravery of Ukrainian forces who continue to valiantly defend their country's freedom.

"President Zelensky updated the Prime Minister on the situation in Mariupol, and the Prime Minister said he saluted Ukrainian resistance in the city.

"The pair discussed the need for a long-term security solution for Ukraine, and the Prime Minister said he would continue to work closely with allies and partners to ensure Ukraine could defend its sovereignty in the weeks and months to come.

The Prime Minister said international support for Ukraine only grew stronger and that he remained convinced Ukraine would succeed and Putin would fail

No 10

"The Prime Minister updated President Zelensky on new sanctions from the UK that came into force last week, and said the UK would continue to provide the means for Ukraine to defend itself, including armoured vehicles in the coming days.

"The Prime Minister said international support for Ukraine only grew stronger and that he remained convinced Ukraine would succeed and Putin would fail."

Meanwhile, at home, a former Cabinet minister said the Homes for Ukraine scheme where households can take in those fleeing the war is "bumpy" and visas are taking too long to be processed.

[*Robert Jenrick*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-jenrick) , who was previously communities secretary, revealed his family are housing a Ukrainian mother and her two children.

He is among the first MPs to have managed to get a Ukrainian family to the UK, with Tory North Norfolk MP Duncan Baker announcing earlier this month that he had welcomed a mother and her son.

But Mr Jenrick said the process by which Maria, 40, and her two children, Bohdan, 15, and Khrystyna, 11, had got to the UK was "traumatic". Their father has stayed in Ukraine to fight in the war.

Environment minister Victoria Prentis took in a 25-year-old Ukrainian refugee last month under a separate visitor visa scheme, while other MPs and ministers have said they have applied to host families.

Mr Jenrick told the Telegraph's Chopper's Politics podcast: "It has been a very difficult experience for them. Even the experience of coming here was traumatic.

"They spent seven hours queuing at the Polish border before they were able to finally leave Ukraine, catch the flight to the UK, and the experiences which they've had and their relatives have had in different parts of the country over the last two or three months are really harrowing."

On the process, he said: "Truth be told it has been a bumpy start to the scheme. It's taken too long to get visas, for us it took about three weeks to get all three visas approved.

"And so there are people who are frustrated, it has tested the patience of sponsors and, more importantly, of the families and individuals themselves.

"But having been involved in some schemes that are not dissimilar to this in the past, like the Hong Kong scheme, Syrian scheme, Afghan scheme as a minister, as communities secretary, I know that. But I do think that we will get over those bumps, we are getting over them now."

Mr Jenrick said the scheme as it stands is "overly bureaucratic".

He added: "There were simple things that we could and should have done from the outset, like having the form in Ukrainian, for example.

"And I'm not sure whether you need to be doing checks on minors who are extremely unlikely to be threats to this country."

He said some security checks are needed, but added: "The checks need to be done quickly and in this case I'm afraid it has taken too long."

Mr Jenrick said he has not yet received the £350 he is entitled to for hosting the family, but if it is offered he will either not accept it or pass it directly to the refugees.

"So far... it's been very rewarding to see them feeling safe at last after a very traumatic experience and beginning to stabilise them and rebuild their lives," he said.

Former health secretary Matt Hancock said last week he is planning to take in seven ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at his Suffolk home.

He said the visa process had been a "challenge".

Around 16,400 people had arrived in the UK under Ukraine visa schemes by Monday, according to Government figures.

About 13,200 had arrived under the Ukraine family scheme and 3,200 under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, provisional data shows.

Some 94,700 applications have been received for both schemes and 56,500 visas had been granted by Thursday, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office said.

**Load-Date:** April 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*As Ukraine worries UN, some leaders rue what's pushed aside*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66FV-TKR1-DY4H-K183-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 24, 2022 Saturday 5:10 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1108 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** In speech after speech, world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly are spotlighting Russia’s war in Ukraine

**Body**

In speech after speech, world leaders dwelled on the topic consuming this year’s U.N. General Assembly meeting: Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

A few, like Nigerian President [*Muhammadu Buhari*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/muhammadu-buhari) , prodded the world not to forget everything else.

He, too, was quick to bring up the biggest military confrontation in Europe since World War II. But he wasn’t there to discuss the conflict itself, nor its disruption of food, fuel and fertilizer markets.

“The ongoing war in Ukraine is making it more difficult,” Buhari lamented, “to tackle the perennial issues that feature each year in the deliberations of this assembly.”

He went on to name a few: inequality, nuclear disarmament, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the more than 1 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who have been living in limbo for years in Bangladesh.

In an environment where words are parsed, confrontations are calibrated and worry is acute that the war and its wider effects could worsen, no one dismissed the importance of the conflict. But comments such as Buhari’s quietly spoke to a certain unease, sometimes bordering on frustration, about the international community’s absorption in Ukraine.

Those murmurs are audible enough that the United States’ U.N. ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, made a point of previewing Washington's plans to address climate change, food insecurity, health and other issues during the diplomatic community’s premier annual gathering.

“Other countries have expressed a concern that as we focus on Ukraine, we are not paying attention to what is happening in other crises around the world,” she said, vowing that it wasn't so. Still, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken complained at a Security Council meeting days later that Russia’s invasion is distracting the U.N. from working on other important matters.

In many years at the assembly, there's a hot spot or news development that takes up a lot of diplomatic oxygen. As former U.N. official Jan Egeland puts it, “the world manages to focus on one crisis at a time.”

“But I cannot, in these many years as a humanitarian worker or a diplomat, remember any time when the focus was so strongly on one conflict only while the world was falling apart elsewhere,” Egeland, now secretary-general of an international aid group called the Norwegian Refugee Council, said in a phone interview.

Certainly, no one was surprised by the attention devoted to a conflict with Cold War echoes, oblique nuclear threats from [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President Vladimir Putin, shelling that has endangered the continent's largest atomic power plant, and far-reaching economic effects. The urgency only intensified during the weeklong meeting as Russia mobilized some of its military reserves.

President Andrzej Duda of Poland — on Ukraine's doorstep — stressed in his speech that “we mustn’t show any ‘war fatigue’” regarding the conflict. But he also noted that a recent trip to Africa left him pondering how the West has treated other conflicts.

“Were we equally resolute during the tragedies of Syria, Libya, Yemen?” he asked himself, and the assembly. And didn’t the West return to “business as usual” after wars in Congo and the Horn of Africa?

“While condemning the invasion of Ukraine,” Duda added, “do we give equal weight to fighting mercenaries who seek to destabilize the Sahel and threaten many other states in Africa?”

He isn't the only one asking.

Over seven months of war, there have been pointed observations from some quarters about how quickly and extensively wealthy and powerful nations mobilized money, military aid, General Assembly votes to support Ukraine and offer refuge to its residents, compared to the global response to some other conflicts.

South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor last month told reporters – and the visiting Blinken — that while the war is awful, “we should be equally concerned at what is happening to the people of Palestine as we are with what is happening to the people of Ukraine.”

At the General Assembly, she added that, from South Africa’s vantage point, “our greatest global challenges are poverty, inequality, joblessness and a feeling of being entirely ignored and excluded.”

Tuvalu’s prime minister, Kausea Natano, said in an interview on the assembly’s sidelines that the war shouldn't “be an excuse” for countries to ignore their financial commitments to a top priority for his island nation: fighting climate change. Part of Bolivian President Luis Arce's speech compared the untold billions of dollars spent on fighting in Ukraine in a matter of months to the $11 billion committed to the U.N.-sponsored Green Climate Fund over more than a decade.

To be sure, most leaders made time for issues beyond Ukraine in their allotted, if not always enforced, 15 minutes at the mic. And some mentioned the war only in passing, or not at all.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro devoted his time to lambasting capitalism, consumerism and the U.S.-led war on drugs, particularly its focus on coca plant eradication. Krygyz President Sadyr Zhaparov, whose country has close ties to Russia, homed in on his homeland's border dispute with Tajikistan. Jordan’s King Abdullah II briefly mentioned the war’s effects on food supplies, then moved on to sustainable economic growth, Syrian refugees and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ukraine is undeniably a dominant concern for the European Union. But foreign policy chief Josep Borrell insisted the bloc hasn't lost sight of other problems.

“It’s not a question of choosing between Ukraine and the others. We can do all at the same time,” he said on the eve of the assembly.

Yet diplomatic attention and time are precious, sought-after resources. So, too, the will and money to help.

U.N. humanitarian office figures show that governments and private organizations have put up about $3.7 billion to aid Ukraine and ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** this year. About $2 billion has been raised for war-torn [*Yemen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yemen) , where the U.N. says over 17 million people are struggling with acute hunger.

And those are big campaigns. Just $428 million has been raised for Myanmar and for the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

Egeland’s organization helps uprooted people around the world, including in Ukraine. But he feels an “urgent need to get attention to absolute freefalls elsewhere.”

“It didn’t get better in Congo or in Yemen or in Myanmar or in Venezuela because it got so much worse in Europe, in and around Ukraine," Egeland said. “We need to fight for those who are starving in the shadows of this horrific war in Ukraine.”

\_\_\_

Associated Press writers Krista Larson in Dakar, Senegal, and Aya Batrawy and Pia Sarkar at the United Nations contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rwanda migration policy breaches international law, says UN refugee agency*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657C-C121-JBNF-W266-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 4:18 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 963 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** The UNHCR said it 'strongly condemns' the plan to send migrants who arrive in Britain unlawfully, to Africa.

**Body**

The UK's proposal to send migrants who arrive in [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) unlawfully to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) is "unacceptable" and a breach of international law, the UN's refugee agency said.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) announced this week it plans to provide failed asylum seekers, including those crossing the Channel in small boats, with a one-way ticket to Rwanda, where they will have the right to apply to live in the African country.

Gillian Triggs, an assistant secretary-general at the [*UNHCR*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhcr) , said the agency "strongly condemns outsourcing the primary responsibility to consider the refugee status", as laid out in the scheme put forward by Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and Home Secretary Priti Patel.

Speaking to BBC Radio 4's World At One programme, the former president of the Australian Human Rights Commission said the policy was a "troubling development", particularly in the light of countries taking in millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** displaced by the conflict in eastern Europe.

Put to her that Australia had effectively deployed a similar tactic to cut migration numbers, Ms Triggs said: "My point is, just as the Australian policy is an egregious breach of international law and refugee law and human rights law, so too is this proposal by the United Kingdom Government.

"It is very unusual, very few states have tried this, and the purpose is primarily deterrent - and it can be effective, I don't think we're denying that.

"But what we're saying at the UN refugee agency is that there are much more legally effective ways of achieving the same outcome."

She said attempting to "shift responsibility" for asylum seekers arriving in Britain was "really unacceptable".

Minister [*@VBiruta*](https://twitter.com/Vbiruta?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) makes it clear ⤵ "There is a global responsibility to prioritise the safety and well-being of migrants, and Rwanda welcomes this Partnership with the United Kingdom to host asylum seekers and migrants, and offer them legal pathways to residence." [*pic.twitter.com/1nWNhHHERm*](https://t.co/1nWNhHHERm) - Home Office (@ukhomeoffice) [*April 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1514903045779374084?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ms Triggs pointed out that Israel had attempted to send Eritrean and Sudanese refugees to Rwanda, but that they "simply left the country and started the process all over again"."In other words, it is not actually a long-term deterrent," she added.Tom Pursglove, minister for justice and tackling illegal migration, said on Friday that the policy was "in line" with the UK's legal obligations.However, he accepted that it would be "difficult" to implement the plan to remove asylum seekers to Rwanda, with the Government braced for legal challenges.He told Times Radio: "I think what is also really important to make (clear) in dealing with that issue is that, at all times, we act in accordance with our international obligations, the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights) and the refugee convention."We are absolutely confident that our policies are in line with that and entirely compliant, which by extension would mean that those legal challenges would be without merit."But it will be difficult, there will be challenges."The UK has an obligation to ensure access to asylum for those seeking protection.UNHCR strongly opposes the plan to export its asylum obligations. We urge the UK to refrain from transferring asylum seekers and refugees to Rwanda for asylum processing. [*https://t.co/01ygqrmuu4*](https://t.co/01ygqrmuu4) [*pic.twitter.com/TMkq1z6KiD*](https://t.co/TMkq1z6KiD) - UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency (@Refugees) [*April 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Refugees/status/1514699018500292617?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Mr Pursglove also suggested during broadcast interviews that other countries in Europe were considering emulating the UK's Rwandan policy, which he described as a "world first".

He said there was a "moral imperative" to crush the business model of human traffickers and avoid a tragedy like that seen in November, when a dinghy sank in the English Channel, drowning dozens of migrants heading to Britain.

"The point I would make is that what is cruel and inhumane is allowing evil criminal gangs to take advantage of people, to take their money, to put them in small boats, often with force, including women and children, to put them in the Channel with all the risks that that presents to human life," he told ITV's Good Morning Britain.

"We simply cannot allow that to happen, which is why we've introduced the new plan for immigration to stop these illegal journeys."

The minister also argued that in the "longer term" the scheme would save Britain money, with almost £5 million per day currently spent on accommodating those arriving in the country.

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The department said it did not believe any migrants arrived "on their own terms in a small boat" on Thursday, but on Good Friday women, children and single men were among hundreds of people brought ashore.

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**Load-Date:** April 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Success for party of 'Sweden first' energizes global right*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66D5-6R51-JBNF-W3JS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 15, 2022 Thursday 3:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1004 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** An anti-immigration party is the now second-most popular party in Sweden following a weekend election held amid fears of rising crime

**Body**

The [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) Democrats party was founded by neo-Nazis and skinheads in the 1980s. Today, the rebranded and reformed nationalist party stands on the edge of unprecedented influence.

Following a weekend election held amid fears of rising crime, the anti-immigration party is the now second-most popular party in the Scandinavian country.

The development is the latest global example of a political force once widely deemed socially unacceptable moving into the political mainstream.

Vowing to put “Sweden first” and to “make Sweden good again,” the slogans of party leader [*Jimmie Akesson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jimmie-akesson) echo those that have resonated with ex-President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) 's supporters in the United States.

Its surge has energized right-wing forces in Europe as they eye further gains against the left.

“Let this be an omen and model for the rest of Europe," said a tweet from the European Conservatives and Reformists party, whose president is Giorgia Meloni, leader of the far-right Brothers of Italy party.

In 10 days, Italians will elect a new [*Parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) in balloting that, if opinion polls prove right, could see Meloni triumph as part of a center-right electoral alliance and even possibly become Italy's premier.

Steve Bannon, Trump's longtime ally, also hailed the Sweden Democrats' surge on his “War Room” podcast, calling the shift to the right in traditionally progressive Sweden a “political earthquake." He praised the Sweden Democrats because “they want their borders, they want their sovereignty.”

Bannon described Sweden as a destroyed society — a right-wing trope that exaggerates the scale of Sweden's challenges.

Sweden is for the most part a prosperous and thriving European Union member, though many have been shaken by shootings and gang-related violence. Some, though not all, of the rising violence, has taken place in largely immigrant neighborhoods.

The populist party's strong showing was confirmed Wednesday evening, three days after a vote so close that the final result had to wait for postal and other outstanding votes to be counted.

With the tally clarified, the right-wing bloc of parties has 176 seats while Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson's center-left bloc has 173. On Thursday, Andersson submitted her resignation to the speaker of Parliament.

Despite the Sweden Democrats' surge — it won 20.5% of the vote, making it the largest right-of-center party — the stigma which it cannot entirely shake means that it will not be the first party to be tapped to form the government. Ulf Kristersson, leader of the Moderates party, another member of the right-of-center bloc, is expected to be the first to get a chance to try to form a governing coalition.

Many Swedes worry that the Sweden Democrats' history and hard-line stance on immigration threaten the democratic identity of a nation that is home to the Nobel Prizes and where generations of refugees have been welcomed, and thrived.

Emily Jeremias, a 45-year-old musician, said that she was worried but not surprised about "a right-wing kind of extremist party ... gaining so much power.”

“We see kind of a right-wing movement in the whole of Europe, so it’s not surprising that’s happening here as well,” she said.

During her campaign, the outgoing prime minister depicted the Sweden Democrats as a possible threat to the country's pluralism and tolerance.

And as Andersson acknowledged defeat, she said she personally had been subject to a “hate campaign," and alleged that the party used “organized trolls” to target young activists.

She and others on the left have also accused the Moderates of being complicit in normalizing the Sweden Democrats by being willing to work with them.

The populist party's more acceptable image is the result of years of efforts by Akesson, its 43-year-old leader. He says the party's transformation from its early days is sincere and that it rejects fascism and Nazism.

Under his leadership, the party long ago traded its torch symbol for a flower, aiming to underscore its reformation.

Akesson's interest in politics started as a teenager when Sweden became a member of the EU in 1995. He opposed it at the time, but in another shift, the party today supports membership in the 27-member bloc. It also supports NATO membership, which Sweden applied for this year after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Akesson's personal image is of someone smooth and well-groomed. He plays keyboard in a soft rock band, and in his speeches avoids inflammatory language, using humor and irony instead with his opponents.

As part of its reckoning with the past, the party recently published a study into the roots of the Sweden Democrats. Swedish newspaper Expressen revealed the author was a party member. Nonetheless, the investigation confirmed that several of the party’s founders in the 1980s had links to fascist and neo-Nazi movements.

The party says immigration to Sweden in the past was mostly acceptable, but that it has become too much in recent years. In 2015 alone the country of 10 million took in a record 163,000 refugees — the highest per capita of any European country.

Party members say they welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but that Sweden should not have to accept more from the Middle East or Africa.

The party is vowing to limit asylum approval to a bare minimum and to deport any migrants or refugees who commit crimes. In its election program it alleged that there are cases of asylum-seekers who claim dishonestly to be persecuted because they are gay or rejected Islam, suggesting it would limit such claims.

The Sweden Democrats say that Sweden has become “a magnet for the world’s migrants” and their aim is “to restore Sweden to what it once was.”

While it is unclear whether the Sweden Democrats will join the eventual government — not all the center-right parties in the bloc are ready to agree to that — it is clear that any right-wing government would need their support in order to muster a majority in Parliament to pass legislation. The star is on the rise for Akesson and his party.

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Olsen reported from Copenhagen, Denmark.

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